



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

# House of Commons Debates

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**Volume 151 No. 254**  
Thursday, November 23, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 23, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

## *Prayer*

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

#### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

While I am on my feet, I move:

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

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** The question is on the 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*]

**An hon. member:** Recorded vote.

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1045)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 452*)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Aldag  
Ali  
Anandasangaree  
Arseneault  
Atwin  
Badawey

Alghabra  
Anand  
Angus  
Ashton  
Bachrach  
Bains

Baker  
Battiste  
Bendayan  
Bibeau  
Blaikie  
Blaney  
Boissonnault  
Bradford  
Cannings  
Casey  
Chahal  
Chatel  
Chiang  
Cormier  
Dabrusin  
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Dhaliwal  
Diab  
Dubourg  
Duguid  
Ehsassi  
Erskine-Smith  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fraser  
Fry  
Gainey  
Gazan  
Gould  
Hanley  
Hepfner  
Hughes  
Hutchings  
Idlout  
Jaczek  
Joly  
Julian  
Kelloway  
Koutrakis  
Kwan  
Lambropoulos  
Lapointe  
Lauzon  
Lebouthillier  
Long  
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)  
MacDonald (Malpeque)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Martinez Ferrada  
Mathysen  
McDonald (Avalon)  
McKay  
McLeod  
Mendès  
Miller  
Morrissey  
Naqvi  
Noormohamed  
Olipphant

Barron  
Beech  
Bennett  
Bittle  
Blair  
Blois  
Boulerice  
Brière  
Carr  
Chagger  
Champagne  
Chen  
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)  
Coteau  
Damoff  
Desjarlais  
Dhillon  
Drouin  
Duclos  
Dzerowicz  
El-Khoury  
Fillmore  
Fonseca  
Fragiskatos  
Freeland  
Gaheer  
Garrison  
Gerretsen  
Hajdu  
Hardie  
Holland  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Ien  
Johns  
Jowhari  
Kayabaga  
Khera  
Kusmierczyk  
Lalonde  
Lamoureux  
Lattanzio  
LeBlanc  
Lightbound  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacGregor  
Maloney  
Masse  
May (Cambridge)  
McGuinty  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McPherson  
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Morrice  
Murray  
Ng  
O'Connell  
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Robillard  
Rogers  
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Sidhu (Brampton South)  
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Thompson  
Valdez  
van Koeverden  
Vandenbeld  
Weiler  
Yip  
Zarrillo

Richards  
Rood  
Savard-Tremblay  
Schmale  
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Simard  
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Steinley  
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Trudel  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Viersen  
Villemure  
Vuong  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Williamson

## NAYS

## Members

Aboultaif  
Albas  
Arnold  
Barlow  
Barsalou-Duval  
Bergeron  
Bérubé  
Blanchet  
Block  
Brassard  
Brunelle-Duceppe  
Carrie  
Champoux  
Cooper  
Davidson  
Deltell  
Doherty  
Dreeshen  
Ellis  
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
Fast  
Findlay  
Gallant  
Gaudreau  
Genuis  
Gladu  
Gourde  
Hallan  
Jeneroux  
Khanna  
Kmicc  
Kramp-Neuman  
Kusie  
Larouche  
Lehoux  
Leslie  
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
Lloyd  
Maguire  
Martel  
Mazier  
McLean  
Michaud  
Motz  
Nater  
Patzner  
Pauzé  
Plamondon  
Rayes

Aitchison  
Allison  
Baldinelli  
Barrett  
Beaulieu  
Berthold  
Bezan  
Blanchette-Joncas  
Bragdon  
Brock  
Calkins  
Chambers  
Chong  
Dalton  
DeBellefeuille  
Desilets  
Dowdall  
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Epp  
Falk (Provencher)  
Ferrerri  
Fortin  
Garon  
Généreux  
Gill  
Goodridge  
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Hoback  
Kelly  
Kitchen  
Kram  
Kurek  
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Lawrence  
Lemire  
Lewis (Essex)  
Liepert  
Lobb  
Majumdar  
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)  
McCauley (Edmonton West)  
Melillo  
Moore  
Muys  
Normandin  
Paul-Hus  
Perkins  
Poilievre  
Redekopp

## PAIRED

## Members

Chabot  
Housefather  
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Morantz  
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**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 30—PROCEEDINGS ON BILL C-56

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in relation to the consideration of Government Business No. 30, I move:

That the debate be not further adjourned.

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

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, lately the government likes to claim it has had a conversion to being concerned about affordability. Meanwhile, for years it has been running a horrifying economic experiment. It has massively increased spending and more than doubled our national debt. We know now that it is spending more on debt servicing than it is sending to the provinces for health care.

Outrageous amounts of money in debt servicing costs are making life less affordable for Canadians. Fundamentally, since the Liberals claim to have had this conversion to being concerned about affordability, will they tell the House when the budget will be balanced?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I hope all Canadians watching at home are looking at this debate. They would agree that there is a time to consider and a time to debate, but also a time to act. I have been saying that to Canadians and even to the Leader of the Opposition. There is only one thing he can do for Canadians, which is to vote for Bill C-56. Why? The Conservatives would be well advised to listen to Canadians.

Canadians have told us that the two things they are concerned about are housing and affordability. That is why we have already had 20 hours of debate over five days. Imagine that. Canadians at home need the help contained in this bill and are wondering why members of Parliament have been talking about 20 days. I think Canadians watching today want action and that is what we are going to deliver.

• (1050)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have said many times that there are two bloc parties in the House of Commons, the Bloc Québécois and the “block everything” party, the Conservative Party, which has blocked dental care and provisions for doubling the GST credit so that Canadians can put more food on the table. It has blocked every piece of legislation coming forward, except of course the Canada-Ukraine trade bill, which it voted against on the Day of Dignity and Freedom, when Ukrainians were commemorating their democracy. That is when the Conservatives, one by one, voted down the Canada-Ukraine trade bill. Aside from that, they have blocked every other piece of legislation.

We know their history. Under the Conservatives in the Harper regime, housing prices doubled, and they lost or destroyed 800,000 affordable housing units. Is that why the Conservatives are yet again blocking legislation provoked by the NDP that would help Canadians?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, that is music to my ears when I hear that from the party blocking everything.

We can imagine that folks at home are watching, and they are saying that the Conservative Party of Canada voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. I am sure people at home are asking what is going on in Ottawa these days. They want to know what kind of Conservatives would vote against a nation that is fighting for democracy on behalf of all of us.

My hon. colleague is right; he brings words of wisdom to this House. Bill C-56 is about helping Canadians with housing and affordability. Will the Conservatives ever vote in favour of Canadians? We are going to be watching them.

[Translation]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry is very proactive on many files.

*S. O. 57*

However, as the saying goes, the longer we wait, the worse things get. That is what happened with the Competition Act. The government could have taken action years ago. If it had, we would not be stuck with these huge monopolies, especially in the grocery sector, that have pushed prices up with margins that benefit them, rather than producers or processors, and that have doubled prices for consumers.

The same goes for telecommunications, gasoline and banks. Costs have gone up because this government did not act in time. It waited too long to introduce Bill C-27. It also waited too long to introduce the bill to amend the Copyright Act.

When will the government take action? Can the minister assert his legislative power to ensure that these files actually get debated? Right now, it seems to me that there is no movement on his side.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect for the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, that is exactly what we are doing. There have been five days of debate, which adds up to 20 hours. I am listening to the member, and I hear him. He says we must act, and that is exactly what we are trying to do. I hope the Bloc Québécois will be with us.

My colleagues need to remember that there were 120 days of consultations on competition, including five round tables and 400 submissions. Nearly 120 organizations filed submissions. We consulted all the stakeholders. Today, we are asking the House to move forward.

Canadians also agree with the member. They want us to forge ahead. We expect the Bloc Québécois to vote in favour of Bill C-56. That way, we will be able to push forward and reform the Competition Act, which has not been updated in 37 years.

[English]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is true, the Conservative Party is the “block everything” party.

However, the Conservatives are not even consistent. They delayed with respect to the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, and suddenly, in the 11th hour, with about a week left, they came up with this red herring that it had something to do with a price on pollution.

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

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I hear the heckling from my Conservative colleagues.

Ukraine has had a price on pollution since 2011. As a matter of fact, the only way it could get into the European market was to commit to that. This is nothing more than a red herring.

Is the minister concerned that the delay of this bill is, once again, just another red herring being put out there by Conservatives?

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

*S. O. 57*

• (1055)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, order. Maybe the members should have a talk later or send an email to each other to figure this out.

The hon. Minister of Innovation.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, I am going to respond to that, because I know Canadians are watching.

My colleague is right. Yesterday must have been a shock to Canadians from coast to coast to coast, seeing the Conservatives voting against Ukraine in a time of war. Did they really vote against the Canada Ukraine free trade agreement? They tried to find excuse after excuse for it.

Now we are going to see if the Conservatives find another excuse to not help Canadians. Bill C-56 is simple: It would help people with housing and affordability. I am sure Canadians are asking whether the Conservatives will ever do something for them.

Conservatives have the opportunity of a lifetime. It is just before Christmas. They should give a gift to Canadians by voting for Bill C-56 and letting us move forward in this country.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is good that we can actually bring it back to the debate on the motion at hand.

This motion contains a promise that the Liberal government made in 2015. I find it a little difficult to take that the minister waxes incredulous when members may want to debate the bill. It took the Liberals eight years, kicking and screaming, to do this, after the opposition leader actually tabled a private member's bill that presented the exact thing that the Liberals promised to do in 2015.

After eight years of the Liberals not keeping that particular promise on housing, how on earth are Canadians to think that it is somehow the Conservatives' fault that this legislation has not been enacted? How are they to accuse Conservatives of blocking the Liberals from doing what they promised to do eight years ago?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I have enormous respect for the member, but let me repeat in English what I said in French. Do they know how much we consulted on that when it came to competition? There were 120 days of consultation. Five round tables were held across the country. Four hundred submissions were received in 120 stakeholder organizations.

On the one hand, the Conservatives say they want more debate, consultation and time. On the other, they are trying to blame us for delaying. We are saying no. Canadians are saying no to them. They said no to them in the last election.

There is a time for consideration and debate, but there is also a time for action. Canadians want action on housing and affordability. Can they help Canadians for once? Bill C-56 is very simple; it is a bill for helping Canadians. I am sure people at home will look at the Conservatives and wonder whether they will do the right thing for Canadians once and for all.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is getting all

worked up talking about competition, saying it is important to promote it.

I have a proposal for him to promote competition. In Quebec, a lot of small businesses need help. We asked that the deadline for small businesses to pay back the emergency business account be extended by one year. Due to inflation and what they lived through with the pandemic, they are not able to reimburse the loan so quickly.

The government said it would grant them 18 days. What are they going to do in 18 days? They cannot do much. We proposed that the government extend the deadline for small businesses to reimburse the loan. We also offered to help in expediting passage of Bill C-56. The government refused.

Is it telling us it has decided to abandon small businesses in Quebec?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that my colleague is talking about competition because we know all about competition in Quebec. Consumer protection is a value that Quebecers hold dear. Right now, Quebecers who are looking at my colleague must be thinking that the Bloc Québécois will certainly support a bill that promotes competition.

One of the problems we have seen recently involved the food sector. Bill C-56 would give more power to the Competition Bureau to investigate, to undertake a comprehensive study. I am sure that Quebecers at home are thinking that the Bloc Québécois will certainly vote in favour of Quebecers because, if it believes in competition, it believes in Bill C-56.

Bill C-56 will create new tools to help Quebecers. I am sure that people at home listening to us today are convinced the Bloc Québécois will do the right thing and support Bill C-56.

• (1100)

*[English]*

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, as Greens, we believe we are sent here not to play partisan games but to focus on the priorities of our communities. Right now, we are not even debating Bill C-56 or the programming motion to move more quickly on Bill C-56. We are debating another motion to limit debate on the programming motion. This has happened dozens of times in this Parliament alone. I believe it is 29 or so. One day, the minister might be in opposition. Is he at all concerned with the precedent that this sets of bringing forward allocation to limit time on debate again?

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**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I would not bet on that. However, I would say that I know the member; he is a man of good heart. I have had a number of discussions with him, and he is someone who wants to do what is right for Canadians.

However, like me and I hope all members, when they get groceries, when they walk in their ridings on the weekend and when they talk to people in the street, they hear that there are two things that Canadians are facing today. They are facing the cost of housing and affordability. Those are the things Canadians want us to take action on, not only as government but also as parliamentarians.

Christmas is approaching. Canadians are watching, and they ask whether Parliament will finally do something to help them. They want help on affordability and on housing. This bill would do that. We can imagine: It would enhance the GST rebate on new rental housing; it would give more tools to the Competition Bureau to go after uncompetitive practices in this country.

If the Greens want to help Canadians, as I am sure they do, I have no doubt that when the vote comes up on Bill C-56, they will vote in favour of it and in favour of Canadians.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to give the minister a chance to highlight the importance of passing this bill again. The reason I ask is that, a couple of weeks ago at church, a senior slid over behind me, tapped me on the shoulder and thanked me for the way that I voted on the carbon tax on home heating oil. She also told me that she was at Sobeys grocery store that week, picking up a few items. When she got to the lineup for the check-out, she said she added up in her head what those items were going to cost and had to walk away and leave them in the cart. She left the store and went home; she could not afford to buy those groceries or buy those items.

Can the minister explain how this bill will help that person be able to afford to buy groceries?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, this is the reality for many Canadians. One thing we have seen across many nations is that the best way to bring affordability and stabilize prices is through competition. Bill C-56 would do something that has not been done in about 37 years in our country. It would reform the Competition Act in ways that are very clear.

The bill would give more power to the competition authority, for example, when it does a market study. The last market study was done on groceries. Can we imagine having an authority with no subpoena power? That has not been seen in any other G7 country. Now we are going to fix that. Another thing it would do is ensure that anti-competitive mergers can be blocked. We have seen, time and time again, that we have restricted competition. Lastly, Bill C-56 would remove restrictive covenants that we can currently find in leases. We have seen in the member's riding, as in my own, a grocer in one shopping centre. Today, there are some restrictive clauses in leases that would prevent an independent grocer from going and competing with them. We need to put a stop to that.

Canadians watching at home are trusting us to do the right thing for them. The only reason we are here is to serve the people at home. They sent us here to do something. We are committed to doing that.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we already heard earlier that there are elements in this bill that belong to Conservative private members' bills. The fall economic update also took in four more Conservative private members' bills, including portions of my own.

How many more Conservative ideas will the government have to steal to try to help Canadians? When will the government call an election so that we can actually take Conservative ideas and implement them as a Conservative government instead?

● (1105)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to take that question from the member because, as we said, Parliament is the place where we should debate ideas. This is the place where the best ideas should come from and actually be implemented. That is what we are seeing with Bill C-56 and this motion. There is a time for consideration and debate, but there is also a time for voting and acting.

If the member believes what he said, he should be in favour of the bill and running to his caucus to tell them that Christmas is approaching. Canadians are going to be watching and they need to do the right thing for Canadians. The two things that matter to Canadians are housing and affordability. Bill C-56 is going to help Canadians. If he is true to his word, he is going to convince his colleagues to vote for Bill C-56.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe this.

Today, my colleague tells us it is urgent, that we must quickly pass Bill C-56 for its housing initiatives. The GST credit is a marginal measure to fight the housing crisis. Still, in the economic update, two days ago, we had a unique opportunity to invest in housing. However, most measures will only come into effect in 2025-2026.

We need billions of dollars in investments now. We need to build 150,000 new units a year in Quebec. In the agreement with Quebec, 8,000 units will be built in the next five years. There are 10,000 homeless people in Quebec. We asked for an emergency fund to prevent deaths in Granby, in Rimouski and in Saint-Jérôme. Not a cent was allocated. The crisis is here now. I can hardly believe we were told this morning it is urgent to vote on the bill, while the government put nothing in its economic update two days ago.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, it is so urgent that we have to move a motion to force members to vote.

*S. O. 57*

I understand why my colleague says this is urgent, I feel the same way. That is why the government believes it must move this kind of motion this morning. After 20 hours of debating, after five days of debate, it is time to act.

I have listened to my colleague and I share his views. That is exactly right. What we are facing as a government is that on the other side of the House people want to slow down the process. Ultimately, they are preventing us from moving forward for Quebec, for Quebecers, for the entire country.

I know the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert. He is someone who wants to get things done and move forward. He will convince his colleagues to vote for Bill C-56. He will help Quebecers when it comes to housing. He will certainly help Quebecers when it comes to affordability. That is what people are asking us to do. That is what we are trying to do today.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague talks the big talk. He wants to help Canadians with affordability, yet the bill would not do that. The government is quadrupling the carbon tax on farmers. The Senate is stalling Bill C-234, which could give \$1 billion of relief to farmers to help bring down our food prices, and the government is also trying to take away the ability of free enterprises to make their own business decisions. The reality is that the bill would not do anything to bring down grocery prices for Canadians. The government is living in a fantasyland if it thinks that retailers are not going to pass along to consumers any new taxes or protocols that the government puts in place.

Why will the government not do something concrete, like axe the carbon tax and push its senators to get Bill C-234 passed in order to give farmers immediately relief from the carbon tax?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member would agree that there is one way to help everyone in Canada. If we look at countries around the world, the best way to stabilize prices, reduce consolidation and have lower prices is through competition. Everyone would agree that this is the best way to make sure we help Canadians, and the bill would do exactly that.

The last time anyone touched the legislation was 37 years ago. We are presenting the most important reform in competition. Why are we doing that? It is because we want to have more tools in the tool box so we can act. We want to help Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Those at home understand, as they have seen time and time again, that the best way for us as parliamentarians, collectively, to do something meaningful and concrete is to increase competition in this country.

I am sure my colleague would agree with that, because I know her and I know she cares about the people in her riding and about Canadians. They are watching today. I am sure they would say she will do the right thing, that she will convince the Conservative caucus and say, “Yes, we are going to do something for Canada; yes, we are going to do something for consumers; and yes, we are going to do something for competition.” They will be watching.

• (1110)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, this is such an important bill, especially for Nunavut, given that the price of housing and the price of groceries are so high and that it is so difficult in Nunavut. I would love to have seen more conversations about how we could make improvements, and I think the bill would do just that.

It is unfortunate that we are discussing closure. If I understand it correctly, and maybe the member could help me understand it better, it is because there has been a lot of filibustering in the House, not just during debates in the House of Commons but also in committees. I had the unfortunate experience of replacing a colleague of mine at one of the committees yesterday, and all I sat through was Conservative filibustering.

I wonder whether the minister could explain the cost of filibustering and why we needed closure.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, the member's question was very thoughtful, and she pointed out what is going on in this place. I hope Canadians are watching.

There is a party in front of us that will do anything to block any progress. Yesterday, we saw something egregious. The Conservatives blocked the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. What the member is saying is that we see it time and time again. If I look into my own heart, I would think there should be unanimous consent. This is a bill that would improve housing and affordability. Everyone was sent here by families and other members of their communities. I know that these people expect us to do the right thing when it is about helping them. Like the member said, she would not expect people at home to say they sent members here to block and filibuster. They sent people here, on all sides of the House, to make sure we work for Canadians.

The bill is about more housing and more competition for Canadians. I hope that every member of the House will vote in favour of Bill C-56. Let us give a gift to Canadians at a time when they need it most.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, the minister is talking to us about competition. I am glad he is, because right now there is a problem with competition.

People are paying more than ever for their groceries. Not so long ago, after speaking with grocery executives, the minister told the House that the problem had been solved because, looking at the flyers, he saw good discounts.



*S. O. 57*

However, the reality is that, shortly after that, we saw grocers make even more profits, record profits. We were told people had found a solution for inflation by changing their buying habits. Instead of buying fresh vegetables, they were buying frozen vegetables. Instead of buying a big steak, they were buying ground beef. We were told that, in fact, there was no problem because people had changed their buying habits. This is what grocery executives told us.

The minister told us the problem was solved by flyers. How can we take these people seriously? Honestly, I think something is broken here. Is the minister proud of his work? Does he really believe the grocery inflation problem has been solved?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that we have to do more. This is why we introduced Bill C-56. We said the meeting with grocers was a first step. We asked them to do what was necessary to help Canadians, but we are not fools; we know more has to be done.

I know my colleague will vote in favour of the bill. I can see it in his eyes. He is thinking that Bill C-56 gives more power to the Competition Bureau specifically to investigate big grocers across the country. If what he says is true—and I know he thinks what he says—he will vote in favour of Bill C-56. This bill will give more power to the Competition Bureau so it can conduct inquiries, and we know that the best way to help consumers across the country is to strengthen competition.

Quebeckers will be watching the member when he votes on Bill C-56. I am convinced he will vote the right way.

*[English]*

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been eight years of the government's failing Canadians over and over again. The reason we are in the circumstances we are in today in this country is the economic decisions of the government, along with increased taxes at a time when Canadians are earning less and the cost of everything is more. The question the government is not answering and that Canadians are asking, which is more important to them even than this, is why it chooses not to take responsibility for the fact that Canadians are in the urgent scenarios they are in today because of decisions made by the government.

When will the government do what the Conservative Party has said from the very beginning? Our leader recognized a long time ago that this was going to be an issue. The government refused to respond to it in any way, so when will the government do the things that will get the long-term and fast responses this country needs and remove the carbon tax so Canadians can afford to live and inflation will go down? Those are the things Canadians need from the government.

• (1115)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I would not have talked about the leader of the Conservatives, but since my colleague raised it, let us remember, for those watching at home, that this is the leader who advised Canadians to invest in cryptocurrency. In terms of economic advice, I am sure Canadians would probably agree with me to not follow anything he says.

When the member talks about our record, I am so happy. She will have seen, because I know her and she looks at stats, that the OECD ranked Canada third in foreign investments that have come into this country, just after the United States and Brazil. This is a record. We are attracting investments like we have never seen before. We think of Volkswagen, Stellantis, GM, Ford and Volta.

The world is realizing Canada has what it needs for the economy of the 21st century, a decarbonized economy, an economy that bets on the talent of people, renewable energy and open markets. I know that the member is looking at that and saying, “Wow, what a record.” I wish the Conservatives would join us to make sure Canada is the place everyone around the world looks to for investing.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the leader of the Conservative Party has courted membership of the People's Party, we have seen the far right actually take over the Conservative Party. To amplify that fact, one only needs to take a look at how the Conservatives collectively voted against Ukraine and the trade agreement the other day. The reckless behaviour we are witnessing on a daily basis coming from the Conservative Party is demonstrated on the floor, as it is determined to filibuster and do whatever it can to prevent legislation from passing. I am wondering whether my colleague can provide his thoughts on how the far right has reached into the House of Commons today through the Conservative Party of Canada.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, it would take me more than an hour to try to explain that to Canadians, but I do not think I could find any answers. On what Canadians witnessed yesterday, I am sure they are still at home wondering whether what they saw really happened, that in 2023 the Conservative Party of Canada would vote against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. Did it really? A time when a nation is fighting for democracy, and when it is fighting a war, is the time when one needs to help it.

I know that maybe there is still a glimmer of hope, because Christmas is approaching. I know my colleagues are eager to go home, but Canadians are asking them to do one thing: to please vote for Bill C-56. They should give something to Canadians before they go on vacation and make sure we have more affordable housing and more affordability across this country.

*[Translation]*

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

The question is on the motion.

*[English]*

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.

*S. O. 57*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote, please.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1200)

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

*(Division No. 453)*

## YEAS

### Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathyssen
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod

McPherson	Mendès
Miao	Miller
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara	Sousa
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thompson	Trudeau
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi— 171	

## NAYS

### Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean

Melillo  
Moore  
Motz  
Nater  
Patzner  
Pauzé  
Plamondon  
Rayes  
Richards  
Rood  
Savard-Tremblay  
Schmale  
Shields  
Simard  
Small  
Steinley  
Stewart  
Stubbs  
Thomas  
Tolmie  
Uppal  
Vecchio  
Vien  
Vignola  
Vis  
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Williams  
Zimmer— 141

Michaud  
Morrice  
Muys  
Normandin  
Paul-Hus  
Perkins  
Poilievre  
Redekopp  
Roberts  
Ruff  
Scheer  
Seebach  
Shipley  
Sinclair-Desgagné  
Soroka  
Ste-Marie  
Strahl  
Therrien  
Tochor  
Trudel  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Viersen  
Villemure  
Vuong  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Williamson

## PAIRED

### Members

Chabot  
Housefather  
Lantsman  
Morantz  
Perron  
Sarai

Fry  
Khalid  
Mendicino  
Morrison  
Rempel Garner  
Sheehan— 12

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

### CONSIDERATION OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 30

The House resumed from November 20 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the legislation we are debating today would have a profoundly positive impact on Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

I would like to bring to this debate the Conservative Party's attitude towards legislation in general. I put it in the form of a question earlier about the Conservative Party today, the leader of the Conservative Party, his attraction to the People's Party and the membership of that particular party. As a result, the Conservative Party has moved far to the right. I would ultimately argue that the far right has taken over the leadership of the Conservative Party today.

I do not say that lightly. I truly believe that to be the case, and we have seen a good demonstration of that. Talking about the legislation we have today, one would think the Conservative Party would recognize the value and the good within this legislation and have a desire to see it passed. However, that is not the case of the far right Conservative Party today.

We saw that amplified just the other day when the Conservative Party voted against a trade agreement. Conservatives actually voted

## Government Orders

against the Canada-Ukraine trade agreement. It is unbelievable. Then they try to rationalize why.

It is rooted in the leadership of the Conservative Party. We see that far right element has virtually taken over. That has started to filter down into what we see across the way today. That is why, whether it is the Conservative Party voting against the trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine, or against the legislation we are debating today, there is a desire on the part of the Conservative Party to play that destructive force on the floor of the House of Commons.

Then they look surprised that we would bring in time allocation for the debate on Bill C-56. The bottom line is that time allocation was brought in because the Conservatives do not want to see this legislation passed—

• (1205)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In light of the member's comments saying that he apparently wants to do more for Ukraine, I wonder if there would be unanimous consent for the adoption of a motion put on notice by the member for Dufferin—Caledon, which is that there be an instruction to the Standing Committee on International Trade that, during its consideration of Bill C-57, an act to implement the 2023 free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine, the committee be granted the power to expand the scope of the bill in order to support expanded munitions production in Canada and increasing munitions exports to Ukraine, and support the development of weapons and munitions manufacturing capabilities in Ukraine by Canadian industry.

I hope there would be unanimous consent for the adoption of that motion so that we could move forward.

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

**An hon. member:** Nay.

[English]

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I have a very quick procedural question. Will the Hansard reflect that it was the Liberal member for Winnipeg North who said no, or—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** This is not a point of order; this is a point of debate. I would remind members that they are well aware, especially the opposition House leader, what points of order are. I would ask members to please respect the rules of the House.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives just demonstrated just how dumb they can be.

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Let us remember that they tried to move a unanimous motion to, in essence, kill the free trade agreement completely. What do they think would have happened if that motion had actually passed? There is an agreement that is in place. The Conservatives remember that President Zelenskyy came to Canada to sign that agreement, and now they just want to throw it out the window. It is irresponsible. That is what I mean when I speak about the far right extremists in the Conservative caucus today. Shame on them.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind the hon. member that a point of order was raised yesterday when a member raised the fact that someone had used a word, and I am not going to repeat that word here, but I do want to remind members to please be very careful with the words they use in the House. We should not be using these derogatory words as that shows a lack of respect.

I have a point of order from the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, my point of order was going to be to ask you to address the issue of the Liberal member calling someone dumb—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Yes, and so I have.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I would like to apologize for calling them dummdums.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** That is not a proper way of apologizing. I would like to remind members to please be careful with the words they use in the House. It does cause a lot of problems, and it really stops the flow of the House to be able to proceed.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member asked what would have happened if the Conservative motion to expand the scope had passed. It is quite simple what would have happened. The amendments I drafted to expand the scope of the bill to make specific legislative changes to expedite weapons transfers to Ukraine could be proposed, and if adopted, those amendments would then become part of this legislation. It would not in any way undermine the existing agreement. It would simply be a matter of Canada's adding additional legislative measures that would expedite the sale of weapons to Ukraine.

It would be things such as, for instance, putting Ukraine on the list of open policy countries, which would reduce the time and review standard required to get these weapons to Ukraine. It would be things such as having EDC and BDC play a greater role in supporting the manufacturing of weapons in Ukraine through Canadian business investments. These are concrete measures that would make an actual difference to Ukraine as it fights the war. Why does the member not support those measures?

• (1210)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, each and every one of the Conservative members needs to take ownership and responsibility

for their behaviour and their unanimous decision to vote against the Canada-Ukraine agreement. The Conservatives can come up with all the red herrings that they want.

The bottom line is that President Zelenskyy came to Canada and signed a trade agreement with Canada, even during a time of war, recognizing the value of that trade agreement. Only the Conservative Party, in its wisdom and its far right extremism, made the decision to vote against him. Shame on them. If the member has remorse already, then he could apologize and ask for unanimous consent to reverse his vote.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. I want to remind the hon. member that he had an opportunity to ask a question. If he has other questions, he should wait for the appropriate time.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would just like to reiterate the comments that my colleague made about the Conservatives voting against supporting a trade agreement with Ukraine. In fact, they did it on the Day of Dignity and Freedom for Ukraine, just to make it that much more appalling and inexplicable.

The bill we are trying to get through today and the work we are trying to get done would provide some support for Canadians with housing. I know that the government has admitted that it has not done nearly enough to address the situation of housing. I listened today to my colleague from Nunavut when she spoke about how dire the situation is for housing in the north. I am just wondering how this piece of legislation, which we would like to be able to talk about and be able to pass, would help with nutrition, food prices, grocery prices and housing in northern communities, such as that of my colleague from Nunavut.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, to give a very specific example, the legislation would establish getting rid of the GST for purpose-built rental homes. This would have a profoundly positive impact. We have now seen provinces do likewise with respect to the PST. I hope to see more provincial jurisdictions continue to do that.

The member made reference to a special day. This is Holodomor week, a week to recognize what took place in Ukraine when Russia starved millions of Ukrainians. This is in the same week that the Conservative Party voted against the Ukraine-Canada free trade deal. It is very hard to imagine why the Conservatives voted that way, with the exception of the far-right element that I referenced.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we are talking about Bill C-56, and it is important to bring us back to what this bill could offer to Canadians.

I am particularly interested in the piece around strengthening the Competition Act. We know that Canadians are deeply concerned about the rising costs of living. Christmas is coming. Ideally, not moving toward closure is what we want to see in the House, but we need to unfortunately because of the games that are played.

Could the member speak to some of the things we are seeing in the House that unfortunately prevent us from passing critical legislation like this?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the legislation would enable us to strengthen the Competition Bureau, which is very important. It would also take away the efficiency argument in regard to when a large company acquires another one. A tangible example of that would be to go back to the days when Stephen Harper was the prime minister. We used to have Shoppers, a stand-alone company that provided all sorts of groceries. It was consumed by Loblaws in a multibillion dollar deal.

We all recognize that competition is healthy. It helps us keep prices fair for consumers. This legislation would make competition better in Canada, whether it is that aspect or the rental supports to ensure we have more homes into the future. This is good, sound legislation. One would think the Conservatives would be eager to see its passage.

• (1215)

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, I am really glad to see the governing party so keen to move forward with this measure to address the housing crisis. At the same time, we just had a fall economic statement with no new funds for the rapid housing initiative and no new action to address the financialization of housing.

For example, the Liberals could have removed the tax exemption that real estate investment trusts are benefiting from every day and put those funds toward building the affordable housing we need.

Why are the Liberals so selectively keen to move ahead on housing policy?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, never before in the history of Canada, at least for the last 50 or 60 years, has a government been more focused on dealing with the issue of housing. The member made reference to the fall economic statement that was released yesterday. I know the member is a big fan of housing co-ops. Within that statement was a serious commitment of somewhere in the neighbourhood of over \$300 million toward supporting and seeing the realization of more housing co-ops.

I have always argued, and will continue to argue, that a housing co-op is a wonderful form of housing. People are not tenants; they are residents. That is a big difference. If I had more time, I would love to talk about all the things this government is doing on housing.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, in her previous comments attacking the Conservatives, the member for Edmonton Strathcona tried to pretend that she supports Ukraine. Here is what she told the committee in February 2022, the same month as the invasion. She said the following:

Some people in this committee and some members of our Parliament have been calling on the government to provide lethal weapons to Ukraine. I have some concerns about that, obviously.

Do you believe there are risks to providing those lethal weapons to Ukraine? This applies in terms of keeping track of those weapons, but more importantly, I'd like some information on how Russia would perceive that. Would they perceive that as an escalation instead of a de-escalation?

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That is an unbelievable statement by the member for Edmonton Strathcona, the foreign affairs critic for the NDP. She was expressing an unwillingness to transfer lethal weapons to Ukraine because of fear of how Russia would perceive it. That is what the NDP was saying in February 2022.

Does the member think the NDP should apologize for those pro-Russia statements?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, from that question, I take it that there is a lot of remorse, at least from some of the Conservative members, for the manner in which they voted the other day. It is incredibly difficult for Canadians to believe that the Conservative Party would vote against a trade agreement that would have a profoundly positive impact for both Canada and Ukraine. It will make a positive difference.

What we have heard from the Conservative Party today, from the far right wing element, is a policy that is so reckless that it just does not make sense. People should think about the Conservative leader. It is a risky business nowadays being a Conservative. Those members really need to consider how they voted. I would highly recommend they make a major flip-flop and support the Canada-Ukraine agreement.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we need to get this work done. This morning I was at an anti-poverty event. I can tell members that people do not have time to wait for housing, for food and for medication, pharmacare. We have a lot of work to do.

I wonder if the member across the aisle could tell us how quickly we can get to the Canada disability benefit, because that legislation needs to get passed very quickly or come into force. Could he give us some updates on that, please?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the government has a very proactive and progressive legislative agenda. We would like to get a lot of legislation through. We just brought in the anti-scab legislation. Whether it is budgetary measures or legislative measures, we have a full agenda. We know that it is in the best interests of Canadians for them to be passed.

The frustration is when the Conservatives stand on concurrence motions to filibuster debates or try to adjourn the House to prevent debates from occurring in the first place.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind members again that when someone has the floor, it is respectful to wait until they are recognized during the appropriate time if they wish to say something.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

• (1220)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

It is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the constituents in my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country.

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We are debating Bill C-56. The NDP-Liberal government continually fails to address the real issues that it has caused for all Canadians. It says the bill will somehow bring down the cost of living and grocery prices.

People in my community are struggling to pay their bills and put food on the table. Food bank usage is the highest it has ever been, with over 30% more clients year over year. This is consistent across the country and also in my community. People with disabilities and seniors on fixed incomes are hit particularly hard.

Instead of cutting the carbon tax and government spending, which is driving up inflation, the Liberal-NDP government believes that implementing Bill C-56 would somehow solve the inflated cost of living and grocery price issue.

There is a lack of competition in Canada's grocery industry, an industry held mostly by Loblaws, Sobeys and Metro, and this is a problem the bill would not solve. We have already seen the Prime Minister and the government fail at keeping their promises, like having cheaper groceries before Thanksgiving. That date has long come and gone.

Canadians are faced with higher costs than many other developed countries due to a lack of competition, whether in industries like grocery, airline, banking or telecommunications. High taxes, bureaucracy and red tape make Canada unproductive and uncompetitive. The Liberals added a second carbon fee, basically a second carbon tax. Saying the legislation takes some kind of stand against grocery stores is nothing short of performative with a nice title.

The policies of the NDP-Liberal coalition, with its inflationary deficit spending and high-tax agenda, has caused our inflation rate to be as high as it has been, and continues to be, which has caused the highest interest rates in a generation. The legislation is trying to deal with problems created by the government without addressing any of the causes. It is as if we are walking along and someone trips us and while we are lying on the ground looking up, that individual puts his or her hand out and asks to help us up. Meanwhile we would be thinking that if that person had not tripped us in the first place we would not be on the ground.

The NDP-Liberal coalition thinks that taxing farmers who grow our food, taxing transport trucks that move our food and then taxing grocery stores that sell our food has nothing to do with inflation. We have to remember that it was the Liberal finance minister who had declared victory on inflation only to see it go higher.

We also have to remember that inflation is compounding. Most people are familiar with compounding interest on their investments. However, this is the harmful kind of compounding, because it means things cost more.

For a 3% inflation, for example, that is 3% on top of last year, where during the same month it could have been 8%, as we were seeing in 2022. Therefore, the inflation rate this year is 3% plus 8%, which is 11%, but is even more because it is compounded compared to two years ago.

The Governor of the Bank of Canada said that inflation was homegrown and that it was costing the average Canadian \$3,500 a year. That is not per family; it is per person. No wonder people are

having trouble heating their homes. They were last winter and we are seeing them have a tough time again this year.

I send multiple surveys each year to every home in my community of Kelowna—Lake Country, and it is amazing the huge amount of people who respond to them. A recent one was this past summer. Here are the results: 70% say they are buying fewer groceries; 81% say they are taking fewer trips; 78% say they are donating less to charity; and 89% say they are putting less into savings. Many people also put detailed notes, sharing their ideas, solutions and heart-breaking stories with me.

The John Howard Society of Okanagan and Kootenay has stated that it is now having clients come to its organization saying that they have just lost their homes and do not know what to do. Now the organization does not know how to support these people because it was not built for the capacity it is now seeing.

It is no surprise that people cannot afford a home when the price of homes and rent in Canada has doubled over the last eight years of the NDP-Liberal government. It used to take 25 years to pay off a mortgage. Now it takes 25 years to save for a mortgage.

● (1225)

Saving for the average mortgage for the average home used to take five and a half years before the Liberal government. A recent C.D. Howe Institute study determined that in Vancouver, nearly \$1.3 million of the cost of an average home is government gatekeepers adding unnecessary red tape. That means that over 60% of the price of a home in Vancouver is due to delays, fees, regulations, taxes and high-priced consultants.

The NDP-Liberal government has poured billions of dollars into housing programs and there is little to show for it. Removing the GST from home construction was proposed in a private member's bill by the leader of the official opposition. The difference between what he was proposing and what this bill would do is that this bill would help, but it is not focused on affordability like the official opposition member's bill is.

When I am home in my community at many different activities and events, a top issue many people bring to me is the increasing cost of their mortgage payments and how it is affecting their families and families they know. I was talking to a dad who said his mortgage just increased by over \$1,000 a month. Another person, who has three kids, reached out. He is the sole income-earner for the family as his wife stays home to look after the kids. He was looking for any tax credits for kids' fitness and other activities, something I had to tell him the Liberals cancelled.

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The latest MNP consumer debt index shows 51% of Canadians are \$200 or less away from not being able to complete their financial obligations. It said, “Facing a combination of rising debt carrying costs, living expenses and concern over the potential for continued interest rate and price hikes, many Canadians are stretched uncomfortably close to broke. There is no mystery as to what is causing Canadians’ bleak debt outlook: it’s getting increasingly difficult to make ends meet.”

A recent survey released by financial firm Edward Jones Canada said, “Canadians are stuck in a chaotic whirlwind of personal financial stress,” and, “The poll clearly shows that Canadians are so pre-occupied with just getting through the day, that the idea of paying debt feels like a distant dream.” It also found that 88% of Canadians say their personal financial situation is impacting their well-being.

In addition, 65% of Canadians now say they are concerned about saving for retirement, and 63% are concerned about how to prepare for an unexpected financial event. There are less savings, more concern and more risk. Forced sales events are up 10%, with mortgage defaults climbing, as just reported by the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board. It is not just me talking about the financial situation in my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country. The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada said that Canadians are now facing the biggest financial challenges of their lives.

The Prime Minister and the NDP-Liberal coalition have really lost touch with Canadians. This bill would assist with one small sliver of an issue with building homes, but it is not a housing affordability bill. As we see now with the fall economic statement and the Liberals being supported by its partner, the NDP, this spending will continue on a path of deficits and keeping inflation and interest rates high. This bill would not address the causes of high food costs, inflation or high interest rates. The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

We can send this bill to committee to be studied, and hopefully, some amendments can be made at committee and brought back to the House.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member referred to Loblaws and the importance of competition. I would be interested in her thoughts regarding when Stephen Harper allowed Loblaws to acquire Shoppers, thereby decreasing competition in Canada’s grocery industry. He is the one who brought it down ultimately to five companies.

This legislation would take away the efficiency argument. It seems to me, like the trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine, this is good legislation. I do not know what the Conservative Party is going to do on this legislation. Can the member indicate whether she will be voting in favour of this legislation or will she be doing like she did on the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement and voting against it?

• (1230)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure if the member was listening to my speech, because I actually said I would be supporting it going to committee and that I was hopeful there would be

some amendments at committee. That is what I said at the very end of my speech.

Regarding an organization like Loblaws, we have to remember how the government treats an organization like that. It gave refrigerators to Loblaws. During that time, I was getting phone calls from small businesses in my community, such as floral shops and a very small cheese shop, asking if they would also be given fridges. Of course, that was not the case. They were only given to one of the largest companies in Canada.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I am glad the member said she is going to be voting in favour of the legislation. What she did not answer is if the Conservative Party would be. I would hope the Conservative Party would be supportive of the legislation. Maybe the member could give some sort of indication why the Conservative Party tends to want to prevent government legislation from passing, even legislation that the Conservatives support. The member says she supports this legislation. I am going to believe her on her word that the Conservative Party will be supporting the legislation.

When would she like to ultimately see this legislation pass through Parliament, including the Senate? Would she like to have it done before Christmas? Is that not a reasonable expectation?

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, first of all, referring to how there are debates and debates are shut down, it is the government that does the calendar. The government chooses what is brought forward every day. The Liberals continually shut down debate in this House.

I am really glad I was able to bring forth the comments from people in my community on this particular piece of legislation. I can think of three times over the last very recent weeks where I had prepared a speech, was prepared to debate and bring the voice of my community here, and the government moved closure and shut down debate. The reason we are here is to bring the voices of our community into this place, and the government continues to shut down debate on legislation and stifles us from bringing the voices of our community here.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, can the member share with this place recommendations we have tried over and over again to extend to the government to use that would do far more to meet the needs of Canadians at this point in time?

*Government Orders*

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, we have made a number of recommendations. As I mentioned in my intervention, the government does nothing to address the causes of why inflation is high and why interest rates are high. We have made recommendations to cancel the carbon tax. We have also made recommendations to be reasonable and accommodating and to look at removing the carbon tax for farmers. That is sitting in the Senate right now and is being stalled. We have made suggestions to take the carbon tax off all forms of home heating across the country, because the government, due to its panic over Liberal members who might lose their seats, decided to only make the carbon tax unavailable to one type of home heating. We have made that suggestion. The carbon tax alone we know has been analyzed, and removing it would bring down inflation. That is just one thing we would do.

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place and represent the amazing people of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, as well as all Canadians.

It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but it is breathtaking just how desperate the Liberals have become. In the House of Commons, we are witnessing a curious trend: imitation disguised as Liberal innovation.

The recent flurry of activity from our Liberal counterparts presents a spectacle. It is desperation masquerading as originality.

It is really fascinating. The Liberals have hastily adopted common-sense Conservative strategies to cloak their actions as a remedy for affordability, all the while seeking recognition for ideas that were not theirs to begin with.

Unfortunately, their replica has flaws, and the Liberals know that they need to ram this legislation through before Canadians realize that it is nothing more than a cheap knock-off.

If the government is looking for another idea to steal from Conservatives, maybe it could finally decide to repeal the carbon taxes, which are the real reason Canadians are facing the soaring cost of living.

First, let us dissect the fabric of the Liberals' imitation. The Liberals' newfound fascination with affordable living appears more as a last-ditch effort to mirror our common-sense Conservative initiatives, although it lacks the authenticity and the understanding required to genuinely address the woes of everyday Canadians.

This sudden adoption reeks of desperation. Maybe they have seen the polls. Maybe they are hearing in their ridings that the Conservatives are the only party putting forward common-sense ideas.

Maybe the Conservative message of common sense sounds good to them too, but their leadership comes down heavy-handedly when they vote in favour of our legislation, like the Liberal member for Avalon, who tried to do the right thing for his constituents initially, although he eventually betrayed them and caved to his master like a typical Liberal always does.

The government's thievery of Conservative ideas seems relentless. Were members aware that the fall economic statement contained no less than four Conservative private members' bills?

For example, there is Bill C-323, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act with respect to mental health services, from the good doctor from Cumberland—Colchester. There is Bill C-318, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code for adoptive and intended parents, from my friend, the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster. There is Bill C-294, an act to amend the Copyright Act, on interoperability, from my riding neighbour to the east, the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands. There is Bill C-365, an act respecting the implementation of a consumer-led banking system for Canadians by the amazing member for Bay of Quinte.

While the Liberals eagerly snatch concepts from our playbook, they turn a blind eye to the actual root cause of the economic pains faced by Canadians: their out-of-control debt and deficits, out-of-control spending, a carbon tax that does not do anything for the environment, a rapid housing initiative that cannot build homes and inflation that results from all of their financial mismanagement.

These are the real culprits behind the soaring cost of living, behind escalating interest rates and the burdensome grocery store bills and fuel prices that burden the citizens of this country every day. Our Conservative blueprint for affordable living, particularly our Conservative leader's building homes not bureaucracy act, stands as a testament to our commitment to the welfare of Canadians.

Our messaging, like the "bring it home" initiative, encapsulates not just slogans but a genuine drive to resolve the housing crisis plaguing our nation.

In contrast, the Liberals' response to this crisis they partly crafted lacks the depth and innovation required for a lasting solution. Their plan, often confined within the boundaries of existing programs and reannouncements, fails to project a path forward. It is a patchwork of recycled notions rather than a blueprint for real, sustainable change, and they have no problem announcing the same promises over and over again with the same pompous Liberal attitude that most Canadians have grown tired of.

● (1235)

The question remains: Are the Liberals truly addressing the housing crisis or merely engaging in performative arts to mitigate the damage that their policies have caused and the fact that the vast majority of Canadians desire to see them removed from office? Their sudden attempt to provide solutions and then force them on Canadians seems more reactive than proactive, a calculated response to evade accountability rather than an earnest effort to rectify the havoc they created. I can only hope it means they are getting ready for an election.

Liberals may tout their actions as responsive and comprehensive, but in reality, they bear the marks of limited vision and failure of leadership.



The building homes not bureaucracy act, as presented by our Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, is not just a set of words—

• (1240)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I think the hon. member recognized that he mentioned the official opposition leader by name. I want to remind him that he is not to mention the names of parliamentarians who sit in this House.

The hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, the building homes not bureaucracy act, as presented by the Conservative leader, is not just a set of words or an ostentatious announcement. It is a clarion call for genuine reform, which that act is all about. It embodies the Conservative commitment to forge a future where affordable living is not a privilege but a right for all Canadians. Its depth, its foresight and its genuine intent to alleviate the housing crisis differentiates it starkly from the borrowed and incomplete solutions offered by the Liberal government.

We, as Conservatives, are not satisfied with token Liberal gestures, and Canadians are not either. We need substantive change and substantive solutions that do not create just photo ops and news clippings. Canadians cannot live in a photo op, a press release or an initiative. They need affordable housing and a Conservative government that is going to bring it home.

The choice is very clear. It is between either a Conservative vision anchored in genuine innovation and a desire to provide common-sense solutions to Canadians, or a Liberal stance marred by imitation, which lacks depth, and is not worth the cost. Canadians deserve more than rehashed plans; they deserve visionary initiatives that ensure a brighter, more affordable future and a leader with the common sense of the common people who is united for our common home. Let us bring it home.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member just implied that they deserve a leader with a visionary nature. We had that in the last federal election when 338 Conservatives and their leader said that a price on pollution was actually a good thing. Yes, Conservatives have ideas, but we find that they often flip-flop, and this is one of those ideas they actually flip-flopped on. We saw it today in the debate when Conservatives said that they wanted to get rid of the price on pollution.

We cannot trust the Conservatives and their policies, which are very reckless. We cannot tell what they are really going to do on this legislation, or if they even want it to pass, because they are so preoccupied with the far right.

My question to the member is this: Recognizing the issues of the flip-flops within the Conservative Party, can we acknowledge today that the Conservative Party will in fact stay in touch with Canadians and support this legislation?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It looks like other people want to try to answer. I would let them know that it is not their opportunity to do that, and they may want to wait.

The hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

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**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, I think it is important to understand that, first of all, Canadians are speaking very loudly. They are tired of the government. They are tired of policies that damage their futures, and that impact the ability of their children to afford homes and themselves to afford homes.

As far as his suggestion, for example, that the Conservatives supported the carbon tax is concerned, he will not hear one word out of my mouth, ever, that I supported the carbon tax, as I do not, and I never will, because it does not work, end of story.

• (1245)

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am always surprised to hear the Conservatives harp on the carbon tax day after day when they talk about inflation. When serious studies—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will ask the member to start over again. There seems to be some discussion on both sides of the House.

[English]

I would ask members, if they want to have a conversation, to please take it out in the lobby. That would be much more respectful.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Jonquière.

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to do so.

I was saying that I am always surprised to hear the Conservatives harp on the carbon tax day after day, when we know that it does not have a major impact on inflation. Serious economic studies tell us that the carbon tax causes inflation to rise by 0.1%.

The Conservatives keep harping on this. Not only that, but their leader recently said that the carbon tax would be the issue at the ballot box. We know very well that this tax does not apply to Quebec, which means that the Conservative leader does not care one iota about what is happening in Quebec.

I wonder what is really driving the Conservatives to talk about the carbon tax. Are they perhaps doing this to give their friends in the big oil and gas companies some overt, explicit support? Are they not ultimately oil and gas lobbyists?

[English]

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, I have just a couple of things.

The clean fuel standard, which applies in Quebec, is actually a carbon tax. While there may not be a carbon tax as such, there is a clean fuel standard. That is a carbon tax.

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When I talk to my constituents, they want me, as their representative in the House, to ensure they have the ability to move forward and to make a living. I see farmers who have hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of carbon tax on irrigation operations, on grain drying, on heat for their barns and those sorts of things. It affects their bottom lines, and their prices are fixed.

It is about Canadians' well-being. If the carbon tax actually had a positive impact on the environment, then it would be worth looking at, but it does not. It has not, and it will not because it is a tax. It is only a tax, and it has no impact on improving the environment whatsoever.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my colleague from Alberta spoke a lot about housing. Obviously, we hope that we could get through to the bill so that we could actually get some supports in place for people who are fighting for housing.

However, my concern is around how he expects that Canadians could trust his leader on housing when, really, he has only come to this in the last two years, while New Democrats have been calling for more action on housing for over 30 years. We know that the party executives are lobbyists for oil, for pharma, for real estate and for non-unionizing companies. The Conservative leader has actually blamed municipalities and, in fact, has called Canadians' homes "shacks".

How could we trust the leader on housing?

**Mr. Glen Motz:** Madam Speaker, I agree that the current leader of the government is not to be trusted. The Prime Minister is a sham, and he has achieved nothing but failures for our country.

If we want to look at an act that would help Canadians with housing, then we need to look at the Conservative leader's and the Conservative Party's plan in the housing and not bureaucracy act, which would actually make a difference for Canadians and would get them into homes that are sustainable moving forward.

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in today's debate on Bill C-56, the affordable housing and groceries act. Our government understands that many Canadians are struggling to make ends meet in these times of high inflation. It is committed to continue to make targeted and responsible investments to build a stronger future for all Canadians.

We all know the rising costs of groceries and the lack of affordable housing are affecting families across the country. I am pleased to discuss some of the ways we are addressing those important issues through the measures outlined in Bill C-56. We know that for far too many Canadians, including young people, the dream of owning a home is becoming increasingly—

• (1250)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will just stop the hon. member here.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has a point of order.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, my apologies to my colleague, but I believe that he was going to share his time with the member for Avalon.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am not sure that is quite a point of order, but I appreciate that the hon. member mentioned it for the hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora. Generally, messages are sent to them, and they would try to acknowledge that then, but it is up to the members to remember if they want to share their time.

The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora.

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the intervention of my colleague.

We know the rising cost of groceries and the lack of affordable housing are affecting families across the country, and I am pleased to discuss some of the ways we are addressing those important issues through the measures outlined in Bill C-56.

We know that for too many Canadians, including young people and new Canadians, the dream of owning a home is increasingly out of reach, and paying rent is becoming more expensive across the country. The housing crisis is having an impact on our economy. Without more homes in our communities, it is difficult for business owners to attract the workers they need in order to grow their businesses and to succeed. When people spend more of their income on housing, it means they spend less of their money in their communities for necessities like groceries.

Bill C-56 would enhance the goods and services tax rebate on new purpose-built rental housing to encourage the construction of more rental homes, including apartment buildings, student housing and seniors' residences across Canada. The enhanced rebate would apply to projects that begin construction after September 14 and on or before December 31, 2030. For a two-bedroom rental unit valued at \$500,000, the enhanced GST rebate would deliver \$25,000 in tax relief. This is another tool to help create the necessary conditions to build the types of housing that we need and that families want to live in.

The measure would also remove the restriction on the existing GST rules so that public service bodies, such as universities, public colleges, hospitals, charities and qualifying not-for-profit organizations that build or purchase purpose-built rental housing, would be permitted to claim the GST new residential rental property rebate. The government is also calling on provinces to join it by matching its rebate for new rental housing. It is also requesting that local governments put an end to exclusionary zoning and encourage apartments to be built near public transit.

Launched in March, the housing accelerator fund is a \$4-billion initiative designed to help cities, towns and indigenous governments unlock new housing supply, which is about 100,000 units in total, by speeding up development and approvals, like fixing out-of-date permitting systems, introducing zoning reforms to build more density and incentivizing development to choose public transit. It represents one of the ways we are encouraging initiatives aimed at increasing the housing supply. It also would support the development of complete, low-carbon, climate-resilient communities that are affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse. Every community across Canada needs to build more homes faster, so we need to reduce the cost of housing for everyone.

We also need to stabilize the cost of groceries in Canada. Through the one-time grocery—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry. There is another point of order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I understand the rules indicate that if a member wants to split their time, they have to affirm that they would like to split their time. Is that not correct? Do they have to say it?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** That is correct. I appreciate the hon. member's intervention. Again, as I indicated, points of order should not be used to remind members to split their time. However, the member is correct that the member does have to say that he wants to split his time.

The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora.

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen:** Madam Speaker, I thought that when I thanked the member for his intervention, I confirmed that. However, for the record, yes, I do wish to split my time.

We also need to stabilize the cost of groceries in Canada. Through the one-time grocery rebate in July, we delivered targeted inflation relief for 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians and families who needed it the most, with up to an extra \$467 for eligible couples with two children and an extra up to \$234 for single Canadians without children, including single seniors. This support was welcomed by Canadians, but we knew we needed to do more to address the rising cost of groceries.

Through Bill C-56, the government is introducing the first set of legislative amendments to the Competition Act to, one, provide the Competition Bureau with the powers to compel the production of information to conduct effective and complete market studies; two, remove the efficiencies defence, which includes allowing anti-competitive mergers to survive challenges if corporate efficiencies offset the harm to competition, even when Canadian consumers would pay higher prices and have fewer choices; and three, empower the bureau to take action against collaborations that stifle competition and consumer choice, in particular in situations where large grocers prevent smaller grocers from establishing operations nearby.

Bill C-56 builds on other measures that have been introduced to make life more affordable for Canadians: delivering automatic advance payments for the Canada workers benefits, starting in July 2023; supporting up to 3.5 million families annually through the

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tax-free Canada child benefit, with families this year receiving up to \$7,400 per child under the age of six and up to \$6,200 per child aged six through 17; increasing old age security benefits for seniors aged 75 and older by 10% as of July 2022, which is providing more than \$800 of additional support for pensioners; and reducing fees for regulated child care by 50% on average, delivering regulated child care that costs an average of just \$10 a day by 2026, with six provinces and territories reducing child care fees to \$10 a day or less by April 2, 2023, and strengthening the child care system in Quebec with more child care spaces.

The new proposed housing and grocery support I outlined today would make it easier to build more of the homes Canadians need and want, to help them thrive. It would also help families with the growing cost of putting food on the table. The passage of Bill C-56 would help us to provide a brighter future for Canadians. We want to ensure that Canada remains the best place in the world to live, work, go to school and raise a family, and making life more affordable is a key part of that.

I urge hon. members here today to conduct their review of this bill expeditiously and support its speedy passage so that we can conclude this important work.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, as usual, the Liberal members are awfully pleased with themselves. They are bragging about their government's achievements.

My colleague had a lot to say about housing. Unfortunately, the GST rebate in Bill C-56 is not going to make much of a dent in the housing crisis in Quebec and Canada. It is a marginal measure, especially in Quebec.

The government tabled its economic update two days ago. Unfortunately, many of the measures in it will not take effect until 2025 or 2026. Quebec has 10,000 homeless people. I have seen them in Longueuil, Saint-Jérôme and Rimouski. There are people on riverbanks. This is going to be very hard.

We asked the government to put an emergency fund in the economic update. Winter is coming, and it is going to be cold. We know that. It is going to be hard. I know people will die in Quebec, on those riverbanks, in small towns, all over the province. That is unacceptable.

We asked for an emergency fund to help address the problem, but we got nothing. Most of the economic measures will not take effect until 2025 or 2026, but we need to build 150,000 housing units a year starting right now. If we do not build them this year, there will be a backlog, and they will have to be built sooner or later.

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When will the Liberal government get serious about this problem and come up with measures that will make a real difference?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I must interrupt the hon. member to give other members time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora.

[English]

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen:** Madam Speaker, I would save that debate for when the fall economic statement comes forward. Today we are discussing Bill C-56.

While I cannot speak to the impact of the GST, I can say that in my community of Newmarket—Aurora, there is one project that will provide us with 568 new units. These were ready to go, but the business model was not effective until the GST was implemented. In a community of 24,000 housing units, that number is quite significant, so we cannot take away from the fact that this is a progressive measure that will help many communities like Newmarket—Aurora.

● (1300)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, this bill is particularly important for Nunavut because it addresses housing and affordability, two major issues in my riding. To give an example of current grocery prices, a one-litre bottle of orange juice is \$17 and one case of bottled water is \$28. Even programs like nutrition north are not working. I wonder if the member can share with us how this act would help to reduce grocery prices in places like my riding.

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising the concerns of her riding. Frankly, my heart breaks to hear that this type of inequity is going on. Our government is committed very much to prioritizing relief for remote areas, and hopefully there will be further discussion on that when we get to the fall economic statement.

**Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in the member opposite's past life, like me, he was a mayor. I know he is familiar with the county of Simcoe, and I represent a portion of it. There is huge disappointment with the government among many of the politicians in the area, and there are two parts to that. One is certainly the bureaucracy and the timelines to build, but there are places in my area, such as New Tecumseth, Collingwood and Clearview, where there is no infrastructure money available. It takes time.

Has he not heard before from his constituents about the dire need for housing and that perhaps it is the government that has been taking up the timelines? Houses have been built that will not have water until 2028, and people have purchased them. Would the member like to comment on those two parts, the bureaucracy and the fact that there are a lot of announcements about funding but it does not seem to hit any of the local municipalities?

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen:** Madam Speaker, it is important that we work closely with municipalities to move these projects forward. I heard a reference earlier today that the build homes, not bureaucracy legislation was going to move things along, but it reminds me of a phrase my father used to say, which is ironic: The beatings will continue until morale improves. The approach the opposition is

providing when it comes to improving relationships and making municipalities more efficient is dead wrong.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to discuss Government Business No. 30 and the affordable housing and groceries act. It stands as a cornerstone of our commitment to building more homes faster and stabilizing prices.

Regrettably, the urgency and significance of this bill have been overshadowed by the repeated filibustering and delay tactics employed by the Conservative opposition, resulting in over 20 hours of debate across five days. It is evident that despite garnering support from within its own ranks, including commitments made by the Conservative member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon over a month ago to vote in favour of this bill, the Conservative opposition remains committed in its attempts to hinder the bill's progress.

Bill C-56 is designed to address the challenges faced by Canadians, specifically in relation to the cost of groceries and the need for affordable housing—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry to interrupt. I believe the hon. member's phone is on the desk, and it is causing problems for the interpreters.

I want to remind all members that when they are doing their speeches, they should make sure their phone is not on their desk, because it is a health and safety concern.

The hon. member for Avalon.

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Madam Speaker, regarding housing affordability, the ability to own a home or secure reasonable rental accommodations has become increasingly unattainable for many, especially for young people and newcomers. Bill C-56 proposes substantive enhancements to the goods and services tax, GST, rental rebate for newly constructed purpose-built rental housing. This initiative serves as a catalyst for fostering the development of rental properties encompassing apartments, student residences and homes for seniors. The proposed rebate system, offering significant tax relief, exemplifies our commitment to facilitating the creation of the much-needed housing inventory suitable for diverse family needs.

We urge provinces and local governments to work in tandem with this bill on rebate initiatives and actively support housing developments situated in close proximity to public transit systems, enhancing accessibility and promoting sustainable communities.

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Concurrently, the government has taken concrete measures to mitigate the costs associated with groceries. The introduction of targeted inflation relief through the one-time grocery rebate in July represented a proactive step. Bill C-56 supplements these efforts by proposing legislative amendments to the Competition Act, augmenting the authority of the Competition Bureau to conduct comprehensive market studies. These amendments seek to eliminate the efficiencies defence for anti-competitive mergers and address col-laborations that impede competition, specifically those disadvan-taging smaller competitors in contrast to larger grocery entities.

The significance of Bill C-56 extends beyond its immediate im-plications. It complements a suite of measures aimed at enhancing the quality of life for Canadians. Since the beginning, our govern-ment's commitment to delivering meaningful benefits to Canadians has remained unwavering. The 2023 fall economic statement, deliv-ered by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance earlier this week, is a testament to our dedication toward creating an inclu-sive and thriving economy that supports the middle class while striving to build more homes faster.

This year's fall economic statement serves as a blueprint to tackle the prevailing challenges of high prices and impending mortgage renewals. Our government stands resolute in taking targeted mea-sures to stabilize prices, support Canadians with mortgages and en-hance affordability. The comprehensive plan outlined in this state-ment introduces substantial funding for housing initiatives, crack-ing down on illegal short-term rentals and making significant ad-vancements in making housing more affordable across Canada.

Continuing our legacy of delivering tangible benefits to Canadi-ans, the economic statement reinforces our commitment to support-ing Canadians. The government has taken proactive steps by intro-ducing measures aimed at making groceries more affordable, crack-ing down on junk fees and removing GST from psychotherapy and counselling services. These initiatives underscore our dedication to fostering an economy that offers equitable opportunities for all Canadians.

Moreover, our economic plan is not merely in response to imme-diate challenges. It is also strategically positioned to propel Canada toward a cleaner and more sustainable future. Investments in Canada's clean economy, the introduction of the Canada growth fund and advancements in the indigenous loan guarantee program signify our unwavering commitment to fostering a robust economy that is sustainable and inclusive.

The robustness of our economic plan is underscored by the feder-al government's unwavering commitment to making housing more affordable across Canada. Federal investments in housing have wit-nessed a substantial increase, surpassing previous benchmarks. This year, the federal investment in housing is \$9 billion higher than it was in 2013-14. Since 2015, the average annual federal housing in-vestment has more than doubled compared to the previous govern-ment. The comprehensive strategy outlined in our economic plan allocates billions in new loan funding to support the creation of more than 30,000 additional new homes and dedicates a substantial portion to affordable housing projects, all aimed at enhancing the accessibility and affordability of housing options for Canadians.

● (1305)

Our government's responsible economic stewardship has yielded commendable results, reflected in the employment of over a million more Canadians compared to prepandemic levels. Canada's unem-ployment rate has remained consistently lower than in previous records, while inflation rates are on a downward trajectory. More-over, our commitment to fiscal responsibility is reflected in main-taining the lowest deficit and net debt-to-GDP ratio among G7 na-tions.

In conclusion, Bill C-56 is a testament to our government's un-wavering commitment to addressing the critical issues faced by Canadians today. It symbolizes our dedication to fostering an inclu-sive and prosperous Canada for all. As members of Parliament, it is our collective responsibility to prioritize the well-being of Canadi-ans, ensuring equitable access to housing and essential goods. I would encourage all members to support the measures included in Bill C-56.

I am thankful for the opportunity to advocate for the passage of this crucial legislation.

● (1310)

**Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Liberal-NDP coalition's so-called free trade bill with Ukraine aims to quadruple the carbon tax on Ukrainians, as it is doing in Canada, and increase their suffering. While the coalition virtue signals about Conservatives' lack of sup-port for this, it has failed in its promise to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to lobby Japan and South Korea to stop the importa-tion of Russian crab. After it made this promise, exports of Russian seafood to South Asia in the last half of the year increased by 63%.

The Prime Minister, the Minister of International Trade and the Minister of Foreign Affairs promised the people of his riding, my riding and all the ridings in Newfoundland and Labrador to hammer those countries to stop supporting the Russian war effort and let Newfoundland and Labrador fishermen keep their homes and enter-prises. How does the member for Avalon feel about this broken promise?

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Madam Speaker, I know the member op-posite from Newfoundland fights hard for the fishery, which is very important to our province.

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I believe the Minister of International Trade is doing everything she can to make sure more markets are opened and established. It is no different than the bill we voted on this week, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. The Conservative Party hangs its hat on being the party in favour of trade, but all members stood and voted against it. They do not want trade with Ukraine for some reason. It is a bit rich that the member on the other side talks about what we are doing about trade initiatives across the world.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, but once again it was little more than an infomercial for the Liberal government's action on housing.

That is rather unfortunate, because the housing crisis is a major problem, and the further along we get in the debate, the more we see that the government is not facing the facts when it comes to this crisis. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, we need to build 3.5 million housing units by 2030. That is a huge task. In a report published two weeks ago, the federal housing advocate even indicated that we need to build nine million housing units in Canada in the next 10 years. That is a huge task.

In the economic statement, the government announced the construction of approximately 30,000 housing units in 2025-26. That is just the tip of the iceberg. Any housing needs that are not met now are just going to accumulate. The government is not going to get off that easy. In Quebec alone, 500,000 households are in dire need of housing.

I look forward to hearing from a government that will stand up and say that we are on the verge of a serious humanitarian crisis in Quebec and Canada and that it is going to take strong action to deal with it. I look forward to hearing that.

[English]

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Madam Speaker, nobody is going to build houses overnight. It takes time. I have spoken to developers in my area in Newfoundland and Labrador. They are anxious for this bill to get passed, so they can take advantage of the incentives to build affordable rental units and affordable housing for seniors, low-income families and the whole gamut.

Will it be completed in a year or six months? No, it will not. This is a long-term initiative that we want to make sure gets rolled out the right way, gets done the right way and delivers the right results.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member talked about there being more funding this year than there was last year and how the current government and previous governments did not invest in housing.

We know that housing is a human right. I very much appreciated the question today from my colleague from the Bloc, who talked about the urgency of this crisis. Why has it taken the government this long to get serious about investing in affordable housing?

• (1315)

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Madam Speaker, I cannot answer for why it took so long. I do not sit around the cabinet table for discussions on which policies come forward and which do not.

However, I am delighted, and I know the people in my riding are delighted, that we are actually moving this envelope forward. We are going to make more houses and rental units available and have more people living in homes that they deserve. It should be a right, not an option, for people to have homes.

**Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Saskatoon West.

I rise today to address Bill C-56, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Competition Act. This debate is crucial, as it concerns not only the legislative process but also the fundamental issues of housing affordability and market competition that affect Canadians nationwide. This bill, introduced by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, demands our careful consideration and thorough analysis to ensure it meets the needs of the people we represent.

In discussing Bill C-56, it is imperative to address the manner in which it is being ushered through the House, specifically through Motion No. 30. This motion, a procedural manoeuvre by the government, significantly limits the time allocated for thorough debate and consideration of this substantial piece of legislation. By limiting parliamentary discussion and expediting the bill's passage, Motion No. 30 undermines the democratic process that is fundamental to our legislative system.

Such a hastened approach is particularly concerning given the bill's wide-ranging implications for housing affordability and market competition. These are complex issues that warrant detailed scrutiny and thoughtful debate, ensuring that every aspect of the bill is examined for its potential impact on Canadian society.

The use of Motion No. 30, in this context, suggests a Liberal government preference for achieving catchy headlines on affordability instead of democratic thoroughness. Such a stance risks overlooking critical nuances and potential shortcomings of the bill. As representatives of the Canadian people, we have a duty to ensure that legislation, such as Bill C-56, receives the comprehensive attention it deserves.

Turning our focus to the housing affordability aspect of Bill C-56, it is essential to analyze its proposed measures and compare them with the initiatives outlined in our Conservative leader's building homes not bureaucracy act. While Bill C-56 suggests removing the GST on new purpose-built rental housing, this approach is merely a fragment of what is needed to genuinely address Canada's housing crisis.

Our Conservative vision, as set forth in the building homes not bureaucracy act, offers a more comprehensive and robust plan. It aims not only to reduce the financial burden on housing construction but also to tackle the systemic barriers that hinder the development of affordable housing. This includes removing the gatekeepers who delay the building of homes, as well as all the other red tape and bureaucratic hurdles that are adding to the housing crisis. These aspects are notably absent in the government's current proposal.

Our plan mandates significant yearly increases in housing construction, ensuring a steady growth in supply, and it proposes punitive measures for cities that fail to meet these targets. This strategy recognizes that the housing crisis is not just a matter of fiscal policy; rather, it also requires structural changes in the way housing projects are approved and developed.

Moreover, our proposal goes beyond the mere construction of housing. It includes incentives for municipalities that exceed their housing targets, promoting not only the quality but also the quantity and expedience of housing developments. In contrast, that Bill C-56 has a singular focus on GST removal, but does not address the broader regulatory and procedural challenges, demonstrates a lack of understanding of the complex nature of the housing crisis. Our approach also recognizes the importance of building communities, not just houses.

By tying transit and infrastructure funding to the construction of high-density housing around transit stations, we ensure that new housing developments contribute to the creation of sustainable, well-connected urban environments. This is crucial for improving the overall quality of life for residents and fostering community development. While Bill C-56 makes an attempt to address housing affordability, it falls short of offering a holistic solution.

• (1320)

The Conservative Party's building homes not bureaucracy act, in contrast, presents a detailed, actionable plan that addresses the root causes of the housing crisis and proposes viable, long-term solutions. It is a plan that not only addresses the immediate need for more affordable housing but also lays the groundwork for sustainable urban development and community growth.

In addressing the amendments to the Competition Act within Bill C-56, it is crucial to recognize their inadequacy in effectively tackling the real issues plaguing our market competition. The proposed measures, though seemingly progressive, fail to address the root causes of the problems they aim to solve.

The government's approach to amending the Competition Act, as stipulated in Bill C-56, primarily focuses on empowering the Competition Bureau with greater investigative powers and addressing collaborations that limit competition. However, this approach overlooks the broader, more systemic issues within our market structures. For instance, the highly concentrated nature of certain sectors, such as the grocery industry, remains unaddressed. This concentration is a critical factor contributing to the lack of competition and the resulting high prices that Canadian consumers are forced to endure.

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Moreover, the bill's omission of the efficiencies defence repeal is a significant shortcoming. The efficiencies defence, which allows certain anti-competitive mergers under specific conditions, has been a point of contention, undermining fair market competition and consumer interests. The Conservative Party has long advocated for the repeal of this defence, recognizing its role in facilitating monopolistic practices. By neglecting to address this defence, Bill C-56 misses an opportunity to make substantial, meaningful reforms to our competition laws.

In addition, the amendments proposed in Bill C-56 lack clarity regarding the specific entities they cover and the concrete standards for service. This vagueness creates uncertainty about the legislation's effectiveness in tackling market challenges. Effective competition law reform requires precise, targeted measures that directly address the issues at hand. Generalized amendments, without clear direction or focus, risk being ineffective in bringing about the necessary change.

While the amendments to the Competition Act in Bill C-56 represent a step towards addressing market competition issues, they fall short of offering a comprehensive solution. The Conservative Party's stance on this matter is clear: We need more than just surface-level changes. We need a thorough overhaul of our competition laws, one that addresses the deep-rooted issues within our market systems and ensures a fair competition environment for all Canadians.

It is important to emphasize that while Bill C-56 makes an attempt to address housing affordability and market competition, it falls short of the comprehensive, proactive strategy that Canadians desperately need in these challenging times. As Conservatives, we are unwavering in our commitment to implement solutions that tackle the fundamental issues affecting our nation's housing supply and the integrity of our market systems.

The Conservative leader's building homes not bureaucracy act offers a road map for real, tangible change, in stark contrast to the limited scope of Bill C-56. Our approach is about addressing the root causes of these critical issues with a long-term perspective. We believe in creating legislation that not only meets the immediate needs of Canadians but also sets the stage for sustainable growth and prosperity for future generations.

Conservatives call upon the government to look beyond short-term fixes and consider more holistic, impactful measures. It is time to move away from reactive legislation and towards forward-thinking policies that genuinely reflect the challenges of Canadians. We must acknowledge these challenges and address them rather than pursuing this legislation.

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• (1325)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member made reference to more of a holistic approach in dealing with the issue of housing, and I will use that as an example.

I have said in the past that no government in the history of Canada, at least not in the last 50 to 60 years, has actually invested more in housing than the current government has. We can talk about the national housing strategy of billions of dollars, as well as a litany of different types of programs to encourage the development of housing and working with provinces. We can go to the fall economic statement, where we are seeing an expansion being proposed under the housing co-ops for alternative forms of housing.

Would the member not recognize that this legislation is just one aspect of that? Does he not support the holistic approach that the government is actually proposing?

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the hon. member's talking about the failures of the government. He is correct. It has spent the most amount of money on housing to get the least number of returns, so good on you that the Liberal government is doing such a horrible job and admitting it to the House. Thank you very much for that.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I do want to remind the hon. member that he is to address his comments through the Chair and not directly to the members.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, there was one part of my colleague's speech that I really liked. When he talked about the housing crisis, he said it is a complex issue. He is right.

At some point, the government is going to need to wake up and face the facts. Those 3.5 million housing units will require hundreds of billions of dollars in investments. I am not even convinced we are going to get there.

However, there is one issue the government could work on, and that is the financialization of housing. That is a significant issue. We are talking about the fact that a growing share of rental housing is being bought up by large private investors, often international ones. It is estimated that, in Montreal, less than 1% of owners own 32% of the rental housing stock. They could not care less about the right to housing. All they want to do is make money. They buy buildings with 60, 80 or 100 units. They demolish or renovate them. They renovate and double the price of the units. They have a major impact on the rise in housing prices. We absolutely have to tackle this issue.

Could my colleague suggest some measures today to deal with this?

[English]

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** Madam Speaker, I think that is what we have always talked about, which is making sure we have affordable

housing. There is a big difference between having housing at a high price and having actually affordable housing.

The majority of Canadians do not have six-figure salaries. There are way too many Canadians who have lower incomes, and we need to do exactly what the member is recommending: build affordable housing for all Canadians. That is something that the Conservative plan would definitely address.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I am glad that the member was talking about prosperity. In my region, retail grocery stores outside my riding are allowed to prosper by being subsidized by the nutrition north program. I think that the bill before us is particularly important so we could ensure that nutrition north becomes a social program that would change that system so it is not subsidizing for-profit grocery stores, so my constituents can also prosper.

Does the member agree that the nutrition north program needs to tax the rich grocery stores better and become a social program so my constituents can also prosper?

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** Madam Speaker, I really do not think we need more social programs. What I really think we need to start doing, especially for the north, is to start a program where people can grow their own food in the north through greenhouses, making sure they can produce top-quality food and do it on their own terms, with the kinds of food they want to produce, not being brought in from different levels of government or different corporations.

That is what we need to start looking at: more self-sufficiency in the north as opposed to reliance on government.

• (1330)

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Madam Speaker:

Tuesday is a day where if you thought there was something wrong in this country you would have more evidence you are right.

If you sense the system and those in charge, the high-and-mighties thought to be smarter than the rest of us, have let us down big-time and without apology, you would be right again.

If you feel a general sense of unease, dissatisfaction, your gut telling you there should be a shake-up you would be far from alone.

I just quoted a passage from Rick Bell's column in the Edmonton Sun newspaper yesterday. Mr. Bell was commenting on Tuesday's fall economic statement by the finance minister, a speech she delivered that ties directly into the legislation we are discussing today, Bill C-56. I want my friends in Saskatoon West to hear what else Mr. Bell had to say:

Sunny ways have turned into darkening storm clouds....

If this was supposed to be a Hail Mary pass in the direction of [the Prime Minister's] political redemption, the pass was incomplete, under-thrown, hopelessly off-target.

The high cost of living. Groceries, mortgages, rents, the price of so many things. Up. Federal government spending. Up.

The ever-increasing carbon tax. Up.



It is true. After eight years of the costly NDP-Liberal coalition, Canadians are facing the worst affordability crisis in decades. Spending on the bureaucracy in Ottawa is out of control. The money supply has been severely increased to the detriment of consumers and wage earners. The Bank of Canada is strangling our economy with massive interest rate hikes. The NDP-Liberals keep turning the screws on Canadians with every increase of the carbon tax and with the introduction of a second carbon tax. This has led to massive inflation and grocery bills that families cannot afford. The fact is that everybody is spending more money. The uber-rich are the only ones who will be able to afford a house in the future. This needs to change.

The NDP-Liberals tell us not to worry, that they have legislation, Bill C-56 which we are supposedly debating today. I say “supposedly” because what we are actually debating today in the chamber is not Bill C-56 but an NDP-Liberal programming motion. I think it is important that the folks in Saskatoon watching this understand that while I want to be debating the legislation on its merits, the NDP-Liberal government is actually forcing us to debate what we colloquially refer to as a programming motion.

Motion No. 30 is almost 900 words long, and it would take me half of my time here to recite the whole thing, but here are the highlights. First, it would limit the amount of debate MPs are allowed on Bill C-56. Second, it would limit the amount of time the finance committee has to hear from witnesses on the legislation. Third, it would limit the amount of time and the capacity to make and then debate amendments to clauses in the legislation. Fourth, it would instruct the committee to accept amendments beyond the scope of the bill, which, under our regular procedures, would be out of order. Fifth, it would limit the amount of time for debate of Bill C-56 for report stage amendments and third reading to one day when it returns to the House.

This may sound complicated, but it is not. Each of these would override long-standing rules or procedures of the chamber that guarantee the rights of members of Parliament to represent their electors and to speak to legislation. In what is supposed to be, by design, a lengthy process of debate and a cautious and thoughtful examination by MPs, this motion would cut the committee process down to three days, and the remaining time in the House, between second and third reading, to a day and a half.

I know that defenders of the NDP-Liberals in the mainstream media will scream from the rooftops that we are approaching Christmas and that Bill C-56 was introduced in September, so Conservatives should just let it roll through. Is it really the job of Conservative MPs to roll over for a government that has so badly mismanaged its work calendar that it is in a panic to take its Christmas holidays? Does the average Canadian get the ability to ram their work through without any scrutiny just because Christmas is approaching, or does it wait there until they come back after their two or three days off?

Of course the Prime Minister does not know how regular people live. The National Post reported earlier this week that since he became Prime Minister in 2015, he has taken one-quarter of his days off. Would it not be nice if every Canadian could get one-quarter of their days off? That is the ridiculous nature of the programming motion. The NDP-Liberals are so inefficient and hopeless at getting

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anything done in the House that when faced with the upcoming Christmas break, they panic and go to extreme measures to get anything done.

Let me get into the legislation. Would the legislation work? Would it actually solve anything? The stated purpose of the legislation is to eliminate GST on rental builds and make changes to the competition laws that govern retail stores like grocers. It is meant to be a solution for Canadians who are stretched to their limits, but does it actually solve these problems? The answer is no. That is not my answer; that is the answer the Minister of Finance stated in her own fall fiscal update just two days ago in the chamber. She said, “The apartments that renters need are not getting built fast enough, in part because the builders who would like to build more currently don’t have access to enough of the financing needed to make rental projects financially viable.”

• (1335)

Whose fault is it that builders do not have access to the capital and the financing they need? It is the current government that has put in place economic conditions so dire that the Bank of Canada has increased interest rates to their highest level in 40 years. The central bank, in direct response to government actions, is cutting off the lifeblood of our economy: the ability to borrow and finance the building and buying of new homes.

John Ivison, in the National Post, succinctly put it this way: “[The finance minister]’s fall economic statement was bulging with statements that, if not outright whoppers, were certainly distortions....Growth is expected to be muted....Unemployment is forecast to rise to 6.5 per cent by the middle of next year, from 5.7 per cent now.” Conservatives agree with these damning indictments of the government’s economic policy, the fall economic statement and its failure to get housing built. It is a pattern of failure that the costly coalition repeats over and over again. The costly coalition claims that the legislation is the solution that Canadians are looking for.

Do members remember this time last year? The NDP-Liberals were singing the praises of their one-time GST rebate, which nobody even remembers now. Then, earlier this spring, the Liberals cooked up another scheme with the NDP, a one-time rent rebate for low-income wage earners that nobody remembers now. Now, they think this latest idea will take a bite out of inflation. Did they not say that of their toothless dental program last year? It was another failure, because all of these ideas are temporary and do not get to the root of the problem. Instead, the Liberals are always scheming to stay in power, never delivering tangible, real results for Canadians. It has been failure after failure.

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Why is there this overwhelming record of failure? It is because with the current government, the underlying economic landscape is set to fail. It is no wonder. We only need to look back at what the finance minister passed off a couple days ago as an update to the government's budgetary policy, the costly coalition's fall economic plan. With \$20 billion of costly new spending, the mini-budget can be summed up very simply: prices up, rent up, debt up and taxes up. Time is up.

The finance minister announced more than \$20 billion in new inflationary spending that will keep inflation and interest rates higher than Canadians can afford. It is an NDP-Liberal mini-budget that proposes to increase taxes on the backs of middle-class people. It is an NDP-Liberal mini-budget that will spend more money on servicing the debt than on health care. The signature policy in this mini-budget was to pour \$15 billion into a fund to build barely 1,500 homes a year, while we need 5.8 million new homes built by 2030.

Do members remember when the finance minister told Canadians that the budget would be balanced by the year 2028? Since then, the costly coalition of the NDP and Liberals has announced \$100 billion dollars of additional debt. After eight years, it is clearer than ever that the costly coalition is not worth the cost, and this mini-budget does nothing to help everyday Canadians. The only way to undo the damage the Liberals have done is by reversing course and doing the opposite. The common-sense Conservative plan would axe the tax, balance the budget, and build homes and not bureaucracy to bring home lower prices for Canadians.

Despite warnings from the Bank of Canada and the Canadian financial sector that government spending is contributing to Canada's high inflation, the Prime Minister ignored their calls for moderation and yet again decided to spend on the backs of Canadians, keeping inflation and interest rates high. These interest rates risk a mortgage meltdown on the \$900 billion of mortgages that will renew in the next three years. High inflation means the government is getting richer while Canadians are getting poorer.

Under the costly NDP-Liberal coalition, here are the facts. There are a record two million food bank visits in a single month. Housing costs have doubled, and mortgage payments are 150% higher than they were before the Liberals took power. Canadians renewing their mortgages at today's rates will see an increase from 2% to 6% or even higher. The International Monetary Fund warns that Canada is the most at risk in the G7 for a mortgage default crisis. Over 50% of Canadians are \$200 or less away from going broke. Business insolvencies have increased by 37% this year. Tent cities exist in every major city, including in Fairhaven in my community of Saskatoon. Violent crime is up 39%, and drugs are everywhere.

Instead of listening to common-sense Conservative proposals to reverse the damage, the NDP-Liberal government has introduced more half measures and photo-op funds that will do nothing to solve the problems that Canadians have. It is time for common sense to return to the Canadian government's decision-making process. It is time for Canadians to say to this costly coalition that enough is enough. It is time for a Conservative government. Let us bring it home.

• (1340)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is interesting when Conservative members talk about the government not allocating enough time. It was not that long ago when the Conservatives were trying to adjourn the House and filibuster debate. In fact, they bring in concurrence motions. I said during the debate on one concurrence motion that the Conservatives liked to waste time, that they were filibustering, preventing debate from occurring. I also said that there would be a time in the future when they would stand and criticize the government for bringing in time allocation.

If we do not bring in time allocation, we can never get anything passed. This is what the member just demonstrated at beginning of his speech. He is criticizing the government because the government is not allotting enough time for debate, yet the Conservative Party continues to filibuster and be a very destructive force on the floor of the chamber. I suspect it has a lot to do with the extreme right of the Conservative Party today to try to be disruptive in the chamber.

Maybe the member can explain why the Conservatives continue to do things like adjourn debates and bring in concurrence motions to prevent debate from occurring in the chamber.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, the one member in the House who has spoken more than anybody, and I guess we could call that filibustering, is the member who just spoke. He loves to speak all the time.

The Conservatives have a job to do in the House. Our job is to defend the Canadians who we represent. Our job is to prevent foolish policies from being implemented by the government. We do our jobs. I am sorry to say that the member is admitting, I guess, that he is not very good at his job, being the secretary to the House leader, and that we can do a better job of it.

Our job here is to hold the government to account and to do everything we can to ensure good laws and good legislation are passed by the House.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am always happy to talk about housing.

Earlier, I asked my Conservative colleague a question about the financialization of housing and the growing number of large investment funds buying up housing in Canada. This is a huge problem. We know that, for every affordable housing unit built in Canada, we lose 10 to the private market because those units are being bought up by big investors.

The Bloc Québécois wanted the economic update to include an acquisition fund to take affordable housing off the private market and keep it affordable for the long term. That is what non-profit housing organizations across Canada want, too. The goal would be to shelter the \$600, \$800 and \$850 units that are still on the market. The government could buy them and take them off the market. Everyone agrees that this would be a solution.

Does my colleague agree?

[English]

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, I am very hesitant to say that the solution to the housing problem is to get the government more involved, to have it owning and producing houses. The current government especially has proven it is unable to get that done. I was a home builder before I became a member of Parliament. I probably built more houses than the government has ever built.

The fact is that we cannot rely on governments, especially the NDP-Liberal government, to have any hope of building more houses. We have to engage all different parties. The more the government gets out of the way, the better it will be for our future in housing and the economy in general.

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we are supposed to be discussing the Competition Act this morning, but we are discussing the delay tactics of the Liberals.

Some have said that the reason we have high grocery prices is the lack of competition in the grocery industry. Could the member think of any other reasons why there are high grocery prices?

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, Canadians are certainly suffering from high prices. At the root cause of almost everything is the carbon tax.

The carbon tax adds costs, first of all, to the growers who grow and produce food. Then the tax is added to the companies that truck the food to the places that process the food. Then there is the grocers who pay carbon tax on their facilities and everything else. There is carbon tax throughout the system. We are not talking a little, we are talking tens of thousands, and, in some cases, hundreds of thousands, of dollars for a farmer, for example.

Those costs have to go somewhere and they do not get those costs back. Those costs end up in the price of food Canadians need to buy every day, and it is one of the big drivers in why things are getting more expensive, whether we are talking about bread, meat or whatever it might be.

For that reason, two million people a month are going to food banks. People I have talked to tell me they cannot afford to buy meat anymore and are feeding their children cereal. This has to stop. We have to get rid of this terrible, destructive carbon tax.

• (1345)

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House of Commons to speak on behalf of the wonderful constituents of Calgary Midnapore. I will be splitting my time with a fellow Albertan, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

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I am going to tell members something that they know, that their constituents know, that my constituents know and that all of Canada knows. Without question, Canada is in an economic crisis. We see record inflation rates. We have certainly seen this across all consumers products, most specifically food where we saw a 40% hike across Canada. All families need to put food on their tables. As well, the cost of clothing, home heating, all these things have increased.

We have seen horrific interest rates as a result of the government's out-of-control spending. Every single opportunity it has, it throws more fuel on the inflationary fire, as we saw this week with the fall economic statement. People who are currently trying to renew their mortgage, as was brilliantly pointed out by my leader, the member for Carleton, are now in a crisis as they attempt to get the best rate possible, as they attempt to hold onto their homes since mortgage rates have doubled, as have rental rates.

We are in a housing crisis. The government has a failed housing accelerator plan, which I believe built, at the last count, 15 homes in the last fiscal year. It is an absolutely shameful number. What did the Liberals do? They brought forward this bill, Bill C-56. We have hope when we hear there is a fiscal bill on the horizon. We hope that somehow the Liberals will get the message, that they will do something sweeping for Canadians, something that will move the dial, that will make even a small change in the lives of Canadians.

What did the Liberals do in the bill? They put forward two measures. We have inflation, interest and a housing crisis, and they put forward a bill with two small measures. The theme here is the same as it always is. The government could be doing so much more to help Canadians, but it consistently does the minimum. It consistently makes the choices that harm Canadians. This bill is another example of that, where it did the tiniest thing possible in the face of the economic crisis across the country.

I am sure members are aware that the most recent deficit this year was at \$46.5 billion. The President of the Treasury Board and the finance minister were off by over \$6 billion. Certainly, \$6 billion is an absolutely incredible amount, but this shows the lack of respect they have for Canadian taxpayer money. Canadians work hard to bring home this money and the government cannot even get it right in a single year.

In fact, the deficit will be going up an average of \$4 billion a year through fiscal year 2028-29. To put this into context, that is the year my son, who is now 12, will graduate from high school. He can only hope for the possibility that the government might balance the budget and get out of deficit by 2028. As we have seen, the government is incapable of that by putting forward Bill C-56 with two small measures.

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Recently, the Parliamentary Budget Officer was at the government operations committee, and will be returning today to discuss the supplementary estimates. I am sure he will give us a lot of good information. Last time he came to the government operations committee, he did not have very positive things to say about the government and its fiscal management in this time of an economic crisis. I asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer if the government reduced spending, would it have to rely less on nominal GDP, which is another area that is suffering, the productivity of Canada. In addition to having a spending problem, the government has a productivity problem. As my leader said, Canadians just want to get to work. His answer was yes, if I was asking if the government spent less could it reduce taxation.

• (1350)

It is not surprising as we see the government's obsession with taxation, including the carbon tax, which has now quadrupled. It will go to any extent in an effort to support this carbon tax. We heard the Minister of Rural Economic Development admit that if other Canadians had just supported the governing party, they too might get this carve-out, the exemption from the carbon tax. This is the way the government operates. It cannot manage its finances and it cannot increase productivity for Canadians. There is this level of corruption, as is evidenced by the comment from the Minister of Rural Economic Development. The government could be doing so much more.

On August 15, the President of the Treasury Board, my counterpart, said that she would find \$15 billion, which is a tiny drop in the bucket, by October 2. As we have seen, \$15 billion is not even a quarter of the current deficit. October 2 came and went, and what was announced? Nothing. There was one thing. One billion dollars was removed from our defence budget, at a time when we have significant instability in the world, with the war in Ukraine, with what we see currently in the Middle East and with Taiwan continuously under threat from its aggressor, China. Even she was not able to keep her promise of finding \$15 billion by her imposed date of October 2.

If the deficit is going up an average of \$4 billion a year, that does not even negate the increase in the deficit. As I said, the President of the Treasury Board did not even meet her own target. Again, the government, with Bill C-56, had the opportunity to do something significant for Canadians and chose not to. It could be doing so much more.

We will have the Parliamentary Budget Officer at the government operations committee today. The government is seeking approval for another \$20.7 billion of spending in the supplementary estimates, which is more than a significant amount. It is a horrific amount.

What has the government spent a huge sum of money on? Not surprisingly, and unfortunately, it was on consultants and consulting services. My Conservative colleagues and I tried to raise the alarm last year about McKinsey, not only with respect to the amount being spent on consultants but how the Liberals did not take their instructions from their constituents, as we do on this side of the House, but from their Liberal insider friends. The spending on professional and special services continues to increase and will be a

record \$21.6 billion in this fiscal year, in addition to the significant deficit I mentioned. Again, it will probably only increase based upon the spending request in the supplementary estimates.

We have seen a failure with the Liberal-NDP government over the last eight years and a failure with the supplementary estimates. Then, when we are looking for hope in the fall economic statement, it is not there. It is more disappointment, as we see another \$20 billion worth of fuel poured on the inflationary fire. We have seen this time and again. The government has a spending problem. It has a productivity growth problem. It has no leadership in Canada or in the world.

The government could be doing so much more with Bill C-56, but it again chose to do nothing.

• (1355)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, speaking of problems, the Conservative Party has a problem with the truth. People who listened to what the member was saying would wonder what the heck she was talking about, because that was about the fall economic statement from yesterday.

Today's legislation is substantial legislation that would support Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is substantial and would ensure that they would see thousands and thousands and thousands of new purpose-built rental homes constructed. It would ensure a fairer sense of competition by ensuring there would be more choice in the future. These are the types of substantive measures the Government of Canada is taking in order to support Canadians, and yet we get the Conservative Party, in that reckless fashion, going all over the place, listening to the far right and not listening to what Canadians have to say.

When is the Conservative Party, and particularly the leadership of the Conservative Party, going to get out of the right wing and start listening to what Canadians are saying coast to coast to coast?

Let us get behind and support this legislation. Will the member vote for the legislation, yes or no?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, what I really do not appreciate in this House is being lumped into a group. This is absolutely an effort to scapegoat and divert from the Liberals' horrific record in every single area of society and in every single area of the economy. I do not appreciate that at all.

We are here today talking about these two little pieces which are supposed to help housing. We know that the housing accelerator fund has been a complete failure. As my leader said yesterday, one year, okay, we will give them that, maybe two years and maybe even three years. However, it has been eight years and housing is a failure. These two little pieces would not help Canadians.

Again, I do not appreciate their diverting with name-calling at a time when Canadians are facing the greatest economic crisis we have had in decades.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for doing the important work in the House of sharing opinions.

I read a report from Oxfam the other day, which said that the top 1% earners across the planet are sending out as much emissions as the lowest 66%. Obviously, if we do not have things in place to support people, we see that they are really not getting the benefit.

I really appreciate this bill, because it talks about getting resources to people who desperately need them right now. It does not go as far as I would go. I have a lot of other ideas that I would love to see. We have mentioned them in the House.

I wonder if the member could talk about why a windfall tax is so important. We know there are businesses that are making a huge amount of profit while so many are suffering.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, there is an important point here. We both agree that the government has failed on the environment. Everyone in this House knows the government has not met a single target to which it ascribed.

However, on our side of the House, we believe that we can have a plan for the environment as well as have industry functioning. We can fire on all cylinders. As I said, the Liberals failed on spending as well as on productivity in Canada; whereas, the member, unfortunately, given her hand-in-hand work with her coalition partner, the Liberal government, believes that we need more taxation. That is just not our position on this side of the House.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about housing and she mentioned the accelerator fund. I wonder if she is aware that the fund has been closed since August 18 of this year, so there is no further money coming forward and no further money announced until 2025-26.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, this is what we have seen time and time again. My colleague from Sarnia—Lambton knows this well, since she is the only member of Parliament to have gotten two private members' bills through the House to royal assent. One of them was the palliative care bill.

My point is that she and I and everyone in this House see bill after bill with structures, ideas and ideologies, but they never deliver any results. They never put any meat on the bones. I am sick of it. We are sick of it. Canadians are sick of it.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

### INCIDENT ON RAINBOW BRIDGE

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, it was only 24 hours ago that we gathered in this place shaken by the news that an explosion on the Rainbow Bridge sounded like it might have been about terrorism. We were worried.

### Statements by Members

The Prime Minister told us that it was time to ask questions to find out what had happened.

The word “terrorism” was in the air, and some sought to achieve partisan advantage by jumping on the word and trying to achieve goals for their Republican presidential nomination—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. I want to remind members that this is Statements by Members and there is no opportunity for questions and comments. I would ask members to please give respect to the person who has the floor. Members may not be in agreement with what is being said, but, again, there is no time for questions and comments.

I will ask the hon. member to start her statement over.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, it was exactly 24 hours ago that we came into this chamber, shaken by the news we were hearing on the television and radio that there had been an explosion on the Rainbow Bridge. There were words and accusations of terrorism in the air. We did not know much, but as we gathered here, I was grateful that the Prime Minister told us that he was seeking answers, that authorities were trying to find out what had happened.

In those moments when terrorism was a rumour, some chose to seek partisan advantage by jumping on those words. I refer, of course, to the presidential nomination candidate in the United States for the Republican Party, Mr. Ramaswamy, who once again fanned flames in the United States to blame Canada with an accusation of terrorism that was false.

Today as we gather here, let us remember the importance and the wisdom of leaders who wait for the answers, who sow the seeds, which we must all do, for calm, for peace, for compassion and for justice.

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### CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the far right is alive and well today in the Conservative Party here in Canada. It is somewhat of a sad state to say it, but that is the truth.

Imagine, if members will, President Zelenskyy comes to Canada and signs a trade agreement with Canada. After signing that agreement, the government brings it into the legislature. The Conservative Party does what it can to filibuster and prevent the vote. Now we know why. The far right within the Conservative Party spearheaded the Conservative Party to vote against a trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine. That is absolutely and totally shameful.

*Statements by Members*

The Conservative Party needs to apologize to Canadians and apologize to Canada's Ukrainian heritage community for behaving in such a manner. They need to have a flip-flop and vote for Canada and for Ukraine.

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### HUNTERS

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week marked the beginning of deer season for thousands of hunters across Manitoba. After many enjoyed a successful fall season, hunters are now in tree stands and in the woods working to harvest a deer for their family.

Hunting is part of our Canadian heritage and it is part of our rural way of life. The responsible harvest of wild meat is something that cannot be replaced. It provides a connection to nature that extends beyond mere sustenance.

For generations, hunters have been stewards of Canada's natural landscape, successfully protecting and managing this land for future generations. Hunters are responsible for the recovery of many species through conservation practices and financial contributions. Members will find few Canadians who are more dedicated to preserving our natural environment than Canadian hunters.

This season, I wish all hunters a safe, responsible and successful harvest. I thank them for all they do for conserving and preserving Canada's environment.

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● (1405)

### CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the past weekend while in Halifax, I visited Pier 21. I wanted to look up the records of my grandparents, my dad and my uncles who came to Canada on a boat called the *Beaverbrae II* after World War II.

Proud Ukrainians, they came to Canada because they were looking for a safe place to call home and raise their family. My grandparents, if they were alive today, would have been proud of the \$9 billion in funding that Canada has contributed to Ukraine. Everything from military equipment to humanitarian and economic support was given to Ukraine as its people bravely fight for their democracy against Russia's brutal unprovoked invasion.

They would have also been proud of the modernized Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement that was passed in this House this week and with Canada's unconditional stand with Ukraine and its people. Previously, we were united in our support for Ukraine. It is incomprehensible that the federal Conservatives voted against the updated Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement this week.

Let us never stop supporting Ukraine's courage and bravery and let us never stop fighting for its freedom and for ours.

[Translation]

### ÈVE BILODEAU

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in the House and highlight an outstanding accomplishment by a young girl from my riding in Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu.

On October 26, Ève Bilodeau won not one, but two gold medals in the extreme and kempo categories for girls 10 and under at the World Karate championships in Orlando, Florida.

Despite her tender age, she is already the pride of her family and her town. Moreover, she is literally shining an international spotlight on Quebec and proving that our homegrown talent can make it all the way to the top. Who knows, we might even see her at the Olympic Games one day.

Ève Bilodeau's athletic career is an inspiration. She encourages us to dream, and she has all our admiration.

\* \* \*

### UKRAINE

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, the Ukrainian people rose up with virtually one voice to defend the democratic path they had chosen in 1991. Ukraine envisions its future within a free, prosperous and inclusive Europe. Vladimir Putin's Russian Federation refuses to respect that choice, let alone accept it.

The Russian invasion, which began in 2022, is reviving decades of oppression and repression by the Stalinist regime. Canada will always stand with Ukraine in refusing to erase Ukrainian identity.

November is a solemn month for the Ukrainian people. This November 25 marks the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor, the brutal genocide of millions of Ukrainians in 1933.

I join my colleagues in reaffirming our full and unwavering solidarity with Ukraine.

*Slava Ukraini.*

\* \* \*

### CASERNE DE JOUETS SAGUENAY

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, I attended the 36th annual toy drive organized by Caserne de jouets Saguenay. This organization is run entirely by volunteers, and some have been there since 1988.

On the weekend, I saw generous donors line up to bring toys that will be handed out for free to families who are struggling financially. I do not have to tell members that this outpouring of generosity moves me every year. The state of the economy means that there is growing demand. To date, roughly 400,000 toys have been donated.

Today, I want to pay tribute to the co-founder and head, Mario Gagnon, and to all the volunteers, including Robert Dufour, Martine Aubé and Gina Gagnon, for their charity and dedication. They are helping to ease the financial woes of some parents as the holiday season approaches.

I thank Mario and his entire team for their generous efforts that will again this year make a difference to several households.

Now it is our turn to be generous.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express disappointment over the recent decision by the Conservative Party to vote against the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. Its objection to a reference of carbon pricing in the deal, something Ukraine already embraces, appears to be a diversion from the broader and more critical issue at hand, and that is to support Ukraine in its fight against tyranny.

It is regrettable that on a matter of international urgency, the Conservatives have chosen to prioritize populist politics over standing in solidarity with our ally, Ukraine, as it is under siege. It is perplexing that the Conservatives have chosen to be the only party in this House voting against something that Ukraine has asked Canada to support as it fights for its very existence.

The revised Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement is an opportunity for solidarity in the face of adversity. Let us not allow narrow political interests to overshadow the broader principles of unity, support and shared values.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

#### CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week, the Conservative Party voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, supposedly because it imposes a carbon tax on Ukraine. What is this?

There is, in the agreement, a tangential reference to carbon pricing. However, Ukraine has had carbon pricing since 2011, so what is the real reason the Conservative Party voted against this agreement? Perhaps it is because opposing further assistance to Ukraine has become a litmus test for the American far right politically. It may also be for the far right in Canada as well.

At a time when thousands of Ukrainians are risking their lives fighting this war, including some of my relatives, fighting in the best interests of their children, to have one of the main political parties in Canada take a position that seems to be paid out to the interests of the American far right, rather than—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

\* \* \*

#### BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today, I wish to honour a Canadian hero. Lloyd Coady was born in Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia, and he came from a family of eight children. In 1942, at the age of 18, he was finally able to enlist for World War II, having been sent home previously for being too young.

#### Statements by Members

He did his basic training in Peterborough and Petawawa and arrived in Halifax shortly thereafter. Next, he was sent to Windsor, Nova Scotia, and was trained as a medical orderly.

He served aboard the *Queen Mary*, the *Aquitania* and the *Samaria*, bringing wounded soldiers home from the front. He also served at the Cogswell hospital in Halifax and the Debert hospital. He moved to Truro in 1951 after studying entomology and forestry. He spent the next 35 years chasing bugs throughout the forests of Nova Scotia.

Lloyd was married to Kay for 57 years. He was very active in the community for many service organizations, and he continues to be fit and agile. Many years ago, he actually challenged me to a running race and a push-up contest. I politely declined.

Today, let us all wish Lloyd a happy 99th birthday.

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#### CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am profoundly disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition has forced his Conservative caucus to betray the people of Ukraine in voting against Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

This agreement represents a commitment to shared values and democratic principles and is a crucial step toward strengthening prosperity for both Canada and Ukraine.

It is a bill that should have been supported unanimously, to show our solidarity with Ukraine and our commitment to help them rebuild as they fight a brutal and illegal invasion by Russia. Our government will always prioritize the best interests of all Canadians and recognize that trade agreements are not obstacles but bridges to a more prosperous and interconnected future.

The vote on Bill C-57 is the clearest demonstration yet that, when it comes to standing in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, the Conservative Party cannot be trusted. It is not worth the risk.

*Slava Ukraini.*

\* \* \*

#### UKRAINE

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor, the Ukrainian famine and genocide of 1932-33.

This genocide was deliberately planned and executed by the communist Soviet regime under Joseph Stalin to systematically destroy the culture, language and, indeed, the very ethnicity of the people of Ukraine. Sadly, several million innocent men, women and children were starved and slowly murdered by Stalin for one reason. They were patriotic Ukrainians.

### *Statements by Members*

Fifteen years ago, Canada became the first western nation to officially recognize the Holodomor as a genocide. As we commemorate the Holodomor this Saturday, let us not forget that Vladimir Putin is repeating history by illegally invading Ukraine, destroying Ukrainian lives and threatening their freedom, all in an attempt to repeat Stalin's Russification of Ukraine.

We stand with the brave people of Ukraine in their fight for sovereignty, democracy and liberty. We remember the victims and honour the survivors of the Holodomor, as well as the Maidan, and pray for those fighting against Russia's barbaric invasion today.

May their memories be eternal. *Vichnaya pamyat.*

\* \* \*

● (1415)

### **CARBON TAX**

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, the NDP-Liberal government has finally admitted that it not worth the cost and that the carbon tax is hurting Canadians.

A farmer in southern Saskatchewan shared his carbon tax costs with me. He goes through 150,000 litres of diesel on his farm every year. At over 15¢ per litre, he is paying \$24,000 in carbon tax on diesel fuel alone. There is more. The GST gets added on top of that, bringing the total to just under \$25,000, but there is still more. The NDP-Liberals will quadruple that number for him, and he will be paying \$100,000 a year just on the carbon tax for diesel fuel, thanks to the radical Prime Minister.

Canadian families will pay more for groceries as well, yet the Liberals do not seem to care. They broke ranks with their NDP coalition to vote against common-sense Conservatives who would remove the carbon tax from farm fuels. Now, there are senators, appointed by the Prime Minister, who are trying to shut it down at the last minute. The Prime Minister needs to stand with Canadian families and producers, and tell his senators to stop blocking Bill C-234.

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### **CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT**

**Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition talks about fighting for freedom in Canada when we live in the freest country in the world. He has hijacked the word for partisan political purposes. He had a chance to stand up for Ukraine, which is truly fighting for freedom, two days ago, and he said no. It is appalling.

The opposition lets domestic petty politics interfere with issues that should be issues on which we are unified, as Canada always has been. It is appalling.

If we want to see Conservative MPs squirm in their seats, we can watch them when their leader tries to explain why. He needs to apologize to Canadians. He needs to apologize to Ukrainians, and he needs to apologize to his caucus. This free trade agreement would help Ukraine rebuild, and we should all be standing with them.

*Slava Ukraini.*

### **RECOGNITION OF SERVICE**

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to extend my heartfelt congratulations to three remarkable public servants who have dedicated their careers to the residents of Hamilton Centre.

I congratulate my legislative assistant, Tyler “Coach” Crosby, who, from day one, has provided me with the sage advice and wisdom he has attained through his 16 years of policy and parliamentary support here on the Hill.

I congratulate Trudy Morris, who, having come off of the factory floor as a proud USW trade unionist, has given us 19 years of improving the material conditions of our constituents through her remarkable tax-filing program and her ability to track down the benefits that have been cut off from our most vulnerable families, seniors and residents.

I congratulate Rose Marie McAleer, who also has an impressive 19 years of service. Her expertise in immigration, family reunification and her general case work is an embodiment of the spirit of our community and the perseverance that we in Hamilton Centre hold dear.

On behalf of the residents of Hamilton Centre and the New Democratic Party of Canada, I extend my deepest gratitude to Tyler, Trudy, and Rose Marie for their years of service. Their contributions have truly made a difference. I am thankful for their service.

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[Translation]

### **CÉGEP DE JONQUIÈRE GAILLARDS**

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, do you know who took home the coveted Bol d'Or at the college football championship this past Saturday? You guessed it: It was the Cégep de Jonquière Gaillards.

For a diehard football fan like me, it was something to be very proud of. I want to acknowledge the incredible determination of the players, who had a perfect season this year, winning not six or seven of their games, but all 11. They did not lose a single game in 2023. The Gaillards are undefeated. They are the world champions.

At the championship game on Saturday, the Gaillards made a spectacular comeback in the final quarter against a formidable opponent that was ultimately outdone by our team's passion. It was the seventh championship game in a row for Jonquière, and the third championship win for the team.

I would like to give a special shout-out to number 17, Émile Duceppe, the grandson of former Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe. I would like to congratulate the Gaillards, and I will see them next year.



● (1420)  
[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the NDP-Liberal government tabled a fall economic statement with \$46.5 billion of interest on the public debt this year and \$52.4 billion next year. That is more than the entire Canada health transfer. That is double the budget for national defence.

The Prime Minister has run up more debt than all previous prime ministers combined, and this week, he piled on another \$20 billion in inflationary spending. There is no end in sight, and no plan to balance the budget and tackle inflation.

Prices are up. Rent is up. Interest rates are up. Debts are up. Taxes are up, and time is up. After eight years of the Prime Minister, he is not worth the cost. Rents have doubled. Mortgage payments are up 150%, and minimum down payments have doubled. Two million Canadians a month are at food banks, and people with good jobs are homeless.

It is time for a common-sense Conservative government to clean up the Prime Minister's mess, just like Conservatives have had to do after every Liberal government before this one.

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### UKRAINE

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has become clear that far right American politics have fully taken over the Conservative Party of Canada.

Last June, five Conservative MPs travelled on a lavish trip to London, England, and dined on thousands of dollars' worth of oysters and champagne. We also know that at least one of those Conservative MPs had his expenses paid for by the Danube Institute, a right-wing Hungarian think tank that has said, "the stakes of the Russia-Ukraine war are not Ukraine's sovereignty, but the victory of NATO, the expansion of the US 'deep state', [and] 'wokeism'".

Coincidentally, right around the same time, Conservative MPs started shifting their support away from Ukraine in favour of Russian propaganda aimed at turning the world against Ukraine.

I want Ukrainian-Canadians to know that, while Conservative MPs flirt with Vladimir Putin and his attempts to persuade their support, Liberals are unwavering in our commitment and will be there every step of the way until Ukraine wins this war.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### FINANCE

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's mini-budget was full of bad news for Canadians. Rent is up, taxes are up, prices are up and interest rates are up to fight the inflation his deficits caused. In fact, Scotiabank said that its mortgage rates would be two full percentage points lower if the government could just control its spending. That would

### Oral Questions

be the difference, for hundreds of thousands of Canadians, between losing their homes and being able to renew their mortgages.

Does the government realize that time is running out? Will it end its deficit spending so that Canadians can keep their homes?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and his MPs are simply not worth the risk. He and his MPs voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade deal. Why? They made a brutal political calculation that they would have more support from their far right base here in Canada and in Russia and from their friends in the United States if they abandoned Ukrainians. It is cold, calculated, cruel. Behold, the new Conservative Party and its MPs. What a disgrace.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what is disgraceful and cruel is using Ukraine's vulnerability, while Russian tanks are on its soil, to shove a carbon tax permanently down our throats.

Canadians should not be fooled by the Liberals' phony outrage. They are desperate to talk about anything except for their terrible budget. That is because not only are workers' paycheques going to pay for higher prices and interest rates, but now their tax dollars are going to pay for higher interest payments on the national debt. In fact, next year the government will spend more on the national debt than on health care and the armed forces.

When will the government stop its deficits so we can pay doctors, nurses and soldiers instead of bankers and bondholders?

● (1425)

**The Speaker:** Before the hon. government House leader gets up, I just want to encourage members to please not extend their voices, so the Chair can hear the questions from the hon. leader. I can hear members at the far end of the House.

The hon. government House leader.

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, twice this week, the Leader of the Opposition has demonstrated that he is not worth the risk to Canadians.

### *Oral Questions*

He has been untruthful about why the Conservatives did not vote for the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, because there is no price on pollution in that agreement. We need to ask what the real reason is behind why they are abandoning support for Ukraine and for freedom and democracy.

Also, yesterday, instead of waiting for information on what happened in Niagara Falls, the Leader of the Opposition jumped straight to the conclusion that it was a terrorist attack. That is irresponsible and it is not respectful to Canadians.

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### **AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the government truly wanted to help Ukraine, it would support the Conservative motion to export our energy and military equipment, instead of the failed carbon tax. If the government wanted to be honest with Canadians, it would unveil the details of the \$15-billion subsidy to a single battery plant that will allow up to 1,600 workers coming from Korea to replace qualified Canadians.

Will the Liberals do the right thing and at least publish the agreement so that Canadian workers can find out how many jobs are being filled by taxpayer-funded foreign replacement workers?

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike with the member opposite, who did not, when it came time to find resolve, stand up to his leader when it was time to stand with Ukraine, Canada's support for Ukraine is unwavering.

We have committed over \$2.4 billion in military aid, from tanks to armoured vehicles to ammunition. We have trained 37,000 Ukrainian troops. The Prime Minister recently announced an additional \$500 million in new funding for military assistance. Yesterday, I spoke to Defence Minister Umerov and told him that 10 million additional rounds of ammunition are on the way.

Our government stands with Ukraine.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### **FINANCE**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one thing is certain. After eight years in power, this Liberal government is not doing right by Canadian families. It is not worth the cost. The economic update very clearly shows this government's pathetic administration.

I heard what the Minister of National Defence just said. Is he aware that this government is set to spend twice as much on the debt than on the army? It is going to spend more on servicing the debt than it is going to invest in health. That is completely unacceptable for a G7 country.

When will this government realize that it has been mismanaging everything for eight years?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what Canadians know is that the Conservatives voted against Ukraine. They decided to vote against a free trade agreement with Ukraine.

What we decided to do in the economic statement is what Canadians want. We will continue to build a stronger economy. We will overhaul competition in Canada. We will continue to invest in housing. We have a plan for prosperity. We have a plan for growth. We have a plan for Canadians.

The Conservatives should continue to watch what we are doing so that they can learn from a serious government.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the two million Canadians going to food banks every month see what this government has done. Those who want to own a home are seeing that rent has doubled in the past eight years. They see that mortgage costs are twice as high. They also see that down payments cost twice as much.

What is the Minister of Finance's solution? Believe it or not, it is to be able to borrow for up to 100 years. That is proof that our great-great-great-grandchildren are the ones who will pay.

Does the aspiring prime minister agree with the current Deputy Prime Minister? Does he feel that what is happening in Canada right now really does not make sense?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have enormous respect for my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent; he is an honourable man.

If he wants to convince his colleagues to do one thing for Canadians before Christmas, he must convince them to vote for Bill C-56. This is a bill that will help with affordability, reform the Competition Act after 36 years and allow us to stabilize prices in Canada.

I know my colleague is a man of influence. Will he be strong enough to influence his colleagues to do one thing for Canadians before Christmas?

\* \* \*

● (1430)

### **HEALTH**

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in its economic statement, the federal government seeks to encroach upon Quebec's jurisdiction over labour.

It wants to force interprovincial mobility on workers, especially health care workers. Otherwise, it is cutting health care funding. It forgot one thing, though: Things are done in French in Quebec.

For us, the plan means that bilingual workers from Quebec will be able to work elsewhere in Canada, but the workers who come to Quebec from unilingual anglophone provinces will be unilingual English doctors. In Quebec, things are done in French. This cannot work.

Instead of undermining quality of care in Quebec, could the federal government just mind its own business?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my Bloc Québécois colleague, but he is completely wrong on this.

We transfer more than \$700 million a year for immigration to Quebec. Most of that money is used to teach French to those arriving in Quebec. That includes anglophones who want to learn French.

We are there for labour mobility. We are there to train people in the language of their choice. We are there in partnership with Quebec every day.

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is right there in black and white: The government is threatening to cut health transfers if we refuse to swap our francophone workers for unilingual English doctors. Quebec does not need unilingual English doctors. We need doctors who can speak French and provide care in French. We need doctors that Quebecers can explain their health problems to in their own language.

If the federal government wants to be useful, all it has to do is increase health transfers, and we will hire doctors.

Will the government stop taking Quebecers' money and black-mailing them?

Enough is enough.

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, how very like the Bloc Québécois. It says that Ontarians should stay in Ontario, British Columbians should stay in British Columbia, and Quebecers should stay in Quebec and talk only to each other.

We can work together. We can exchange workers. We can exchange doctors and collaborate. The Bloc Québécois always wants it to be one against the other. It does not have to be like that. Canada is much stronger than the sum of its provinces. We can work together.

The Bloc Québécois does not like that, but that is the truth.

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#### GROCERY INDUSTRY

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, the Minister of Industry was begging grocery store owners to lower their prices. First he asked them to be nice and then he loudly declared victory. He said to check the flyers because there were specials on.

In an interview with TVA, Metro's CEO said, "We didn't change our prices.... Nothing has changed since the meeting". It is unbelievable. The only price that has dropped is the price of turkey, and that is because of Thanksgiving.

Who is the real turkey here? Is it the consumer, for paying too much, or is it the Minister of Industry?

#### Oral Questions

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to resort to rhetoric like my colleague. One thing is clear, however: I will always stand up for the millions of Canadians out there. That is exactly what I did.

For the first time in history, a minister called industry giants to a meeting, told them that 40 million Canadians were outraged and asked them to help us stabilize prices.

If my colleague wants to do something for Canadians between now and Christmas, if he wants to give them a Christmas gift, he should convince his colleagues to vote for Bill C-56. We are going to reform competition and stabilize prices in Canada, and we are going to keep fighting for Canadians.

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I almost feel a little sorry for the minister. He made such a big deal out of his meeting with the grocery CEOs, and now Metro has admitted that it had zero impact on food prices. Any Canadian who has been watching food prices soar could have told the Liberal government that. Instead of standing up to CEOs, the minister has danced around price gouging for two years. The Liberal plan is not working.

With the holidays coming, prices are only going to get worse, so will the government support the NDP's bill to lower food prices and end the gouging?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find it shocking that the hon. member would not stand with the government when we are standing up for Canadians. I remember an NDP that would stand for consumers, stand for Canadians and stand for our country.

I enjoy the member. Instead of criticizing, he should join us and fight for Canadians and express the outrage of millions of Canadians. That is what we did. That is what we will continue to do.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I hope he is going to vote for Bill C-56 to make sure we have more competition in this country.

● (1435)

**The Speaker:** Before I proceed to the member for Calgary Forest Lawn, I want to ask the member for Brantford—Brant to please only use his voice when it is his time to.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn has the floor.

*Oral Questions***FINANCE**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week's Liberal-NDP inflation-fuelling false hopes update is not worth the cost. Prices are up, rents are up, debt is up and taxes are up, and after eight years, time is up for the Prime Minister. The \$20 billion of new inflationary spending is ballooning the debt. Next year, the Prime Minister will spend more tax dollars on the interest to his debt than on health transfers.

Why is the Prime Minister giving more money to bankers and bondholders while Canadians go broke and hungry?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's question gives me an opportunity to let him know what is up. What is up in this country is home construction. Our fall economic statement has indicated that we are building more homes from coast to coast to coast, right across this great country, because that is what Canadians need right now. It also contains important measures that will strengthen competition in this country and help stabilize prices. What is down is inflation in Canada.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, she wants to talk about housing. The only thing they did for housing was change the name of the housing department. Canadians want results; they do not want more photo ops. Rents are up and mortgages are up. The needed down payment for a house has doubled. After eight years, the Liberal-NDP government is not worth the cost.

When will they stop the photo ops and build more homes, not more bureaucracy?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is fascinating and clear that the hon. member has not read the document. He seems to have missed \$15 billion in low-cost loans, which is going to get Canada building. He missed a \$1-billion investment to keep affordable housing going. He missed the fact that we are cracking down on short-term rentals to release tens of thousands of homes to increase supply.

When I look at their plan, they want to raise taxes on home builders by putting the GST back on, they want to cut funding for cities that build homes with the housing accelerator fund and they want to add layers of bureaucracy to do it. We are going to do what it takes to get more homes built. I invite the Conservatives to join us.

\* \* \*

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal government, everything is up. Mortgages are up, rent payments are up, inflation is up, groceries are up and taxes are up, yet the Bank of Canada has asked for help keeping inflation down. It has asked for governments to limit their spending growth to 2.5% each year, except guess what the government just

announced: An increase in growth of spending of over 5% for next year.

Is the minister trying to make misery go up for Canadians too?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe that the Conservatives are talking about taxes. We reduced taxes for middle-class Canadians on two occasions, and the entire Conservative caucus, every single Conservative member, voted against lowering taxes for the Canadians who needed it most.

The fall economic statement we put forward this week shows the strong fundamentals of our fiscal frame. We have the lowest deficit among all G7 countries and we will have the highest growth in 2024 among all G7 countries. We are proud of our record. We are continuing to be there for Canadians.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government's record is inflationary deficits driving up the cost of living. In fact, one year ago, the finance minister stood in the House and presented a plan that would balance the budget in 2027. When asked whether that was by mistake or by design, the minister took great boastfulness in saying that it was deliberate and by design. Except now we learn that the budget will be balanced in the year never.

Does the government actually have a plan to ever balance the budget and bring down inflationary deficits so Canadians can keep their homes?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is up is our ranking in the world. What is up are the number of jobs that we have created in the country. What is up is the prosperity in the country.

We rank third in the world now for foreign direct investment. We have seen landmark investments in the auto sector, in the mining sector, in biomanufacturing, in steel and in aluminum.

Canada is winning on the world stage, while the Conservatives want to bring us back to the Stone Age.

● (1440)

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal government, we know that prices are up, rent is up, mortgage rates, taxes are up, and we know Canadians are fed up with the current government.

Just this week, the government chose to spend an additional \$20 billion, which go toward our overall national debt load. This means that now just the interest will cost Canadians \$51 billion per year. That is enough to build 25 new hospitals and hire a whole host of new doctors. Imagine the difference that would make for Canadians.

Why is the Prime Minister choosing to support wealthy bankers instead of the health care needs of Canadians?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we unveiled our plan to build more homes across the country faster, the Conservative leader called that disgusting. When the Conservatives talk about the spending that they would cut, they are talking about removing supports that Canadians need. They are talking about taking away the benefits that Canadians rely on, benefits for seniors, for families and for people who need them most.

The plan of austerity that the Conservatives are proposing is not worth the risk.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member did not respond to my question, so perhaps she did not understand it. I will ask it again.

There are \$51 billion spent every single year just on interest toward our national debt. That is enough to build more than 25 brand new hospitals and hire a whole host of new doctors. It is twice as much as what the government is willing to spend on our national defence.

Are the men and women who wear a uniform and protect our front line not worth more than the out-of-control spending spree that the government selfishly takes upon itself?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Here is the inconvenient truth, Mr. Speaker. In order for the party opposite to do what it is talking about, it would have to cut massively into every aspect of the federal government.

The member talked about health care. We are making historic investments right now to ensure that the health care system is public and there for Canadians. When we heard about common-sense Conservatives in Ontario, we saw a direct attack against public health care.

Will those members cut dental care? Will they cut the transfers? Will they cut the critical supports that are there in health care and promotion? Exactly what kinds of cuts are they going to do?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, asylum seekers are the responsibility of the federal government. That is why Quebec wants to be reimbursed for the services we provide, including housing and social services.

The federal government refuses to reimburse Quebec. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship said, and I quote, "I don't have \$400 million just lying around".

#### Oral Questions

First of all, it is not \$400 million; it is \$460 million. Second, when the time came to help asylum seekers, Quebec managed to come up with the \$460 million, so the minister will just have to come up with it, as well.

Will he reimburse Quebec?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a relationship is a two-way street. Yes, we received the letter, but responsibility for asylum seekers is shared with Quebec. It is shared with all the provinces and territories.

I could also send a bill for \$450 million to Quebec. We have sent Quebec \$600 million. There is also a \$700-million fund under the Quebec-Canada accord that grows every year. Whatever Quebec's immigration levels are, Quebec must assume its responsibility. We are prepared to sit down and discuss this with our respective finance ministers.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if we look at the Constitution, we see that asylum seekers fall under federal jurisdiction. The federal government not only is not providing the services, but it is refusing to pay.

It is always the same thing with the Liberals when it comes to immigration and refugees. They say that they defend asylum seekers, but only when it comes time to make fine speeches. When it is time to truly welcome these people, the Liberals are not there. There is no service or reimbursement.

Quebec provides asylum seekers the services they need. Now, will the federal government do the one job that it is paid to do and reimburse Quebec?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a lesson on the Constitution from the Bloc Québécois, I will leave it at that. What I can say is that, last year, we gave \$700 million to Quebec under the Canada-Quebec accord. We gave it more this year. We even gave it too much without asking for any of it back.

All I am saying is let us have a reasonable discussion with our respective finance ministers. Let us sit down and lay our cards on the table and have a mature discussion.

• (1445)

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I can tell him about discussions. The Quebec minister for Canadian relations said, and I quote:

The current policy of the federal government is: "We decide. You pay." Ottawa prides itself on being the most generous country, one that welcomes all those who are suffering, but Quebecers are the ones who have to pay. It makes no sense. This is definitely not a responsible policy.

That is what the Quebec minister for Canadian relations said. Quebec is welcoming and generous to asylum seekers. All it is asking for is the resources to continue to be that way.

### Oral Questions

When will the government reimburse Quebec?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will give the same answer to the same question. Let us not forget that, in addition to the lump sum social transfer that is sent to all of the provinces, we are sending more and more money to Quebec every year under the Canada-Quebec accord, regardless of the levels in Quebec.

Quebec has a role to play in welcoming asylum seekers and all immigrants. We are prepared to sit down with Quebec to have a mature discussion between two responsible governments.

\* \* \*

[English]

### CARBON PRICING

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, life has never been so unaffordable. While Canadians struggle, he is quadrupling his carbon tax, which will raise the price of everything. He is just not worth the cost.

The Liberal-NDP government can pass Conservative Bill C-234, create another carbon tax carve-out for farmers and make food cheaper. The Prime Minister's environment minister has threatened to resign if it passes.

Will the Prime Minister accept his resignation and pass C-234 so Canadians can put food on their tables?

**Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the House, Conservatives had a choice. They had a choice to vote in favour of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. Instead, they are the only party in the House that did not do that. In fact, they have made the issue of the environment a red herring.

Even Ukraine today clarified that there is no price on pollution in this free trade agreement. The Conservatives are misleading Canadians. On this side of the House, we are standing and supporting Ukraine. We will continue to do that. The Conservatives cannot say the same.

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of their failed carbon tax, food bank line-ups are longer than they have ever been and Canadians are going hungry. Now they want to impose this Liberal carbon tax on Ukraine. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Conservative Bill C-234 would deliver lower food prices for Canadians by removing the carbon tax on our farmers. Ministers are panicking and begging senators to block it.

Will the Prime Minister tell his ministers to back off, put Canadians first and let his appointed senators pass Bill C-234 so Canadian families can feed themselves?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate because I do not think the member opposite was listening to the previous response. In fact, today, Ukraine said that there is no price on pollution in the agreement. Therefore, it continues to be an absolute red herring and

mistruth from the members opposite as to why they are not supporting the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement.

It is another demonstration of how irresponsible, how reckless and how risky it would be for the Conservatives to be in power, because they simply cannot share the true reasoning behind their decisions with Canadians. They just cannot be trusted.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years, this Prime Minister still does not understand that he can quickly cut food prices. The Conservatives, on the other hand, get it.

We introduced a common-sense bill, namely Bill C-234, which would exempt farmers from the carbon tax. However, the costly Bloc-Liberal coalition wants to drastically increase the carbon tax. It is costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois.

Liberal ministers, meanwhile, are upset and begging senators to delay the bill's passage in the Senate. When will the Prime Minister tell his senators to pass Bill C-234 so farmers can feed our people?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, do you know what is contributing to higher food prices? Climate change, droughts and floods. The Conservatives would not dare mention climate change, and they would not even be able to spell those words if they had to. They want to set us back on climate change, which would have a direct impact on food prices.

We will not listen to them, and we will not go back to the Stone Age.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

[English]

### HOUSING

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast need affordable homes today. People are living in tent encampments, being evicted from their homes or trapped paying sky-high rents.

The Liberals continue to delay and disappoint. In their fall economic statement, by delaying funding until 2025 means that affordable homes will not be built for at least another seven years. This is absurd and completely out of touch.

Will the Prime Minister commit to roll out the money now so that shovels can get into the ground to build the homes that Canadians desperately need?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her concern and her continued support for people in need of housing urgently.

I am pleased to share with her that there are existing programs that have money that continue to support the construction of new homes both in the market and for affordable housing for low-income families. What we have done in the fall economic statement is demonstrate our long-term commitment so that people who are making decisions to go ahead with projects will apply for their building permits now and will get their designs done now.

I am pleased to share that the Co-operative Housing Federation indicated that the statement “shows action from the federal government to support more non-market and affordable housing.” It was pleased with the new investments, including \$1 billion in affordable housing for co-op, non-profit and social housing.

\* \* \*

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Parliament unanimously supported my motion recognizing missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people as a Canada-wide emergency. However, how many times is MMIWG mentioned in the Liberals' fall economic statement? Zero. Earlier this year, the government slashed \$150 million from women's shelters.

Major municipalities have called gender-based violence an epidemic. Therefore, can the government explain why it is ignoring MMIWG and slashing money from women's shelters?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her ongoing advocacy on this issue.

Addressing the ongoing violence against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people is a whole-of-government approach that requires living up to our moral obligations as a country and the calls for justice. That is why in budget 2023 we have invested \$125 million to implement the national action plan for MMIWG to ensure accountability by establishing an oversight mechanism and support the National Family and Survivors Circle.

We will continue to work with families to ensure we address the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Conservative Party, under its leader, does not support Ukraine. He has not advocated for more military, financial or humanitarian support for Ukraine. He has not called out the vicious acts of genocide. This week, that leader and every MP in his caucus voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

The Conservatives are trying to blame their decision on a mention of carbon—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member has about 12 seconds left on the clock. I am hoping he can get to the issue of business of the government.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Mr. Speaker, Conservative members are trying to blame their vote against the agreement on language about carbon pricing, which is a red herring, because Ukraine has had carbon pricing since 2011 and it needs it to get into the EU.

Could the Minister of International Trade share with Canadians why this agreement is so important to Canada—

**The Speaker:** Once again, members know that the speakership issued a ruling in terms of having questions that are relevant either to the business of the government or to business of committees that can be posed to committee chairs or to members of the Board of Internal Economy.

The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

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**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberals are desperately trying to claim that they had no choice but to allow 1,600, taxpayer-funded foreign replacement workers come to Canada to work at the new battery plant in Windsor. The \$15-billion taxpayer subsidy means that each family in Canada is paying \$1,000 to subsidize these foreign replacement workers. After eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Will the Prime Minister release the contract to prove taxpayer-funded foreign replacement workers are banned?

● (1455)

**Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the question by the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre. I thank him for his advocacy. I was proud to join with him to vote in favour of the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. President Zelenskyy wanted this agreement. This is an important agreement—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. The question was posed by the member for South Shore—St. Margarets. I am certain the hon. minister is going to respond to the question at hand.

The hon. minister.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Mr. Speaker, I am proud, on this side of the House, that we voted in favour of the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. Canadian businesses have asked for it. They want to be a part of rebuilding Ukraine. On this side of the House, we are supporting Ukraine. I am disappointed—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. It is impossible, as members raise their voices directly into the Speaker's ear, to hear the response to judge whether it is related to the question.

I am going to ask the hon. minister to answer. I am going to ask hon. members to listen closely to the answer to the question that was posed by the member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

The hon. minister.

**Hon. Mary Ng:** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are supporting Ukraine. Canadian businesses have asked for this agreement because they want to be a part of rebuilding Ukraine. I am disappointed, but I am not surprised, that the Conservatives have decided to abandon Ukraine. When someone shows who they are—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets for his second question.

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they did not answer my first question. Apparently, the Liberals are afraid of the fact that they have decided to bring in foreign replacement workers to Stellantis, while the ministers are ignoring it.

Why are they ignoring it? It is because, on the government's own website, they are advertising for Stellantis jobs that say someone does not need to be a Canadian citizen and they do not even need a work permit. The ambassador for South Korea informed everyone in Windsor that 1,600 replacement workers from South Korea are coming.

I will ask again, since the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. If the Prime Minister and the government dispute those facts, will they release the contract and prove us wrong?

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious for Canadians watching at home how much the Conservatives do not want to talk about Ukraine. One thing I can say is that it is amazing to see to what extent the Conservatives will go to spread misinformation. Do members know what? Sometimes they get caught.

I will quote Brendan Sweeney of the Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing: “I think those making the noise are hypocritical”. He also says, “What they’re saying is erroneous and factually incorrect. They don’t have the faintest knowledge of the industry”.

We will keep on fighting for Windsor, we will keep on fighting for the auto sector and we will keep on fighting for workers.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government awarded a contract worth \$15 billion in taxpayer money to fi-

nance a battery plant in Windsor. There is just one problem: The plant will be staffed by 1,600 temporary foreign workers, not by Canadian workers.

Quebeckers are wondering whether local jobs will be protected at the Northvolt plant in Quebec, which taxpayers funded to the tune of \$5 billion. Did the Prime Minister ensure that jobs would go to Quebeckers, or does he plan to bring in even more taxpayer-funded foreign replacement workers?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me another opportunity to point out that Canada now ranks third in the world when it comes to attracting foreign investment. Not only are we securing record investments in the automotive industry, we also have investments in mining, biomanufacturing, aluminum and steel.

One thing should be perfectly clear: We have a plan for prosperity. We have a plan for Canada. We have a plan for growth.

● (1500)

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if we are spreading misinformation as the Liberals claim, they should explain why the government is posting positions for candidates who are bilingual in English and Korean. My information comes directly from the Windsor police, which the South Korean ambassador visited to prepare for the arrival of 1,600 Korean workers. After eight years of this government, can they finally be transparent and make the contracts public?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have mastered the art of never letting the facts get in the way of their pretty stories.

As for Stellantis, the Conservatives are trying to undermine the 2,500 jobs that will be filled to operate the plant and the 2,300 jobs that will be created to build the plant. How many labour market impact assessments have been approved for Stellantis? The answer is a single agreement, a single position. Those are the facts.

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## OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, COP28 begins next Thursday, and Canada is about to show up empty-handed. It is about to show up without a regulatory framework for capping emissions in the oil and gas sector, the biggest culprit when it comes to climate change. We have been waiting two years for this and have heard nothing but empty rhetoric for two years.



*Oral Questions*

Climate Action Network was on the Hill today. All of the environment minister's old friends, people from Greenpeace and Equiterre, are calling on him to present a costed regulatory framework before going to COP. Obviously, the Bloc Québécois agrees. Will the minister do that?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her question and reassure her. Indeed, my former colleagues, who are still my friends, from the environmental community were on the Hill. I speak with them regularly.

Over the past few years, we have taken a number of steps to tackle pollution from the oil and gas sector, such as pollution pricing and methane emissions regulations. Furthermore, as the Prime Minister pledged to do in New York a few months ago, we will present a framework for capping greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas sector by the end of the year.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this morning, the International Energy Agency issued its report on emissions in the oil and gas sector. If we want to meet the Paris targets then emissions in the fossil fuel sector need to be reduced by 60% by 2030. That is tomorrow.

They need to be reduced by 60% and Canada does not even have a plan to simply cap them. Canada, the fifth-largest oil producer in the world, will be one of the biggest culprits if the world misses these targets. Before heading off to COP28, will the minister present a regulatory framework to at least cap emissions from oil companies?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in addition to everything I said earlier, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that we have a plan to fight climate change that has been praised by Equiterre, Greenpeace, Environmental Defence and the David Suzuki Foundation, and we are the only country in the G20 that has ended fossil fuel subsidies, two years ahead of schedule no less. We are the only country in the G20 that is committed to ending its public support of fossil fuels. As I said, we are going to present our framework for capping greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas sector by the end of the year.

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[English]

#### INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the NDP-Liberal cover-up coalition blocked a Conservative motion to have a whistle-blower testify at the ethics committee. After eight years under the Prime Minister, it is hard not to feel disappointed in the government when every day there is a new scandal. It is easy to see that the Prime Minister is not worth the price.

The latest scandal is the billion-dollar green slush fund. Facing an Auditor General investigation and an Ethics Commissioner investigation, the CEO and the Liberal hand-picked board chair resigned in disgrace. Now they are blocking a whistle-blower from testifying. What are they trying to hide?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, nothing, because we are the ones who want to get to the bottom of this. That is the reality.

Let me bring some facts to this story. The fact is that, the moment there was an allegation, I called for an investigation. I called for an independent report. I demanded from management a plan to restore good governance. The CEO has resigned. I have accepted the resignation of the chair.

We are going to get to the bottom of this, restore governance and make sure that we can support Canadian businesses.

• (1505)

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is a bystander in this billion-dollar slush fund scandal.

Let us lay out the facts: He did absolutely nothing. Conservatives called for an investigation at committee. We wrote a letter to the Auditor General; she started an investigation. We wrote a letter to the Ethics Commissioner; he launched an investigation. We had the CEO and the board chair come to committee; they both resigned in disgrace following their appearances at committee. Now, we want a whistle-blower to come before committee, and what are they doing? Silencing whistle-blowers as a part of the cover-up coalition with the NDP.

What are they trying to hide?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike my colleague, who is behind the game, I am the one who started the investigation. Once we had the allegations, that is what we did. The record speaks for itself, but I know that my Conservative friends want nothing to do with the facts. They like to have their story, but they are not entitled to their own facts.

We are going to get to the bottom of this. We are going to restore governance, and we are going to keep helping Canadian SMEs.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while Conservatives are working overtime to expose Liberal corruption, Liberal and NDP backbenchers, and even a former minister, are doing everything they can at committee to cover up scandals, silence whistle-blowers and shut down investigations.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether the coalition deal he signed behind closed doors, with the socialist NDP, includes requiring the NDP member for Hamilton Centre to vote to cover up the corruption we are seeing with the Prime Minister's billion-dollar green slush fund?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing is a pattern of very concerning behaviour and desperate behaviour from the Conservative Party of Canada.

*Oral Questions*

Conservatives are hiding from Canadians why they are really not supporting the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. In fact, Ukraine came out and said there is no price on pollution. They are also hiding why the Leader of the Opposition will not tell the truth as to why he jumped to conclusions yesterday when we learned about what happened in Niagara Falls. Now, what we are hearing from them is false allegations. They know that committees are independent.

What are they trying to hide?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question has to do with Bill C-57. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has cost thousands of people their lives, and it continues to jeopardize the stability of the entire region and the world.

Unfortunately, this week, the leader of the official opposition and the Conservative members voted against the free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine. We are talking about an agreement that the President of Ukraine clearly indicated would serve as a basis for rebuilding Ukraine. The Conservatives have turned their backs on Ukraine and democracy; they have embraced Russian propaganda.

I would ask the Minister of Finance to reaffirm Canada's strong support for Ukraine.

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Ukrainians are currently fighting for their freedom and ours on the battlefields of Ukraine. We have all seen them. I saw them in Ukraine. They were strong, courageous and ready to make the ultimate sacrifice. They approached us and asked us to negotiate a free trade agreement. We are the first G7 country to sign such an agreement with them. Voting against that free trade agreement, as the Conservatives did, means failing Ukrainians and supporting Russia.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister has done nothing but recklessly spend. Not only was \$54 million rushed into the poorly functioning arrive scam app, but 11 million taxpayer dollars were given to a so-called consulting company, employing two people working out of their basement, who were doing absolutely no work. Talk about hitting the taxpayer lottery. It is beyond clear that the NDP-Liberal government is simply not worth the cost.

The question is simple: Which minister was responsible for this costly hiring?

• (1510)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to disappoint my colleague across the aisle, but no

minister was responsible for those contracting practices. Those contracting practices were done by public servants.

We have said if committees want to look into these issues, we welcome that examination. When the Canada Border Services Agency uncovered irregularities, it called for an independent audit and referred the files to the appropriate authorities. That is what a responsible government does in spite of some of the silly questions from the other side.

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians want these questions asked of the ethically and morally challenged government. Public officials were caught lying and insiders who became millionaires through the arrive scam app were caught lying. It is time for honesty and clarity in this House. For weeks, we have heard the same talking points from the minister and no action. No one has been charged and no one has been fired.

Once again, will the minister responsible for this fiasco that the RCMP is investigating please stand up?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend knows very well that when any irregularity with respect to contracting practices comes to light, the responsible thing for senior public servants who administer these rules to do is to refer it to the appropriate authorities and to establish the facts from external audits. That is exactly what the Canada Border Services Agency did. If committees want to look into this matter, we welcome that exercise as well.

My hon. friend should know very well that it is not elected ministers who decide who faces criminal charges. It is the police and prosecutors, and I have every confidence they will do their job.

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**HEALTH**

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a couple of years ago, this House unanimously passed my private member's bill that allowed for the annual tax form to be used to ask a simple question on organ and tissue donation. Both Ontario and Nunavut opted to have this question included in their tax forms last year, and I am hoping that other provinces will participate in the future.

Can the minister tell us how many taxpayers in Ontario and Nunavut indicated through their tax returns their intent to become life-saving organ and tissue donors?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Confederation has worked hard to help Canadians waiting for transplants. I was happy, along with members from all parties, to support his bill. It shows we can do great things when we work together.

The impact of this change is significant, and I am pleased to say it has been very successful already. The most recent numbers we have indicate that 2.45 million people used their tax returns to indicate they want to be donors. This is very promising.

\* \* \*

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of International Trade and is regarding the important Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement and Conservatives' concerns of our government's unequivocal support for Ukraine. They were right about one thing, that support for Ukraine on this side of the House is unequivocal. Clearly, the same cannot be said for the Conservative Party of Canada as the Conservatives made the shameful decision to appease their far-right, anti-Ukraine extreme base.

Can the minister tell us what the Ukrainians, our friends, have said about this agreement?

**Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, President Zelenskyy himself asked for Canada to negotiate a progressive, strong, excellent free trade agreement. We have modernized it, and we have done that. The only party in this House that voted against Ukraine is the Conservative Party of Canada.

On this side of the House, we stand with Ukraine in what we say, in what we do and certainly in how we vote. This side has voted for Ukraine.

\* \* \*

• (1515)

## INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we now have an accurate picture of the infrastructure gap facing first nations, and the numbers are truly vile: \$350 billion.

This is first nations like Shamattawa facing a housing crisis. It is the long-term boil water advisory in Pukatawagan and 27 other first nations. It is crumbling schools, like the one in Tataskweyak Cree Nation. It is the forced isolation of communities, like Wasagamack and Pauingassi, that desperately need an airport.

It is unacceptable, but what is the government's solution? It is cuts to Indigenous Services. Why are the Liberals punishing first nations for Liberal failures?

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my hon. colleague's passion in this matter.

I am proud to be part of a government that has done more than any other to close the infrastructure gap. We are investing in and working with first nations, Métis and Inuit to build healthy, resilient and prosperous communities for the long term. That is why we are supporting over 9,000 infrastructure projects, including indigenous-led Watay Power, which is connecting 17 diesel-dependent first nations communities to the Ontario power grid.

## Points of Order

We are going to continue following indigenous leadership to address the infrastructure priorities from coast to coast to coast. We know there is more work that needs to be done. We are committed to building this work with first nations, Inuit and Métis partners.

\* \* \*

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, while a four-day pause is delayed by a day, Israel has only intensified its bombing of the Gaza Strip. For six weeks now, the government has been unequivocal in demanding hostages be returned, as the government should be, and yet the government cannot even seem to bring itself to say the word “ceasefire”.

An estimated 5,500 children have now died in the Gaza Strip alone in recent weeks. Therefore, I ask again: How many children need to die before the government calls for a ceasefire?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course, we condemn the October 7 terrorist attack by Hamas. We are extremely preoccupied with what is happening in Gaza. I have said it many times. It is one of the worst places, if not the worst place, to live in the world, and too many women and children have died. That is why we welcome the humanitarian pause that will be happening, starting tomorrow, that has been agreed to between Israel and Hamas and brokered by Qatar.

We will continue to support the fact that Canadians need to get out of Gaza. Civilians must be protected. Humanitarian aid must go. Hostages need to be released.

\* \* \*

## PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I would like draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2023 Impact Awards winners.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

## POINTS OF ORDER

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** I see a number of points of order on the floor.

I will recognize the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

*Points of Order*

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today during question period, the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake used extraordinarily unparliamentary language. It was slanderous. I bring this to your attention, because it is not the first time the member has spoken in that manner. The member used hateful language throughout question period multiple times this week.

Today, he said a very slanderous thing, which I can say with all certainty is a slander because it was directed at me. The idea that the New Democratic Party and I would not condemn in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attack by Hamas is absolutely slanderous. The fact that we have called for a ceasefire and the Conservatives refused to call for that is something very—

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

**The Speaker:** I see the member for St. Catharines rising on the same point of order. I would ask the member to be very brief and to the point.

The hon. member.

**Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to confirm that I did hear that from the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake. When questioned on it by a member on that side, he said he was here for the facts.

I think in this place we can be parliamentary. However, accusing another member of supporting a terrorist organization in this country is way out of line, and I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will look into this.

• (1520)

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for St. Catharines for his comments.

I see that the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake would like to get up. I do hope the member will be brief and succinct.

The hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake.

**Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, can I ask what the exact thing is that I am being accused of? It is unclear to me. I need to know the exact words, and then I will talk.

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

**The Speaker:** I will ask members for their patience for a second.

Colleagues, I am not inclined to repeat unparliamentary language in this House. I will review the tapes.

If the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake would like to get up, I would be happy to recognize him.

The hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake.

**Mr. Jake Stewart:** Mr. Speaker, I will gladly rise. I still have not been told completely what—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. I ask all members to please allow the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake to respond.

The hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake.

**Mr. Jake Stewart:** Mr. Speaker, number one, I directed nothing at the member who is over here in the corner. My exact words, and I know the NDP is not going to like it, are I said that they were Hamas supporters, and they are.

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

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, we are not doing ourselves any favours as members of Parliament in terms of the use of unparliamentary language. Especially if it is directed to an individual, it is clearly unparliamentary. To make statements which create disorder in the House is also unparliamentary.

The Speaker is going to review the tapes and return to the House on this matter.

On another point of order, I recognize the member of Parliament for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, during question period, while the member for South Shore—St. Margarets was asking a question, the Minister of International Development called him a liar. Sitting so close to the good folks from Hansard, I can tell that they captured it in Hansard.

There is an opportunity for the minister to apologize to an hon. member of the House for calling someone a liar. It is, of course, unparliamentary. It is, of course, unbecoming of a member of the King's Privy Council, a member of the government. He should not be recognized until he apologizes to the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister is rising.

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize and I withdraw the remark.

• (1525)

**The Speaker:** I would like to thank the hon. minister for doing the appropriate thing.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the minister has done the right thing.

I would like to come back to your commitment to review the tapes with respect to the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake. What he said was clearly unparliamentary. You have called upon him to apologize. I believe that if he has not apologized, he should not be recognized in the House.

**The Speaker:** I have already made my intentions clear about that, and I will come back to members.

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville is rising on a point of order.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that we cannot say indirectly in the House what we cannot say directly. I am of Canadian Ukrainian heritage. My grandfather came here just before the Holodomor, and every statement today that was said against me on that side of the House, in regard to my decision on my vote, is—

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

I thank the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville. I am afraid that this is moving into a matter of debate.

The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country is rising on a point of order.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Mr. Speaker, during question period, I heard the member of Parliament for Cambridge yell across the way, “Let’s take it outside.”

This is physically threatening and unparliamentary, and he should apologize.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country. It is not considered unparliamentary language, but I will review Hansard to see what I can detect from that.

[*Translation*]

We have now come to my favourite question of the week, the Thursday question.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L’Érable.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L’Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is dark day. Although I have made several attempts to have Bill C-56 debated in the House, considering that it has not been on the agenda since October 5, we are currently witnessing a government manoeuvre to muzzle the House and limit debate on this bill.

Given that we will be sitting until midnight tonight and voting on Bill C-56, can the government House leader tell us what is in store for us tomorrow and next week in terms of business?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. As the Chair said, it is the most anticipated question of the week.

We are of course expecting unanimity on Bill C-56 tonight. Perhaps we can count on Conservative votes to help Canadians at this time. That is our hope.

[*English*]

This afternoon, we will continue with debate on the government business motion relating to Bill C-56, the affordable housing and groceries act. Tomorrow, we will resume second reading debate of Bill C-58, relating to replacement workers. We will return to Bill C-58 debate on Monday. Tuesday will be an opposition day. On Wednesday, we will call second reading of Bill S-9, concerning chemical weapons.

I would also like to note that it is the intention of the government to commence debate next week concerning the bill relating to the fall economic statement that was tabled earlier this week by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

● (1530)

[*English*]

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 30—PROCEEDINGS ON BILL C-56**

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-56, the Liberals’ so-called affordable housing and groceries bill. I say “so-called” because nothing in the bill would make housing affordable or reduce grocery prices.

After eight long years of the Liberals, Canadians are facing an unprecedented affordability crisis. Let us look at the facts. After eight years of the Liberals, housing costs have doubled; rent has doubled and mortgage payments have more than doubled, up 150% compared to eight years ago. After eight years of the Liberals, Canadians have seen 40-year-high inflation. Meanwhile, interest rates are rising at the fastest rate in Canadian history and have reached a 22-year high. Interest rates are projected to be hiked even further. When it comes to essentials like groceries, prices have gone up a staggering 70%, resulting in nearly two million Canadians a month going to the food bank. What Canadians are facing after eight years of the Liberals is a dire situation in which Canadians are struggling to put food on the table and to keep a roof over their head.

This begs the question “Why is it that Canada faces an affordability crisis?” There is one person who bears primary responsibility, and that is the Prime Minister. It is the Prime Minister who has created an affordability crisis as a result of eight years of reckless spending. This is the Prime Minister who, in eight years, has run up the largest deficits and has managed to double the national debt. So reckless and so out of control is the spending on the part of the Prime Minister that he has managed to do the seemingly impossible: rack up more debt in eight years than all of his predecessors over the previous 150 years combined. This is the Prime Minister who thought it was a good idea to pay for his out-of-control reckless spending by printing, through the Bank of Canada, \$600 billion. As a result, the money supply has increased eight times faster than economic growth. Is it any wonder that, in the face of that, Canadians have seen 40-year-high inflation and interest rates rising faster than ever before?

*Government Orders*

That is the record of the Liberals after eight years. That is what they have to show. They have manufactured a cost of living crisis, and everyday Canadians are hurting. In the face of that, what have the Liberals done and what are they doing to address the issue of affordability, the mess they have created? Earlier this week, Canadians got the answer, and that is based upon the finance minister's presenting the government's fall economic statement. What did we get from the finance minister? We got \$20 billion in new deficit spending on top of the more than \$100 billion of deficit spending that the finance minister has racked up in the three years that she has held the portfolio. There is \$20 billion in new deficit spending that pours fuel on the inflationary fire and is sure to keep interest rates high. There is \$20 billion in new deficit spending, notwithstanding the fact that even the Bank of Canada is calling on the Liberals to rein in their spending, and has made clear to the Liberal government that its reckless spending and money printing are contributing to inflation.

● (1535)

There is \$20 billion in new deficit spending, notwithstanding Scotiabank's issuing a report recently that confirmed that a full 2% of interest rates is directly attributable to the government's inflationary spending. Canadians have been hit, after eight years of the Liberals, with a double whammy: high inflation and high interest rates. They are now also being hit with a third whammy by way of the Liberals' punitive carbon tax. It is a tax that the Liberals falsely sold as a means to reduce GHGs, but we know, after eight years of the Liberals, that GHGs have gone up and not down. I would remind Liberals across the way, who talk so much about climate action, that the COP27 rankings ranked Canada, after eight years of the Liberals, at 58 out of 63 countries.

However, I digress. The carbon tax is nothing more than another tax, but I qualify that because it is not quite that. It is, after all, a tax that disproportionately impacts lower- and middle-income Canadians. It is a tax that increases the cost of everything, including essentials such as food, fuel and heating. It is a tax that, according to both the Bank of Canada and the Parliamentary Budget Officer, is exacerbating inflation. Despite that and despite the fact that Canadians are facing an affordability crisis, with nearly half of Canadians \$200 away from insolvency, the Liberal government's plan is to quadruple its punitive carbon tax for hard-working, everyday Canadians.

I say to the Liberals across the way that I would be keenly interested to see whether one of them can stand up in their place and explain to Canadians how the policies of the government, namely money printing, massive deficits and the quadrupling of the carbon tax, all of which are exacerbating inflation and increasing interest rates, are a policy prescription that is going to make life more affordable for Canadians. Very simply, those policies are making life less affordable. Canadians are paying a very dear price after eight years of the costly policies of the Liberal Prime Minister.

After eight long years of the Liberals, costs are up. Rent is up, taxes are up and debt is up. The government's time is up.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the legislation the member is debating is very substantial. I know he wanted to talk a lot about the fall economic statement,

but the legislation is good legislation that would support Canadians in many different ways, especially when it comes to the issue of giving more authority and power to the Competition Bureau. It would also provide literally thousands of new homes into the future.

People are concerned about the reckless behaviour of the Conservative Party today. We listen to some speeches in which the Conservatives seem to be in support of the legislation. In other speeches, they seem to be against the legislation. Look what happened with the Ukraine legislation. At the end of the day, every one of them voted against Ukraine. That is fine; it was their prerogative, and hopefully some of them will make a flip-flop and support the Ukraine-Canada trade deal going forward. I will not hold my breath.

What is the Conservative Party collectively going to do with the legislation before us? Does it support it or not?

● (1540)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, I am glad the hon. parliamentary secretary referred to changes that are being made to the Competition Act, because the amendments put forward in the bill pertaining to the Competition Act are copied and pasted from the private member's bill introduced by the member for Bay of Quinte. Very simply, it would remove the efficiencies defence with respect to mergers. That could, in the long term, have an impact, an increase in competition in the groceries sector, and therefore have some long-term impact upon prices, but Canadians cannot wait for five years or seven years down the road. They need relief today, and all the government has offered them is the quadrupling of the carbon tax.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is good to stand in the House today to talk about a very important bill. It is the idea that we are going to get some purpose-built rental housing built. To the member's point, it is not going to be as fast as we need, and that is why we need other measures outside of this bill. However, on this bill, there are people in my community waiting for purpose-built rentals, so I would like to see this go through, but I would like to see more than what is in this bill.

Can the member share some of the solutions they have? I believe that the Conservatives can support this bill and improve it. Let us see what they have.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, with respect to the GST measure on rental housing, that is something the Liberals promised six years ago and are only now acting on it. It was provided for by the bill put forward by the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition, the building homes not bureaucracy act. That bill is a common-sense piece of legislation aimed at getting gatekeepers out of the way by tying infrastructure dollars to the number of homes actually built.

The Liberal government has thrown around billions of dollars, yet there were fewer houses built in the past year than were built in 1972 when Canada's population was half of what it is today. The record of the Liberals is to build up bureaucracy and not houses. The plan of the Leader of the Opposition is to get homes built for Canadians.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton spent a lot of his time talking about the quadrupling of the carbon tax, but absent from the conversation was the quadrupling of the rebates that go with it. I mention this because we all get emails in our inboxes from constituents who have been misled by those kinds of statements. Can the member make clear whether he believes that rebates also go back to Canadians?

Secondly, can he speak to any concern he might have with the fact that the carbon tax went up 2¢ a litre last year, and the profits of the oil and gas industry went up 18¢ a litre as it gouged Canadians at the pumps. That is what is truly driving affordability. Does he care about that at all?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, with respect, the member should get his facts straight. A good place to start would be to review the report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. It established that more than 60% of Canadians lose out with the carbon tax. In other words, they pay more than they get back from the rebate.

What needs to happen, and what Canadians are asking for, is that we axe the tax, and that is something Conservatives are going to do to keep—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Red Deer—Mountain View.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will first say that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

I am honoured to speak to this programming motion, Government Business No. 30, and its amendment today.

Before I start, I would like to pay tribute to a great constituent by the name of Dot Thompson, the spouse of the late member of Parliament Myron Thompson, whose funeral I attended this past weekend. The two were inseparable and always had the community of Sundre in their hearts. Myron was an unforgettable MP who served on town council, was the high school principal and, through his athletic prowess, taught many youth how to play ball. Sundre was lucky to get him as his New York Yankees professional ball career was put on hold as he played backup to Hall of Famer Yogi Berra.

I am sure that Myron Thompson would have seen many pieces of legislation over his time with bills like Bill C-56, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Competition Act, as well as motions that would have found their way to the floor of Centre Block for discussion. During his 1993 to 2005 era, there were many “suggestions” that the official opposition had lifted by the Chrétien and Martin Liberals in order to minimize the economic damage that had occurred from the era of stagflation caused by Trudeau, the elder.

Sadly, that Liberal government chose to drastically cut the transfers of health funding to provinces, which has haunted our provin-

cial health care services for decades. Handcuffing the provinces was an easy fix to change the federal government's bottom line, but downloading the costs onto other levels of government simply took the heat off the feds and pushed it onto the provinces and their local authorities.

I am well aware of how federal neglect and financial shell games work because I was a hospital board chairman during those dark days. The federal Liberals of the 1990s artfully joined with the Friends of Medicare to back provinces into a corner when they were forced to rationalize services. There is no better example than the daily attacks on former premier Ralph Klein when he was faced with the economic reality of federal cuts to health transfers. The effects of that federal action are still evident, but, thankfully, no government has returned to the era of cuts to health care transfers since the Chrétien era.

The reason that I give this historical reference is that there are different paths governments can follow when trying to work their way through, or out of, a crisis. They can download the problems onto other levels of government; they can analyze policies of other parties in the House and, as is usually the case, claim them as their own; or they can at least acknowledge that the official opposition takes its responsibilities to Canadians seriously and that by usurping the learned advice, the government is ignoring the views of a large number of Canadians.

I will get to some of the specifics in the legislation in a minute, but, as many have stated, it is the heavy-handedness of the government and its inability and unwillingness to work with other partners, unless they are willing to rubber-stamp initiatives in exchange for propping up a minority government, that are at issue here.

What we are seized with today is the government's programming motion, Government Business No. 30. Programming motions have the effect of not only limiting debate in the House, which to many is an affront to democracy in itself, but also dictating instructions to the committee as to how it will deal with this legislation once it gets to committee. Issues related to Government Business No. 30 have to do with the expanded scope that the committee must consider. I will read from Government Business No. 30, which says:

(c) if the bill has been read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance,

(i) it be an instruction to the committee, that during its consideration of the bill, it be granted the power to expand its scope to,

(A) increase the maximum fixed penalty amounts for abuse...,

(B) allow the Competition Bureau to conduct market study inquiries...,

(C) revise the legal test for abuse of a dominant position prohibition order to be sufficiently met if the Tribunal finds that a dominant player has engaged in either a practice of anti-competitive acts or conduct....

*Government Orders*

If those points were important, perhaps they could have been in the bill in the first place.

• (1545)

Also, we will then start with a marathon sitting of two days, after the motion's adoption, to gather witness testimony, with amendments to be submitted within 12 hours at the end of the marathon sitting. Then, at the next meeting, once that time is up, no further debate or amendments will be entertained. Finally, after a few other points, we will have closure after the bill is reported, which will once again be guaranteed.

The Conservative amendment tries to infuse some credibility by at least ensuring that the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry and the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities will be ordered to appear as witnesses for no less than two hours each. At least some level of accountability will be salvaged if this amendment is adopted.

By forcing Motion No. 30 to the committees through the House process, the Liberals avoid the other option, which is to force a programming motion through the committee. They always say that committees are masters of their own fate, which is true, until, as we see with Motion No. 30, it is not. Programming motions are usually enacted when the government knows it has messed things up royally.

Our responsibility as legislators is manifold. First, we must thoroughly analyze legislation to minimize potential unintended consequences. As a country that boasts six time zones, the need to have regional voices heard is paramount in order to head off such negative consequences.

Second, it is important that Canadians get an opportunity to have input as well. Those who live in the real world understand how legislation will, good or bad, affect them.

Third, and this is so evident presently at our natural resources committee, once federal legislation has been challenged, once the regions take on their responsibilities to protect their citizens through such initiatives and once such legislation has been deemed unconstitutional, the government must stop using the challenged parts of legislation in its development of new legislation. This procedural motion, Motion No. 30, is to be determined through a vote in the House. Since the Liberal government has found various willing dance partners, that has been virtually assured.

The only time I saw this process sidetracked, ironically, was when the Liberals had a majority government. It became quite evident at the time that the Liberals never really showed up for duty on Monday mornings. The Mulcair NDP managed to create a second reading vote on a prized Liberal bill. It was quite the scramble, but the vote ended in a tie. Because it was at second reading, the Speaker voted with the government so it would live to fight another day, and, oh my, it did fight. It produced a motion that would have stripped the opposition of all tools to do its job of holding the government to account. That motion dictated how things would transpire in the House and would have been one of the most egregious motions ever moved in our Westminster system of government.

When the vote on that motion was to take place, once again, the members of the NDP were milling around and were in the path of our whip Gord Brown. There is a tradition we see all the time where the whips walk toward the mace, acknowledge each other and then, once their members are settled, take their seats to start the vote. The confusion in the aisle caused one of the most unhinged actions I have seen anywhere. The Prime Minister rushed through the crowd, grabbed our whip by the arm and told him to get the "f" in his place. As he did that, he swung around and hit a female NDP member in the chest, which forced her to leave the chamber. That bizarre action caused a question of privilege that continued for days, whereby the juvenile actions of the PM were constantly on trial by his peers. In order to prevent the continued series of questions of privilege, the government relented and withdrew the egregious motion.

Now, with voting apps being used, perhaps the Prime Minister can avoid such a conflict in the future. Of course, maybe by now the government is also aware that there is a time-out provision whereby the vote would take place whether the whips walk down the aisle or not. Hopefully this motion can be defeated without the theatrics.

• (1550)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, truly, we cannot make this stuff up. At the end of the day, the Conservatives will whine and cry about wanting to have more debate time, but in reality, what do they do? They behave like a bunch of juveniles.

At some point, the members will stand up and move, seconded by so and so, that a person be heard, which will cause the bells to ring for half an hour, instead of voting. Sometimes they will adjourn debate in an attempt to prevent debate from taking place. Most common more recently, it is concurrence motion after concurrence motion.

Why all these games? It is because they do not want to debate legislation. They want to filibuster. They want to prevent. This is the far right wing of the Conservative Party pushing the Conservative Party to be destructive, and the members are very successful.

We are looking at a very extreme right-wing Conservative Party today. Why is the Conservative Party neglecting the vast majority of Canadians in favour of the far right?

• (1555)

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Madam Speaker, the member can continue to insult. Nothing in what I said indicates in any way, shape or form that I approve of any of his far right allegations. It is something the Liberals chose to talk about today, as they felt this was one of the good things they could do during question period. We have heard it all day. It is just as ridiculous now as it was earlier in the day. Quite frankly, perhaps the member should consider the role and actions of his Prime Minister, because, believe me, everything I said was accurate.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to ask a serious question of the member. I was here in the House when, under the Harper regime, we saw housing prices double over nine years. They doubled again under the Liberals, but the Conservatives were just as bad.

They have been worse. The Conservative record is far worse when it comes to affordable housing units. Between the two parties, the corporate coalition of Liberals and Conservatives, over a million affordable housing units have been lost over the past 17 years. Some 800,000 of them, or 80%, were lost under the Conservatives' watch.

Conservatives say that finally the Liberals are interested in housing, so I do not understand why they would block a bill to create more housing units and why they would block it so ferociously, in the same way they blocked dental care and the same way they blocked all of the NDP efforts, including to ensure a doubling of the GST credit to put more food on the table. Every single affordability measure the NDP fights for and succeeds in getting, Conservatives block.

Has the member spoken to the constituents in his riding who want to see these measures, including dental care?

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Madam Speaker, have I spoken to them? Yes, I absolutely have. As a matter of fact, this morning people from FCM, from my riding, were visiting with me and we were talking about all of these issues. We were talking about homelessness issues. We were talking about affordability in housing. We were talking about all of the different initiatives that have been part of governments for years. I speak to constituents constantly about the issues of affordability. I am not sure exactly where the member was going, but, believe me, that is always uppermost in our minds.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his speech. He has identified himself as an MP who is not on the far right like his leader.

He talked a lot about inflation. In Canada, the drop in inflation over the record high of 8.1% in June 2022 must be good news for him. However, more needs to be done, without filibustering committees, to get bills passed. Having more affordable housing would be good for his riding. We were able to meet the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. He met different people.

How is the member for Red Deer—Mountain View going to face these organizations that are going to receive the GST rebate and tell them that he is voting against the measure?

• (1600)

[English]

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:** Madam Speaker, that was one of the discussions I had when a number of members of the FCM were with me this morning, and I know how important it is. Communities have some very good initiatives that they are already incorporating. It is more a case of how we take the good ideas we see from our municipalities and help incorporate them into major ideas that help the provinces and then help the federal government. Believe me, thinking that—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have been very generous with the time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, after eight long years of the Liberal Prime Minister, costs have shot up and millions of Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. Housing costs have doubled, rent has doubled, mortgage rates have doubled, grocery prices are soaring and the lineups for food banks are shocking.

I received an email from Tyler, who bought a home a couple of years ago. His mortgage has gone up from \$1,600 to \$4,000 a month. He says he has no other choice but to sell his home and downgrade to make his life livable.

Candis is from Maple Ridge, and she has seen her payments double also. She can no longer afford new clothes for her children and needs to take them out of sports to try to make ends meet.

Then there is Shaffy. I met him at Seaspan Shipyards in North Vancouver. He is a welder. He showed me on an app that his mortgage is \$7,528 a month. He told me that he is not living in a palace. It is a 40-year-old four-bedroom home in one of Vancouver's suburbs. He is being forced to work 10-hour shifts seven days a week and has no freedom. He said he cannot give his body a rest or he is going to lose his home.

These are not just stories. These are real lives, and the same thing is happening across Canada.

The blame rests fully on the members of the Liberal-NDP coalition for their incompetence and ultimately, I would say, their lack of concern for Canadians. They have shown they lack a basic understanding of economics or how to run a country. I will take that back. They are good at running a country into the ground.

It was not that long ago that our nation was one of the richest in the world, but under the Prime Minister, our rankings have been dropping. Country after country is passing us in GDP and per capita ranking.

I met a tourist on the way to Vancouver Island about a month or so ago. He has come to Canada numerous times over the past 40 years. He asked me what has happened to Canada. From his perspective, it just seems to be in decline. Unfortunately, he is right. What has happened to Canada is eight years of being run by an incompetent Liberal government that is joined at the hip with the socialist NDP and Bloc.

Why has everything become so unaffordable? The Liberals went on a crazy spending orgy, doling out hundreds of billions of dollars. The definition of that word is "excessive and indiscriminate indulgence in a specified activity". We will call that spending.

### *Government Orders*

The Prime Minister has added more debt to Canada than all the prime ministers before him, for 150 years. The Liberals have been absolutely careless with finances and have been racking up, for all intents and purposes, the credit card debt. This has caused great problems and chaos, but they have made sure that their friends, buddies and insiders have gotten their share.

I think of the ArriveCAN app scam, where millions of dollars were spent, essentially given to a two-person company in the basement of a house for no work, other than sending a few emails out. Something that should have cost a few thousand dollars has cost millions of dollars. There has been scandal after scandal. It has almost become part of the narrative.

Last week, we heard about the billion-dollar green slush fund. The chair of Sustainable Development Technology Canada had to resign and is under investigation by the RCMP because money was going directly to her company and to her.

• (1605)

These are some of the buddies we are seeing. This is happening, and I do not have time to talk about all the different situations and the people who have become rich off the Liberals. The Conservatives will turn over these stones. That is our objective here in Parliament, as it will be if we are elected to government.

The message from the Liberals for a long time was essentially that interest rates were low so what was the danger of borrowing. With this borrow and borrow and spend and spend, what has happened? For one thing, interest costs have escalated. We are now spending \$51 billion on interest payments alone this year. That is more than we spend in health transfers. It is twice as much as we are spending on the Canadian military. One of the very few things the Liberals decided to cut back on is the Canadian military, at a time of great danger. Look at what happened with Russia attacking Ukraine and the situation with China. With all sorts of threats, the Liberals decided to cut the one important piece they should be increasing, but that is typical for them.

Canadians are suffering by the Liberals' indulgence in spending, their addiction. We keep hearing the word "investing" and that the Liberals are investing in this and that. It is not their money; it is taxpayers' money. Their actions have led not just to increased interest charges but to a significant rise in inflation. Anybody who goes to the grocery store can attest to that. People are not eating as nutritiously as before because of this.

I met with a number of university students last week, and they said they are having a hard time making ends meet. They are using food banks. I talked to the president of a university, who said there are lineups and that the use of food banks has gone up dramatically. Two million Canadians a month are going to food banks. This is not good, and the Liberals and the NDP need to be accountable for this. They can try to blame Harper from eight years ago, but it rests fully square on their shoulders.

What is happening here? The Liberal brain trust, as we see in the bill, has begun to panic. To the Liberals, this is about politics, power and money. As inflation has gone up and costs have gone up, guess what has gone down. It is their poll numbers, and that is causing a bit of panic on the government benches.

What have they been forced to do? They have raised interest rates, which is a time-tested way to lower inflation. However, what they have succeeded in doing is escalating the cost of carrying a mortgage. Half of mortgage owners will be renewing their mortgages in the next two years, 70,000 per month, and it is hitting them hard. This is happening everywhere in Canada, especially in areas with the biggest mortgages, such as metropolitan Vancouver, Toronto, Victoria and other large centres. People are losing their homes and losing their quality of life. This is real and it is painful.

One of the Liberals' solutions is to extend mortgages to 90 years or 100 years so their great-great-great-grandchildren can pay off the mortgage and people can keep their homes. That is not a solution.

The Liberals have realized the big mess they have created and the political urgency, and what they have done is taken a piece of Conservative Party policy, put on their superhero outfits and told people not to fear because they are here to help with solutions. They took one of our solutions, which was to take away the GST from purpose-built rental housing, but there is a lot more they need to do.

• (1610)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the one thing I did not hear the member talk about was a carbon tax. I know he is a really big fan of the carbon tax, because when he was in the provincial legislature in B.C., he not only voted in favour of it, but he also spoke very highly of it. He said:

It means that every dollar collected from B.C. carbon tax is given back to the taxpayers in the form of tax credits or tax cuts. Our carbon tax appears to be working.

He said:

We view this tax as a tool to change behaviour and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

If a Liberal had said that, he would have been heckling.

**An hon. member:** Maybe he was a Liberal back then.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, maybe he was a Liberal back then. I do not know. Maybe he could inform me why he is against the carbon tax. Why is he hypocritical?

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Madam Speaker, I am proof that there can be redemption. If I can see the light, there is hope for the Liberal Party. It is absolutely clear from one end of Canada to the other that it is a disaster. I totally endorse the removal of the carbon tax from coast to coast to coast.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge and his Conservative colleagues are asking Canadians to believe in a fairy tale. They want people to believe that all these problems with housing magically started over the last several years or at least since 2015. In fact, it goes on a lot longer, with the current government, the Harper government before it, the Chrétien government and the Mulroney government. What we are seeing today is the natural conclusion of 40 years of neo-liberal economic policy. This did not happen overnight.

Similarly, when the Conservatives go after the carbon tax but completely ignore the fact that corporate profits are at the highest level ever, which is a key driver of inflation, it is a shame to their constituents and a shame to the political discourse in this chamber.

I have a question on Bill C-56. Does the member at least agree that these measures strengthen the Competition Act and remove the GST? Will he support them? Will he agree that the motion today is thanks to the hard work of the NDP driving the Liberal government to do better, and in fact that the Conservatives have been, again, sitting on the sidelines doing nothing?

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Madam Speaker, one of our Conservative members introduced a private member's bill on competition, because we need to have competition in the airline industry, in the banking industry, in telecommunications, in every industry.

Canadians are suffering. We support competition. We need to have competition.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is a colleague from British Columbia, and we know that in British Columbia we have some of the highest housing prices in the country. We know that rent has doubled, and housing costs have doubled.

In this legislation that we are debating today, two of the biggest issues that we are dealing with are inflation and the cost of housing. Inflation has caused interest rates to increase which has then caused interest rate payments to be higher for people.

Could the member tell us if this legislation would address inflation or interest rates?

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Madam Speaker, no. This is just a bill of part measures.

It has a couple of pieces that are good, but it does not really address inflation. One of the causes of inflation is that the Liberals have not changed their reckless spending. They have a \$15-billion plant that is costing every Canadian family \$1,000 to employ 1,600 temporary foreign workers.

The Liberals are still out of control with their spending, and things are only going to get worse, even if they take little pieces here and there. Rather than Canadians having little pieces of what the Liberals are bringing out of Conservative bills, what they need to do is actually vote for the real deal, and see lives positively changed.

• (1615)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, before I get started, I really want to thank the member for

Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge for answering my question. He could have tried to skate around it, but he hit it right on. I question the sincerity in his answer, but at least he answered my question. He did not skate around it. I appreciate that, and I just wanted to put that on the record.

Here we are talking about this very important piece of legislation that has to do with affordable housing and the groceries act and how we can amend other acts in order to improve those two challenges that Canadians are facing right now. However, I have heard at least two Conservatives in this debate. Just moments ago, the member for Red Deer—Mountain View was talking about time allocation and concerned about limiting debate on this, but then he never even talked about the bill. The member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge never even talked about the bill. My original question for him, had I not been waiting to ask him this question on the carbon tax in B.C., was going to be whether he had actually read the bill. He did not even reference all the measures that are in the bill. An NDP member asked him a question, and he still did not answer it.

I find it very fascinating that here we have the Conservatives with their full outrage jumping up and saying, “You're not letting us debate” and “You're allocating time.” Meanwhile, with the time that is allocated to discuss this bill, they are not even talking about it. I can only imagine it is not all that important to them if they are not even using the allocated time to actually discuss it.

I am noticing a trend. When we introduced the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement a few weeks ago, the Conservatives were taking a very similar approach. They talked nothing about the bill and did not seem to have a position on it. However, after it had been tabled for quite a while and there had been a prestudy in committee and it had been going on for quite a while, all of a sudden they decided, “Oh, I think we found something that we could use to justify why we are going to vote against this. It mentions a carbon tax in the preamble. Yes, this is exactly how we will vote against this.” Suddenly, the next week, they focused on this narrative and then they voted against it, but they did not mention it once before that.

I wonder who the award goes to in the Conservative Party for finding that red herring for them. It is absolutely shameful. I say this in the context that this is what is happening with the bill before us. I would love to know if they are going to vote in favour of it or if they are still in the process in the backrooms over there trying to figure out what words they can find in it to justify voting against it.

In this debate, I will try to focus a little bit on what I have heard. I have heard the member for Red Deer—Mountain View and a couple of members earlier talk about the price on pollution, or the carbon tax, and I will take the opportunity to set the record straight on some of that stuff.

### *Government Orders*

Eight out of 10 Canadians are better off with the rebate they get back after the price on pollution. Now, I should clarify, in all honesty, that the two out of 10 Canadians who do not are probably the most well off and probably the base that the Conservatives are banking on and so they spread this misinformation to try to suggest that this is not the case. However, I will give members the facts. This has just recently been published.

The average family of four in Alberta gets \$1,544 back per year. The average family of four in Manitoba gets \$1,056 back. In Saskatchewan, it is \$1,360. In Nova Scotia, it is \$992. In P.E.I., it is \$960. In Newfoundland, it is \$1,312. In New Brunswick, it is \$368. In Ontario, my home province, it is \$976. As a matter of fact, when we look at the four provinces that are fully under the federal backstop because they have not implemented their own program, the average family spends about \$500 on the price on pollution and gets back \$804. Eight out of 10 Canadians are better off as a result of what they are getting back.

• (1620)

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader raised this in a question earlier. Why do they never talk about the rebate? The rebate is such a fundamental core part of this.

Conservatives are more interested in spreading misinformation by suggesting that this is a tax, by suggesting that it contributes to inflation, which we know it does not, and then, most recently, by suggesting that it somehow impacts the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement.

That was probably the biggest mistake they made. What they did was make a concerted effort to obviously find this little bit in the agreement and say, “Aha, we found it. In the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, we found it. It says ‘carbon tax’ in the preamble. Let us use it.”

The genius who discovered that probably did not take the time to look. Had they done that, they would have discovered that Ukraine has had a price on pollution, a carbon tax, since 2011. Ukraine needed to do that because as part of its efforts—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** This is not a conversation. When the hon. member finishes speaking, hon. members can ask questions.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, the reason Ukraine has had that price on pollution since 2011 is that in order to get into the European market, which it had been trying to do for so long, the European market required that it have a price on pollution in order to stay competitive. That is why Ukraine had it. This incredible red herring that we are hearing recently from the Conservatives is nothing more than just that, a red herring.

The reality is that there is a faction within the Conservative Party of Canada. Some of the MPs over there have gone down the rabbit hole of alt-right-wing American politics. Now we are seeing that come out. I kind of always suspected it, because we have been seeing it happen over the last number of years, but I did not realize that this faction actually had a stranglehold on the party.

It is very likely that the Leader of the Opposition is part of that, given everything that he has done. Let us go back to the YouTube meta tags.

If members want to understand the Leader of the Opposition's support for Ukraine, they should just look at his social media posts from when President Zelenskyy visited us in September. He did not tweet about it. He did not put anything on Facebook about it. He did not put anything on Instagram about it. He was completely silent. He never said a word about Zelenskyy's visit.

The irony is that he did say a word about Zelenskyy appearing before this Parliament when he came a year earlier, when he came by video conference. He actually tweeted, at that time, in 2022, how proud he was to see President Zelenskyy appear before Parliament.

Do members know what the member for Calgary Nose Hill did? I do not know if a lot of people caught this, but it was almost a little subtle act of defiance. Do members know what she did? When he came this year in 2023, she quote tweeted his tweet from a year ago, congratulating him on coming. That was clearly a dig at the Leader of the Opposition because she recognized how silent he was on it.

The member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman and all Conservatives can stand up and preach to me all they want about how much they support Ukraine, but their actions speak louder than words. They are silent when the president comes here. They are silent when it came to determining what they were going to say on the Ukraine free trade deal, and then they voted against it.

This is a deal that President Zelenskyy asked us to vote in favour of—

• (1625)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask you to remind the member of the bill we are talking about today. It is Bill C-56. I believe he is talking about Bill C-57, which was passed—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We are actually talking about Motion No. 30, but I would like to remind the hon. member of that being the subject we are discussing.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I do not know if the member was sitting in the chamber when his two colleagues just spoke, but neither of them spoke about the bill at all.

The reality is that the Conservative Party of Canada does not support Ukraine. The Conservatives can say all they want about what they do, but their actions speak louder than words. We have seen that, and Canadians have seen that. It is coming to light now, and everybody is becoming aware of it.

*Government Orders*

It is not supporting Ukraine for the same reason that Matt Gaetz and Marjorie Taylor Greene are not supporting Ukraine, which is that far right influence, and it is in the Conservative Party of Canada. They know it. For those who are still wondering, the real reason the Leader of the Opposition is so petrified to show support for Ukraine is that he would lose votes to Maxime Bernier. It is that simple. He is trying to hold on to a base.

When it comes to this particular piece of legislation, we are talking about increasing competition and, by default, increasing trade. We know that, to ensure we put the right measures in place when we are looking internally within our own country, we have to recognize that there are anti-competitive practices going on. When Loblaw has nearly 40% of the market share of groceries between Loblaw's and Shoppers Drug Mart and every other entity it owns, we quickly start to see that it would be extremely difficult for competition to exist.

In comparison, Walmart in the United States, which is the retailer with the largest grocery share, has about 18% of the marketplace. We know that, in Canada, there is a problem with this. That is why this bill seeks to strengthen the rules around competition. It seeks to empower the Competition Bureau further, providing it with more resources and the money it would need to effectively operate and giving it the tools to make advances and make moves, when it needs to, to ensure that competition exists.

Competition is great, and we need to encourage competition, but sometimes government, or government-charged agencies, have to get involved because we do run into situations where that competition starts to get limited, and then we see price-fixing, as we saw with the Canada Bread Company and its bread price-fixing. That is why this is so incredibly important.

Conservatives are going to tell people that inflation is driven by a price on pollution, when it has virtually no effect on it. They are going to tell people that a price on pollution is why the price of gas and oil has skyrocketed over the last year, and it is simply not true. The reality is that, in the oil and gas sector specifically, the carbon tax added two cents per litre. It is two cents and people get more than that back.

Meanwhile, wholesale profit margins for the large oil distributors rose by 18¢ per litre. I do not hear the outrage about the profits. The profits of Loblaw were announced just yesterday for its third quarter, and it was, again, a double-digit increase in profits over the previous quarter. It is extremely important that we put the right measures in place to assist with this.

I can understand why Conservatives are reluctant to do this. They never seem to fall on the side of those who are struggling, of those who need these supports and tools in place, or of those who need the benefit of healthy competition. This government will do that. I have said this many times in the House before, and I will say it again: I am very glad there is another party in the room who are acting like adults, which is the NDP. It sees this need as well, and it sees the need to push this legislation through for the betterment of all Canadians.

• (1630)

We all know that, if we had not put closure on this today, the bill would be here forever. That is what Conservatives have done with so many other pieces of legislation.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member got to the point towards the end, under your guidance.

I would like to stay on the topic of the bill and talk about one of the main things this bill would do, which is that it would take the GST off of purpose-built rentals to promote the building of new rental accommodations. In my riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay, it is almost impossible to find rental accommodation. When I talk to the city planners, they say that every day they are building more housing units than they have ever built before, but every day there are fewer affordable housing units because they are being lost to Airbnbs, people buying holiday homes, etc. The people buying the new housing units are the people who can afford them, and they already have houses.

What is the member's government doing to actually build affordable, non-market housing that would really make a difference for Canadians? Getting out of the way and taking the tax off will build more units, but it will not help people who need affordable housing.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, it is the government's job to incentivize various parts of the marketplace from time to time when it sees the need for the betterment for society. Sometimes we do that with respect to encouraging the growth of a particular manufacturing sector, such as we have seen with electric batteries and the car revolution that is coming along with EVs, and sometimes it is about incentivizing through removing the GST on building new rental units.

On the topic of affordable housing specifically, this is just one tool of many. I have made various announcements that are based on different levels of government support. We may see the rents in a particular building being required at 80% of CMHC market rents and sometimes as low as 50% or 60% based on the supports that have been received. We also have supports for rent that is geared to one's income. The member would know that the ministry responsible deals with that as well.

This is one program he mentioned, but there is a whole host of programs. We have to approach housing from a holistic perspective. If we were just doing the one measure he mentioned, it certainly would not be enough, but we are doing a lot more than that.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the bill we are debating today contains parts of two different Conservative private members' bills buried within it. I am wondering if the member opposite could enlighten us as to how many other great Conservative ideas it will take for his government to get to the point where it can finally look at balancing the budget.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, does the member really think that Canadians care whose idea it was? It is an amazing idea. I thank him very much for it. Let us celebrate it together. Now I hope the member will vote for it. That was such a ridiculous comment.

I know this better than most people. I brought forward a private member's bill in 2016, and before it got voted on, the government put it in a piece of legislation it had brought forward. I rejoiced in that, knowing that Canadians would be better off as a result. Only a petty politician would spend time talking about it being a certain person's idea, not someone else's, and why the other person is getting the credit for it. Who cares? This is for the betterment of our country.

• (1635)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the reality is that we have the scale and scope of a housing crisis, and it is manifest right across this country. In fact, in my riding of New Westminster—Burnaby, average rents are now \$2,500 a month for a one-bedroom apartment. That means families are homeless or are doubling or tripling up. In some cases, there may be half a dozen people living in a one-bedroom apartment.

With that scale and scope, and knowing how awful the Harper regime was, why did the Liberals not move to immediately build the housing that is absolutely necessary? Why are they looking, through the fall economic statement, to wait two years before the funding that is so crucial to building affordable housing, which is based on 30% of income, and that so many Canadians need now, is put into place? Why are the Liberals, despite the pressure, hesitating on doing the right thing?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question, but it has a false pretext, which is to assume that nothing else has ever been done, which is not the case.

We have had, for a number of years now, the national housing strategy. I am aware of several projects in my own riding that have been built, as well as those on the west coast and on the east coast.

This is what I find most frustrating about the last two questions. They assume that this is the only measure that has ever been taken by the government on housing. We have been dealing with housing challenges since we came into office. We had the first national housing strategy introduced, I believe around 2018, and we have been trying to tackle this ever since. Yes, the problem has been getting worse. That is why we are throwing even larger measures at it right now, such as the one the member indicated.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on the whole affordability issue, and this bill apparently deals with affordability, how can we guarantee that it is going to go down or get easier for constituents in my, the member's and everybody else's ridings? We have tried this and that, and we have said that we were going to lower prices, but people are still feeling the pinch. How can he say this bill would help Canadians with affordability?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I cannot guarantee anything. I do not think anybody can guarantee anything realistically.

What I can say is that we look at where the problem is. We know the problem is in food inflation. We know that food prices have inflated much faster than the average. We know there is a small oligopoly in Canada in the major retailers of food. That is why the minister responsible brought those CEOs to Ottawa to talk about what can be done.

That is why this bill would empower the Competition Bureau to do more by putting more teeth into its ability to deal with the problems of anti-competitiveness. Again, this is one measure that I think goes to the heart of competition and to ensuring competition because we recognize that, when there is healthy competition, people get the best value for their dollar, which they are not getting right now specifically as it relates to the retail grocery industry.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Madam Speaker, just so the member is aware, we are talking about Motion No. 30. Therefore, there is no reason why anybody should be chastised for not talking about some of the other issues. Of course, they are important and have been described before.

One thing I would like to mention, because the Liberals seem to feel they have found something special to speak about, is that, yes, Ukraine is part of carbon pricing in the European Union, but that is so it can participate. In 2019, and this comes from McKinsey and Company's Ukraine carbon pricing policy, in Poland it was \$1.00, in Sweden it was \$139, in Ukraine it was 36¢, and in Canada at that time, to be fair, was \$20, which is 55 times more. That is what we are talking about. Therefore, I think it is somewhat rich that the Liberals are taking that position.

The point I wish to make is that I have gone to OECD meetings in Europe where they were discussing the concept of the carbon tax. The major push from this country was that those countries must make sure to put their stamp on Canada's carbon tax. That happened both in Berlin when I was there and in Birmingham two summers ago. These are the types of things the government is pushing, and it continues to do it now.

• (1640)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's comment about talking about whatever we want. Maybe he should talk to the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands about that, as he is the one who called me out on it.

This does not matter because nowhere in this deal does it commit Ukraine to Canada's system. It is a red herring to suggest otherwise.

The member will have to explain to me why Conservatives never raised the issue. First, they started talking about how it was a woke free trade deal. They started out talking about everything but a carbon tax. They only started talking about a carbon tax being in this about a week ago. They just discovered it then. They should not act like they have been on this all along because they have not. They know it is a red herring.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am always happy to see you. I like speaking when you are in the Chair. I know you are eagerly awaiting my speech, but I know you are even more eagerly awaiting that of the colleague with whom I am sharing my time, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, a man so very cultivated that his riding is zoned for agriculture.

I feel like repeating that we are faced with closure yet again. They are reducing our debate time and bypassing the process. They are taking time away from the Standing Committee on Finance for a bill that we feel is important.

The argument the government gives for working this way is this. It says that housing is so important that we need to ram this through by bypassing parliamentary processes and that the Competition Act reform is so important that we need to ram it through before Christmas by bypassing parliamentary processes.

I am not very satisfied with that type of logic for the following reason. There have been problems with the Canadian competition regime for years. In the early 1980s, we had 13 big box stores in Canada. Geographically speaking, Canada is a rather large country. We allowed mergers and acquisitions to occur at the expense of consumers to the point where the minister can now sit down with the entire grocery market around a coffee table in his office one morning. The government let that happen. The Liberals and Conservatives let that happen. We have had alternating Liberal and Conservative governments, and this has never been urgent until now. It was never urgent until the Liberals' pre-session caucus meeting where an argument broke out and then, all of a sudden, they had to move quickly. All of a sudden, this is so urgent that every parliamentarian who is not a Liberal is having their rights violated.

Housing and the GST on housing are so urgent that they have to be rammed through under a gag order. Where did this measure come from? I am not saying it is a bad measure. I am not saying that it will not help increase the supply of housing.

What I can say is that the Liberals had a caucus meeting prior to the parliamentary session. They were down in the polls, they panicked and they had to do something about housing. They came up with the GST measure, but were not even able to include the parameters of a major change to the tax laws in the bill. Now here they are introducing a very flawed bill that will give the government disproportionate regulatory power. Now they are telling us that it has to be passed quickly.

However, they had not thought about it before. This is the government's new way of skirting democratic debate: gag orders.

Today, when we ask questions about the administration of the Canada Revenue Agency's programs, we are told that the CRA is independent.

Now there are new bills where we are given only a framework and everything else is set by regulation. The Liberals had promised help for the disabled. They finally introduced a bill with a framework, but it does not include a penny for the disabled and its parameters are unknown to us.

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That is why I have to say that, once again, the Liberal government is disrespecting parliamentarians. I believe in parliamentary work. I disagree with lots of people in the House, but I recognize that they take the time to look at the issues, read the bills, propose amendments, rise in the House and express their views on bills. I think those parliamentarians should have the right to speak. Now the Liberals are talking about the cost of living. They say we have to bypass the whole process because of the cost of living.

The economic statement contained no immediate social housing measures. That is what Quebec wanted. We have permanent programs to build low-income housing and housing co-ops. The federal government has been stalling on handing money over to Quebec for years. The Bloc Québécois had to push to get the last \$900 million we were owed. There is virtually nothing in the latest economic statement that acknowledges the urgency of the situation.

Take the cost of living, for one. Now that there are only five major grocery chains left, we have to hustle for legislation they took decades to introduce. On housing, not only is there nothing in the statement, but, to make things worse, they are complicating matters with Quebec by creating the department of interference in Quebec's municipal affairs.

● (1645)

It is a bad idea. Pierre Elliott Trudeau's government tried it back in the day and gave up. That government had no luck doing anything with it. Now it is the son's turn. Repeating a mistake twice is never a sign of common sense. It must be an intergenerational thing.

Small and medium-sized businesses and chambers of commerce in my riding are asking that we give our businesses more time to repay their Canada emergency business account loans. What is this government's contemptuous response? It says that the federal government provided \$8 out of \$10 of assistance during the pandemic and that it has helped businesses tremendously. However, it did so with our tax dollars, and piled up a debt that our children will have to pay interest on. This is not money that the federal government conjured out of thin air. It is money that the federal government borrowed at the expense of future generations. True, we collectively took the risk. However, the government is telling us that since it helped businesses during the first phase of the crisis, it has the moral right to abandon them during the second.

Now the government is talking to us about competition. When people in my riding go out shopping, how many small businesses, suppliers and shops will be closed? How many fewer stores will people have to choose from? What effect will this have on consumer choice and prices in rural areas, where often the only place people can buy many products is from a small business? Despite all that, the government is doing absolutely nothing.

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Earlier, I had a phone conversation with a produce grower in my riding. He called to tell me that he had a bad season, that it was terrible. I see Conservative MPs looking at me and they know that what I am saying is true. We all get these calls. People are asking us when the government is going to pay out emergency support to get them through the year. The government's answer is that it will not do anything. It will not offer them any emergency assistance to make up for the worst season they have ever had. How will consumers be affected when produce markets close? In the world of fruit and vegetables, we need produce growers to provide us with local, environmentally friendly products that are grown nearby, that are homegrown and that revitalize our rural areas and regions. The government is doing absolutely nothing about that.

I understand that the NDP wanted to shut down the debate. I do not know what they got in return, but I am very curious. Everyone in the parliamentary precinct is dying to know what the NDP is getting in return for shutting down the debate. Everyone wants to know how the movie ends. I cannot wait to find out. I do not know what the NDP got but I think it was probably pretty costly for the Liberals, although the NDP did not get anything in the economic update. What we want are measures for the middle class. We want measures for our farmers, for our businesses and for housing, but there are no such measures.

Now, on the substance of the bill, it is a good bill. We have been saying for years that this kind of legislation should be introduced, specifically regarding competition.

In Canada, our competition regime is archaic on every level. It is not that the commissioner of competition does not want to do his job. The Competition Bureau employs competent people, but there are fundamental flaws in their mandate. Among other things, mergers and acquisitions are allowed based on efficiency gains alone. In Canada, when two businesses merge, no one asks whether the cost reduction and efficiency gain will allow them to be more competitive with the others and in turn lower the price consumers pay. They only ask whether they are able to be more efficient and to hell with the consumer.

I do not have enough time to get into the details of the bill, but I can say that it will change this particular situation. It will also prohibit other anti-competitive practices. In Canada, it is prohibited to directly come to an agreement with a competitor to reduce competition, but getting the dirty work done by another is allowed. For example, a business has the right to tell the shopping centre it is renting space from that it cannot rent space to another grocer or another hardware store. They get others to do the dirty work.

This bill contains a number of good things. They include the government giving the Competition Bureau more power to conduct investigations, obtain documents and compel witnesses to testify. That will be a good thing.

I will conclude my speech by saying that a bank merger is coming. HSBC is being acquired by the Royal Bank of Canada, or RBC. This file is on the Minister of Finance's desk, and the Competition Bureau only looked into the efficiencies that would be generated by the transaction.

• (1650)

If the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry is at all committed to his principles, he will require that the Minister of Finance wait for this legislation to be passed and for the Competition Bureau to conduct a new analysis before authorizing this transaction.

[English]

**Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am a little bit puzzled. On the one hand, the hon. member is attacking the NDP, and I guess the government at the same time, in terms of this motion. On the other, he is supporting the contents of the bill. Does he support the continued Conservative filibuster, or does he not want to see residents of Quebec and the rest of Canada actually benefit from the measures he supports?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, first, I am not attacking anyone. I am making some factual observations. The fact is that our right and my right as a parliamentarian to express myself on this matter is being curtailed.

The member across the way talks about the Conservative filibuster. It is not right that we are pushing this bill to the Standing Committee on Finance next week when this is legislation that amends the Excise Tax Act and fundamentally changes the Competition Act. It is not right that such an important bill is getting only two meetings, next Monday and Wednesday until midnight. If the Liberals thought their bill was so important and they, like me, thought that the content of this bill was so important, they would allow the Standing Committee on Finance to do its job properly, but this is absolutely not the case right now.

[English]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, first of all, I empathize with the frustration. I am frustrated too. We are in a position where we have to deal with a party that is blocking legislation after legislation from getting through at a time when people need help. People need to have access to affordable groceries and a roof over their head. We are put in this predicament where we are all impacted by the decisions being made consecutively by the Conservatives to stop anything from going through the House. What does the member propose we do in order for us to see Canadians get the help they need and deserve when there is a party blocking all the legislation Canadians need from going through?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, and there was light.

I understand my colleague's viewpoint and her question. It is a reasonable question. I understand how, from the NDP's perspective, voting for multiple closure motions might seem like a good thing for democracy. Let us say for argument's sake that this is a great closure motion, even though I would disagree.



Not only are they muzzling us at this stage, they are also muzzling us at the committee stage. No one with an iota of intelligence in the world of economics, finance or competition would think that two evening committee meetings are enough for a bill with such potentially deep and long-term effects on our competition system.

What would I have done? I might have done a better job of negotiating.

• (1655)

[English]

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, maybe there are other measures the member would like to see the government take on that would be beneficial to his constituents in Quebec. Does he want to speak a bit more about what could be done to further enhance competition rather than just simply having a lazy government stealing other parties' bills?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, I get the same kinds of questions from both Liberals and Conservatives. We support the bill. We think its underlying principle is good and its main features will be useful. We do not think these solutions will fix everything, and especially not when it comes to housing, but there are good solutions here for competition issues.

What I think we should do is take a little more time to hear from witnesses so that stakeholders can share their views and we can suggest amendments and work toward improving the bill. If things do come to a standstill at some point, we will discuss all that, but I think that holding a gun to the committee's head and making it work as fast as possible will rob us of a tool that is of vital importance to parliamentary democracy and the legislative process. I find that deeply disappointing.

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will no doubt pick up roughly where my colleague from Mirabel left off. He painted a good picture of the political context. He concluded by speaking to the bill. I will go a bit deeper into the bill.

The government proposal grants the Standing Committee on Finance the power to expand the scope of the bill by incorporating three substantial changes.

First, there is the amendment seeking to increase the penalty amounts. This increase is right out of Bill C-352, introduced by the leader of the NDP. The amendment changes the Competition Act and will render several of its elements obsolete once Bill C-56 is passed. The two other amendments, which deal with abuse of a dominant position and the Competition Bureau's powers of inquiry when conducting market studies, although subject to the wording of amendments to come, appear to have limited scope. Their inclusion seems to be rather intended to give the New Democrats a symbolic victory in order to paper over a major concession on their part. Let us review these three amendments.

The first aims to increase penalties for abuse of a dominant position to \$25 million for a first offence and \$35 million for subsequent offences. This is taken directly from Bill C-352, introduced by the leader of the NDP. Currently, the maximum penalty that can

### *Government Orders*

be levied by the bureau and the tribunal is \$5 million for an offending company, along with prison sentences of 14 years for directors who breach the act. This proposed revision is therefore significant, dispelling the idea that penalties are just an inherent cost of doing business. They could now have a deterrent effect comparable to that of European or American legislation. Again, as my colleague asked, if it is already in force elsewhere, why has it taken so long for Canada to wake up? I believe the explanations in the last speech were very powerful.

The second amendment, which gives the Competition Bureau the option of conducting market study inquiries at the direction of the minister or on the recommendation of the commissioner of competition, while requiring prior consultation between these two officials, is quite significant. Currently, the bureau has strict investigative powers, but only if there is a clearly defined infringement. This adopts a quasi-criminal approach. The amendment proposed seeks to address this shortcoming when market studies are conducted in order to ensure greater effectiveness in assessing the dynamics of competition.

The third amendment, which reviews the legal grounds prohibiting abuse of dominance, aims to prevent anti-competitive practices that impede or significantly decrease competition in a relevant market. Even though the current legislation prohibits various restrictive practices, it does not address predatory pricing by businesses in a dominant market position. The NDP's Bill C-352 sought to fill this gap by specifically prohibiting the imposition of excessive prices. Despite the provision's obvious value, the government still seems resistant to passing it, offering instead a procedural amendment to the existing legislation through Bill C-56, without really reinforcing consumers' defences against such practices.

Although it makes positive changes to the Competition Act, Bill C-56 hardly seems an appropriate response to the housing crisis and soaring food prices. An in-depth review of the national housing strategy remains essential, as does redefining abuse of dominance to prevent price increases resulting from a lack of competition. These critical areas persist, independently of whether Bill C-56 is passed.

The Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of the motion and the bill, recognizing certain positive measures and the absence of any downright harmful elements. However, we should point out that it is only a drop in the bucket in terms of current needs. With respect to housing, there is no reason to believe that Bill C-56 will help reduce rental costs.

• (1700)

At the briefing offered to members on September 21, officials were specifically asked to provide the studies on which the Minister of Finance based her claim that Bill C-56 would impact rents. To give credit where credit is due, the question was asked by my colleague from Joliette. Their response to my colleague's question was evasive, suggesting they did not have these studies. That suggests an uncertain future as to the supposed effectiveness of the measures.

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It is not very likely that landlords will decide to lower their rents simply because they did not pay GST on the purchase of a new building. Furthermore, the increase in interest rates, affecting all real estate and leading to higher mortgage rates, is a major factor influencing future costs. With or without Bill C-56, tenants might very well have to live with them.

In the best case scenario, eliminating taxes on rental buildings could encourage some builders to choose that type of construction over condominiums, potentially providing a glimmer of hope in this growing housing crisis. However, though it will not have a direct impact on prices, Bill C-56 could still help alleviate the housing shortage, which may get worse in the years to come.

Right now, the Société québécoise des infrastructures says that only 14% of new housing units built by 2030 will be rentals, despite the fact that almost 40% of Quebec households are renting. This growing imbalance foreshadows a terrible national tragedy, and three times as many new constructions will need to be rental units if we want to resolve the housing crisis.

If Bill C-56 manages to increase the proportion of rental housing, even slightly, it would be a modest step forward, but that will not be enough to meet the crying need. However, we note the lack of specifics regarding the types of dwellings or buildings, and the absence of accessibility requirements to be eligible for reimbursement, which hands the government the power to regulate those factors.

During the information sessions for parliamentarians, which my colleague from Joliette attended, we asked officials why the act contained no eligibility criteria, which is an unusual exception in tax matters. Their answer clearly conveyed a sense of urgency and poor preparation, which definitely suggests an off-the-cuff approach.

We can all agree that it would be difficult to impose affordability criteria on builders. They are not the future owners of the buildings under construction. However, the GST could be imposed on buyers if the housing units were rented out at sky-high prices; this is a measure that could be examined in committee to improve the bill's effectiveness, which so far is pretty limited. That might be a good idea.

While amendments to the Competition Act deserve the Bloc Québécois's support, to suggest that they will have any impact on grocery bills is wishful thinking and a misrepresentation of reality. We support the bill, but we have no pats on the back for Ottawa.

• (1705)

[English]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on the last points the member made around rent and who is really going to benefit from the GST exemption.

Of course I believe that the GST exemption is a good idea. I wish it had happened many years ago. Would the member mind just expanding on what we need to do for renters?

In British Columbia, there are above-guideline rent increase pagers being served to people. I know that, for one of the residents in

my riding, their rent went from \$1,100 to \$1,400, and they were asked to sign one of these above-guideline rent increases. Could the member expand on what he thinks would be helpful to make sure renters are protected?

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate some of the things I said. I do not see why a landlord would say that, since he did not pay GST on the purchase of a new building, his rental prices will go down. I do not see how this measure could lead to that. I do not see any automatic or obvious correlation.

Having said that, I believe that if GST were to be imposed, it should be on the buyers if homes were being purchased only to rent them at exorbitant prices. That could be one measure. How can rental housing be improved? It is often a question of supply and demand. To improve the situation, we need a major housing construction strategy. Clearly, we do not have one.

[English]

**Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, that was an interesting answer; the member said he does not see a correlation, then specified the correlation that we need to build more housing. Reducing the cost of building, especially by reducing the GST, would make rental projects more profitable for builders to develop, increase the supply and increase competition in the rental market. Would he not acknowledge that reducing this cost is going to have an impact, which is what we want to see?

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately, the member opposite did not listen to what I said. I said that there was no correlation with rental prices. He can listen to that again and we will talk about it again.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would just like to check something with my colleague. The Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-56. We support the elements of Bill C-56 amended by the motion, but we oppose the super closure motion, which limits all debate and committee study.

Take, for example, the elimination of the GST on new housing construction. Once again, this government is passing laws and saying that it will decide everything in the regulations. Right now, contractors are asking us questions, since they are entitled to a GST rebate if they started their work after September 14. What if they started laying the foundation before September 14? What if the first floor will be zoned commercially and there will be housing above it? Are they entitled to this rebate or not? We do not know.

I would like my hon. colleague to comment on that.

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**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, I think he put his finger on the problem with these super closure motions. My colleague began his question by summarizing our position, which is, of course, to oppose the super closure motion, but support the bill as amended at this stage.

Entrepreneurs are asking us questions and they want to know if they have the right to do certain things. We need to do our job properly on that. Super closure motions do not allow us to do our job properly. They do not allow us to carry out studies and examine the details as we should. This is not the first time that we have rammed a bill through because of a super closure motion only to realize later that the bill is having alarming consequences because of a misplaced comma.

• (1710)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we know very well that the Conservatives want to block this legislation. We know that they want to block it so that they can also block the anti-scab bill that the NDP has been pushing for and that is, of course, supported by Quebec's unions.

My question is very simple. Do the Bloc members understand that the Conservatives are blocking this bill so that they can also block the anti-scab bill?

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, correct me if I am wrong, but it seems to me that the closure motion came after the anti-scab bill issue.

That being said, generally speaking, I too was stonewalled by the Conservatives on a bill I defended at the Standing Committee on International Trade. Those staunch advocates of farmers, the Conservatives, filibustered the defence of supply management. We can clearly see how consistent they are.

However, it never crossed my mind to impose a super closure motion on that, either. Some practices we use can be worse than what we are trying to remedy. A super closure motion is one of them. If democratic procedures are denied, if things get mired in a procedural overload like that on a committee, fortunately, there are rules in place, there is a limited meeting time, despite everything, in case of filibustering.

I understand that it is frustrating, but for something as important as a new competition law that will have a direct impact on the lives of so many people, we must give ourselves the time to do things properly and—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The member has already gone over his allotted time.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to say what a privilege it is for me to be able to speak in what is an important debate for all parliamentarians and to again speak on behalf of the good people of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. For their benefit, I will explain that we are debating essentially two things today. Nominally, this is about Motion No. 30, the programming motion, but it is also about

Bill C-56, the actual bill that the motion is seeking to get through the House to committee, where important work has to be done.

I will start with Motion No. 30, because it has to be put in the context of what the NDP, with our 25 members, has been able to do in this Parliament. I want to give particular thanks to my leader, the NDP leader and member for Burnaby South. We have to make mention in this place of his private member's bill, Bill C-352, because important elements of that bill were adopted in Motion No. 30. I will highlight some of the relevant parts of Motion No. 30 for the benefit of constituents back home.

Essentially, the really important part of Motion No. 30 centres on a number of things that would include some of the elements of the private member's bill from the member for Burnaby South in Bill C-56. I think this would strengthen the bill through a number of measures, such as increasing maximum penalty amounts for the abuse of dominance so that whenever we have market concentration and some corporate entities are abusing their dominance, we would have increased fines to make sure they are brought into compliance. Another measure is allowing the Competition Bureau to conduct market studies and inquiries if it is either directed by the minister responsible for the act or recommended by the commissioner of the Competition Bureau. Another is to revise the legal test for abuse of a dominant position prohibition order to be sufficiently met if the tribunal finds that a dominant player has engaged either in a practice of anti-competitive acts or in conduct other than superior competitive performance.

In other words, these are three important measures in the motion that are basically lifted out of the PMB from the member for Burnaby South, showing once again that, as New Democrats, we are here to strengthen government bills, respond to the needs of our constituents and make sure we are passing laws that would address the serious issues of today.

I will now move to Bill C-56, which is not a very big government bill in the scale of things but one that essentially seeks to do two things: remove the GST from construction costs on new rental units and enable the Competition Bureau to better conduct investigations, while removing efficiency exemptions during mergers to improve competition. That is the specific section of the bill we would be improving through Motion No. 30.

Before I go on, I think we need to place the conversation around Bill C-56 in a larger context. I want to go back to when this Parliament started. Canadians are very familiar with the fact that in both the 2019 and the 2021 elections, Canadians, in their wisdom, decided to return minority Parliaments. I think that was the voice of the Canadian people saying that they did not trust all of the power in this place to any one party. It was a resounding message that parties had to come here and find ways to work together.

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At the start of this Parliament in 2021, we as New Democrats essentially had two choices. We could have chosen to stay on the sidelines, like my Conservative friends, and just complain while achieving nothing, or we could have realized that Canadians expected us to roll up our sleeves, put our heads down and get to work. We chose the latter option, and that is why, thanks to New Democrats, we are achieving some incredibly concrete things for Canadians.

Dental care is a massive program that is going to really help so many Canadians. We know that millions of Canadians are unable to afford to go to the dentist. Thanks to New Democrats, we are pushing that forward so the most disadvantaged people from coast to coast are going to be able to afford and get proper dental care.

● (1715)

We forced the government to double the GST credit. Of course, something I am personally very proud of having done, both here in the House and at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food, which does specifically relate to the conversation we are having today, is that we also started an investigation into food price inflation. I think it was the public and political pressure of that moment that led us to where we are today, talking about Bill C-56. Not only did I get a unanimous vote in the House of Commons, so I believe that all parties unanimously recommended that this was an issue of great concern to their constituents, but we also got a unanimous vote at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food to really put the issue of food price inflation under the microscope and to do a deep dive into the real causes. I will be happy to talk about that a little bit later in my speech.

We also forced the government to come up with a grocery rebate and anti-scab legislation that is going to help unions realize the collective bargaining power they have. When we are talking in this place about helping the working class, we need to make sure we are actually standing up for legislation that would do just that. For far too long in our country's history, working men and women who belong to the trade union movement have been at a disadvantage when it comes to the relationship with their employers. Employers have considerable financial resources. They have been able to wait out workers. They have been able to use replacement workers. In some cases, they have just waited for Liberal and Conservative governments to come to their rescue with back-to-work legislation. It is time, thanks to the NDP, that someone in this place truly stood up for the working class, not just with words, like the Conservatives are fond of doing, but with real action, actually changing our laws so an employer, with all of their resources, would no longer be able to undermine working-class men and women with replacement workers. One of the most powerful things the working class has at its disposal is the guaranteed freedom to withhold its labour in order to fight for a better deal.

Thanks to the NDP, we are going to change federal laws so we have the backs of workers in federally regulated industries, whether they work in the train system, in shipping, in the banking industry, etc. We are going to make sure the legislation before us gets over the finish line and serves as an example right across the country for all provincial jurisdictions. I am also very proud that, thanks to the NDP, we are leading the way in developing a sustainable jobs act. It

was thanks to the NDP that we got labour at the table with the government and brought in those changes to the law before it was finally introduced. Again, this demonstrates that when it comes to defending working people in Canada, the NDP is the party that is pushing the ball here, not just with words but also with sincere action.

Something I am incredibly proud of, as we work toward the end of the 2023 year, is that we are actively working with the government on bringing in pharmacare legislation. Again, the cost of living crisis is something that Bill C-56 is inherently trying to deal with. We have to make sure we deal with the economic shortfall that so many working-class Canadians are experiencing. In addition to lack of dental care, one of the biggest challenges for families is their inability to pay for expensive medication because they do not have the benefit of a workplace plan. Often, I have spoken to constituents who are skipping their medications altogether or are cutting them in half, and that can lead to extremely poor health outcomes later on. Yes, it might seem like a significant investment, but we have to put it in the context of the billions of dollars of savings that would result, not only for working families' budgets as we are trying to help them get by, but also for our health care system as a whole. When we look after people and establish methods whereby they can seek preventative health measures, this is how we save our health care system money, and it is how we look after families' budgets.

I am proud to be a member of a caucus that is standing up for all of those measures. I think there are days when my Conservative friends must be incredibly frustrated that they are being outworked and outdelivered by a party with a quarter of the number of their seats. I want to highlight a few examples because I listen to Conservatives talk every single day about the cost of living crisis, and I want to highlight a few of the hypocrisies we hear in this place from that particular party.

● (1720)

Number one is the carbon tax. I do not think that the oil and gas industry actually needs to spend all of that money on lobbying the federal government, because it already has a political party that does it for free. The Conservative Party's members stand in this place and, at every single opportunity, rail on the carbon tax while completely ignoring the oil and gas profiteering that has been happening over the last three years. It is a real disservice to the substance of the debate.

We only need to look at the evidence. We have seen this at committee, not only when we were dealing with food price inflation but also in a whole host of other committees. The evidence is there for everyone to see. If someone wants to see the real driver of inflation, they only need to look at some key industries and how much their profits have increased over the last three years. The most notable example is oil and gas. Since 2019, the industry's net profits have increased by over 1,000%. The Conservatives want to concoct a fairy tale that the carbon tax is the root of all evil, when we know that the wild price fluctuations we see on the cost of fuel are the result of market pressures and of corporations' gouging our constituents. However, there is not a word from my Conservative friends.

I have to single out the member for Carleton, the Conservative leader, because he has the temerity to stand in this place and vote against dental care for his constituents, for my constituents and for people from coast to coast to coast while having enjoyed taxpayer-funded dental benefits for the last 19 years as a member of Parliament. I guess the Conservative motto is "It is okay for me but not for thee." That is essentially the message I am getting from him.

Of course, there was a vote earlier this week on the Ukrainian free trade agreement. The Conservatives were absolutely grasping at straws to find a way to vote against it. At a time when Ukraine needs solidarity from the people of Canada, it would have sent a strong message if we could have had a unanimous vote in the House of Commons to show the Ukrainian people that we stand firmly with them. That is something President Zelenskyy wanted, yet one party decided to vote against the free trade agreement, and that was the Conservative Party. The shocking thing is that a vote at second reading is a vote for the principle of a bill. The principle of the bill is free trade with Ukraine. Someone may have problems with the bill, and that is fine, but do they agree with the principle of the bill? I do not always agree with bills that I vote for at second reading, but I do it under the condition of getting better results at committee. It is a strong message. Does one agree with the principle of the bill? Unfortunately, I think the Conservatives scored on their own net with that vote.

Let us talk about the housing crisis, because a significant part of Bill C-56 would be the removal of the GST for new rental units. There is a fairy tale being concocted in this place by my Conservative friends. They want people to magically believe that the housing crisis started just in the last few years, or eight years ago in 2015. That is absolutely false. The housing crisis we are seeing today is the natural conclusion of over 40 years of neo-liberal economic policy that has been pursued with glee by both Liberals and Conservatives. It did not start just with the current government and the current Prime Minister. It was happening over Stephen Harper's time, Paul Martin's time, Jean Chrétien's time and Brian Mulroney's time. We could not get to the shortfall we have in affordable housing just overnight. It is the result of a systematic abandoning of the federal government's role in building affordable housing, and the chickens are coming home to roost right now.

Again, we do need serious action, and Bill C-56 would be a small measure, removing the GST to spur on more housing development. If we look at the recent fall economic statement and at some of the spending items in the next few years for affordable

housing, the Liberals have decided to delay spending on critical areas until the 2025 fiscal year. It is a totally shameful response and extremely inadequate to the crisis moment so many Canadians are facing right now.

• (1725)

With food price inflation, I think Canadians are sick and tired of both parties taking potshots at each other when, for 20 months now, we have seen food prices rise at such a high rate, a rate far higher than the general rate of inflation. The Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry made that grand announcement in October, when he said he was going to summon the grocery CEOs to Ottawa for what amounted to a stern talking to. What did we learn today? We learned from Metro's CEO that discussion had zero impact on food price inflation.

This is why the agriculture committee is again examining this issue. It wants to hear from the minister and the grocery CEOs. It was my motion that sent for the corporate documents, which are now under lock and key at 131 Queen Street, so we can see what the corporations have agreed to and what their plan is. We also want to hold the government to account to see exactly what promises the minister tried to extract.

We are facing a situation where Canadians have been playing by the rules and doing everything right. However, there is corporate gouging in multiple sectors. In the housing market there are increased rents and renovations and the buying-up of affordable housing stock. Grocery and fuel prices are constantly going up. It is all a result of corporate profits driving inflation, and there is only one party in this place that is daring to call it out.

I think back to the old tale, Mouseland. Canadians are being asked to pick between the black cats and the white cats, but they are both cats. They are both going to pursue the same economic policies. I think, at their heart, Liberals and Conservatives believe in the same thing. They believe in market-based solutions, which is what have gotten us into the mess we are in. They like to show the differences between the two, but I fundamentally believe those two parties are but two different sides of the same coin. If we want something different, we cannot keep doing the same thing. Trading Liberals for Conservatives is simply going to continue us down the path that we have been on for the last 40 years.

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Canadians deserve a break. I am proud to say that through New Democrats' efforts on Bill C-56 and Government Business No. 30, we are delivering concrete results. We have rolled up our sleeves to get to work to improve this bill and insert some language that I believe is going to make the bill stronger and finally give the Competition Bureau the muscle, resources and legislative flex it needs to tackle the extreme marketplace concentration that we see in so many sectors, whether it is the grocery sector, telecommunications, oil and gas, name it, it is time.

I believe, Madam Speaker, I am getting a signal from you that—

• (1730)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member will have two minutes remaining the next time this matter is before the House.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### PROTECTING YOUNG PERSONS FROM EXPOSURE TO PORNOGRAPHY ACT

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)** moved that Bill S-210, An Act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, it is truly an honour to rise in the House and talk about such an important bill.

Bill S-210 is the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act. This bill would restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material.

Tonight I am honoured to speak to this bill. We have talked about pornography in this place before, and we recognize the impact of pornography, the impact on our youth, and why it is important that we sit down and actually talk about this.

I want to talk about why we need to do this. A lot has to do with unintentional viewing of pornography by our youth. We are here today to talk about what we can put in place to ensure that when our children are turning on their laptops, when they are looking at videos that the next thing that comes on is not pornography, that it is not something that is sexually explicit.

I recall, back in the 42nd Parliament, having the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 47, which looked at pornography. That was studied at committee. I spoke to Motion No. 47 because I had had my own experience with my son. It was following a commercial that I had watched on an Air Canada flight. I shared this story back in 2016-17, but I think it is worth sharing again. It has a lot to do with something so simple turning into something so wrong.

It started off with a simple underwear commercial on an Air Canada flight. As I was flying home, I watched a commercial with two men talking to one another about how cozy they were and how

life was so good. Then it zoomed back, and it is two men talking inside a pair of underwear. They represented testicles. To me, that is just what it is. They were talking about how comfortable they were. To me, it was not pornographic, and it was not sexually exploitive. It was just a really great way of selling a pair of underwear.

I thought I would show my son and my husband. At home I turned on the TV and went to one of the sites. After showing my family this video that I thought was so hilarious, it turned into soft porn. That is when I personally subjected my own child to it, without knowing. That is me as an adult user, and please do not hold that against me.

We have to look at how simple something like this could happen. It happened to me as a mom, and we know that it happens to children. Sixty-three per cent of children who have seen pornography reported that their first encounter with pornography was unintentional. Sixty-three per cent. Why is that important?

It is important because of what pornography does to a child. They looked at what the issue was. It was children having access to pornography. When surveyed, 83% of parents have suggested there should be robust age verification. That is why I am going to put on my status of women's hat now.

I have had the honour of working on really important files since 2015, working with the status of women, working as the shadow minister for women and gender equality. I understand the correlation between pornography and sexually violent acts.

A lot has to do with understanding that 41% of these children who have seen pornography have indicated that it has had a negative impact on their own relationships and their views of the opposite sex. We know that when it comes to misogyny, patriarchy and sexual violence, a lot of it is a power imbalance. That is exactly what we see in pornography.

What children are seeing is something that is not reality. Instead, they are seeing something very fictitious, very fantasy-like. With their level of maturity and processing the information in their brains, it becomes a reality. In time, they find that this sexualness, the things that they do become okay. It becomes normalized. These are things that we should really care about.

I watched an incredible documentary called *Over 18*. We also saw it here. It focused on a young boy, and different things about a family that was dealing with a child and other children who had come into contact with pornography. In the documentary, it was showing this young boy. The parents talked about the fact that they were sitting in the same room while he was watching pornography. Children become addicted to this kind of stuff. We know what happens with addiction, what happens to the brain. We have to know what happens when we are dealing with young children and when their brain development is being messed up.

● (1735)

Eighty-seven per cent of the scenes that people see in pornography are scenes of violence against women. I am not saying anything about pornography and what we should do about adults. I am talking about children and the fact is that what children would see is 87% of these acts are ones of violence against women. This is the stuff that is going into these kids' brains. Is this what our children deserve and need?

According to many researchers and studies, children and adolescents may become more vulnerable to the effects of pornographic content. In turn, with their lack of experience and development, they develop an idea of what sex is. It becomes inappropriate, violent and selfish. Women are considered tools for men's pleasure. Pornography provides violent aggression, where they believe that this becomes acceptable. Pornography becomes a role model which leads to unhealthy relationships.

When we talk about violence against women, one of the biggest things we talk about is prevention, so let us start young. Why are we not starting with our young children? We should ensure from the time they are young that they understand consent. Things like pornography should not be put into their brains until they are adults, when they can make right decisions and right choices and understand relationships and understand who to touch, when to touch, how to touch and understand that consent. Pornography does none of this. It is not something that we can say is a way of sexually educating our children. It is a way of educating our children to something that is extremely dismissive of women.

This leads into teen dating. This is where we are talking about a child who watches this information and then we have to see what happens. How do they process that information? How do they react in their relationships? There have been so many studies done on teen dating showing the correlation between pornography and violence and specifically young women who are being forced into sexual acts. It leads to unsafe sex. We know there is this obsession with sexual fantasy and aggressive behaviour. Unfortunately, young women become victims of those acts.

Pornography, once again, is not sex education. It does not provide real-life sexual experience on relationships. That is why it is so important that our children should not see this by accident.

I want to read from a passage which has the heading, "Pornography and Its Impact on Sexual Activities and Overall Behaviour". The authors state:

Pornography use and aggressive behavior in the classroom was found to be significantly correlated, with higher consumption levels being associated with more aggressive behavior. Exposure at a younger age makes individuals receptive to watching coercive or violent porn. Watching more hardcore pornography containing abuse, rape, and child sex is associated with the normalizing of these behaviors. Exposure to sexually explicit content has a strong influence on adolescents' sexually permissive attitudes.

Over time, the embarrassment that may follow from having a pornographic interest or engaging in pornographic behaviors may internalize itself, resulting in a decline in mental health and general life satisfaction. Pornography can excite the brain's reward system, which can lead to severe brain alterations akin to those found in drug addictions. Compulsive sexual behaviors are also linked to early pornography exposure. By showing an absence of emotional connection between consensual couples, unprotected sexual contact, and, occasionally, violence and rape, pornography normalizes sexual harm. Male adolescents may learn that it is okay and even desired to act violently and aggressively toward and degrade their

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female partners from the aggressive and violent depictions of women that are prevalent in much of today's popular pornography.

I read this because it is something that we all have to be aware of. We hear of sexual violence all the time. There are statistics and I wish I could provide an exact statistic, but it is in the range of a 70% to 80% increase in sexual violence. We need to do something about this. Prevention is one piece and this is what this bill would do. It works on prevention. It is just one of the multiple tools that we can use.

An article from the National Centre on Sexual Exploitation states, "Aggressive acts against women in pornography occur in roughly 87% of the scenes". This is something I brought up earlier. It goes on to say, "Pornography acts as a form of sexual education, teaching the lesson that female sexual partners ought to enjoy physical acts such as hitting, gagging, slapping, or non-consensual sex."

I do not think there is a single member of Parliament who would agree that is what we want for Canadian children. That is why I am here today to say it to everybody, and to ask for their support of this really important bill.

● (1740)

Now I will actually get into the bill. I have talked about why we need this bill, but what is the bill? I will let the member for Avalon know that I am about to fill him in.

This bill ensures we have age verification. We already know that some countries are using this. Germany, France and the U.K. are three that I can cite. There are also a number of states that are putting in these types of age verifications. In Germany, there are three different ways to do this with, I think, 100 different providers.

There are all these incredible things we can do. Technology will lead our way. We know that, with age verification, we need to ensure that privacy is protected. When using a third party provider to verify, for privacy reasons, we need to ensure that information is not passed on. There are a multitude of ISP providers or third party providers that can provide this type of verification. It is all about the safety of our children. It is about the safety of their brains and their development and, in turn, having healthy relationships.

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In Germany, as I said, there is some great work being done. In France, they have also passed different pieces of legislation. Some of the principles put in place there are in order to reconcile the protection of privacy and youth protection through the implementation of online age verification systems for pornographic sites. They take into account certain details. I want to put this in here too because, for many people, privacy is probably what they are most concerned about. I think everybody understands saying no to pornography and children; however, privacy is sometimes what we have to look at.

We must focus on some principles when we are talking about how we ensure that age verification can be done. There should be no direct collection of identity documentation by the site publisher from the pornographic site, no age estimates based on the user's web browser history and no processing of biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying or authenticating a natural person. There are all sorts of different things that can be done.

I think if we look at technology today, we can even look at the fact that, when COVID came, in March 2020, we were all online and using Zoom within weeks. This is all about technology. There are people out there who can do this work. I am asking everybody to get onside so that people will be able to do it.

I have more in here, but I think what I want to do is end it off with a very simple piece on how this started in the United States. This is really important. I do not know if everyone knows who Billie Eilish is in here, but I am sure anyone under the age of 30 has probably listened to a Billie Eilish song. All I know is that she is a Grammy award-winning person who has some blue hair once in a while, but she has spoken the truth. What I really appreciate is that she has talked about her own experience. This reads, "It was December 2021 and Schlegel was on her 'daily news scroll' through Apple news when she saw an article describing popstar Billie Eilish's appearance on the infamous shock jock's show." That was the *Howard Stern Show* that she had appeared on. Eilish told Stern, "I used to watch a lot of porn, to be honest. I started watching porn when I was like 11.... I think it really destroyed my brain and I feel incredibly devastated that I was exposed to porn so early."

This is important, because we are just talking about a normal individual, somebody who so many young people can relate to. So many people look at somebody like Billie Eilish and wonder about what that young woman has done with her life. What an incredible artist. These are her words. When we look at mentorship, I think that we should, as parliamentarians, think of the words of Billie Eilish and support this legislation, so we can ensure our children are safe.

• (1745)

**Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for her words. I think this is an issue that deserves our attention in the House. I have two daughters, so I know who Billie Eilish is.

In all seriousness, I remember reading a book called *Empire of Illusion* by Chris Hedges, a professor at the University of Toronto. There was a whole chapter that talked about this exact subject, what it does to young men and how it exploits young women. I think it was called "The Illusion of Love".

I think that all members in the House would agree that we need to do more. You talked a lot about age verification. Can you give us an example of how that actually works?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am certain that the hon. member does not want me to give him an example, but I want to remind him that he is to address all questions and comments through the chair and not directly to the members.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Madam Speaker, there are different systems being used in different countries. A lot of times, a third party uses age verification and provides a token just to verify that person is of age. People have talked about using their Mastercard because a person cannot get a Mastercard, Visa or whatever charge card, until they are older. However, we also recognize that children do use our charge cards, so we have to figure out something that is a little bit better.

What is the best method? I would like to say to the member that, to be honest, I do not know what the best method is. That is why it is so important that we take this to committee, so we can look at it. I believe that if this token system is the best, as we have talked about, then we have to put it in there, so that these measures can protect children now.

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I think our colleague knows that we support Bill S-210. That being said, I have two questions.

First of all, control seems harder today because servers can be installed almost anywhere. That seems to be making it more challenging to impose laws within a set of borders on anything Internet-related. I would like to ask my colleague to say a few words on that topic.

My other question is this: Why did it take so long? The MindGeek case was in Montreal.

Why did it take so long to introduce this bill and start discussing it here, in the House?

[English]

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Madam Speaker, I will start with part two. This bill was originally brought forward by a senator in November 2021. We have been working on this bill to make sure it could get into this place. It is a good question. As technology changes, we become much more aware of those holes in the system, those gaps in protecting our children.

Can I ask the member what part one of the question was?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will allow him to respond very briefly, but it does eat into the time for questions.



[Translation]

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot can repeat the first part of his question.

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, I was just wondering how we can ensure adequate control, because for anything Internet-related, the servers can be located anywhere.

[English]

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Madam Speaker, sometimes I need a reminder. We know VPNs are a concern. If someone is using a VPN, they can go in any country, so it is going to be bypassing some of that. This is exactly why we need to take this to committee, so we can talk about the technology and all these gaps in our systems. We can then find ways to find the solutions.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am 43 with two kids, and I am a fan of Billie Eilish.

In particular, the member spoke about the prevention side and the tools to protect children from access to online pornography. Could the member share a bit more of her thoughts around the importance of children having access to comprehensive sexual health education, delivered by a responsible adult, in both our schools and communities?

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Madam Speaker, for me it depends, and I believe sexual education is really important, but we also have to recognize the maturity of the child and at what time we start introducing different things. When it comes to consent, children should be taught from the time they are aged zero when to touch a person and when not to touch a person. That is simple kindness and the simple rules of respect. I believe it is something we should be incorporating into our children's lives, specifically at home, from the very beginning. When it comes to school, we will continue to work on that, but that is a provincial issue.

• (1750)

[Translation]

**Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the bill's sponsor in the House, the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, for bringing this important issue to the floor. The bill we are discussing today is closely linked to the government's ongoing work to ensure a safer online experience for all Canadians, particularly children and youth. It is also worth noting that we need to work together to ensure that Canadians' freedom of expression and right to privacy are protected. This is a complex conversation, and we are all trying to find the appropriate balance with regard to these protections.

It may sound trite, but we are all acutely aware that the world is interconnected as never before. Society as a whole and individuals are constantly influenced by the content they see on the Internet. Reliable access to the Internet is so important that, in many areas, it is considered a human right. That is how fundamental it is to our daily lives and our interactions with the rest of the world.

Thanks to various platforms and other tools available to the public, we can access services online, participate in community events, access information, express opinions and just have fun. This is how many of us participate in community life. Online content is also a

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priceless educational resource that enables lifelong learning, engagement and personal and social development.

Let us be clear, though: The digital world has grown, and it is self-regulated. That has raised many new challenges that call for serious debate. Surfing the Internet can expose users to potentially harmful content that may not be suitable for children and youth. Young Canadians need adequate protection from online content so their experience can be as safe as possible and so they can take full advantage of the benefits of digital platforms. We see that a lot.

In our interconnected society, we know that ongoing efforts must be made to ensure that children and youth do not have access to online pornography. Bill S-210 recognizes this challenge and addresses this important public policy issue. As a government, we have a responsibility to ensure that our children can safely browse online and do not have unlimited access to inappropriate content. At the same time, we must be aware of the need to strike a healthy balance by ensuring that the solutions are effective and minimize unintended consequences. Respect for human rights, including the right to privacy and freedom of expression, while guaranteeing adequate protections, resources and recourse for those exposed to harmful content, should be paramount in our considerations.

Let me be clear. Creating a safer online environment for Canadians is a key priority for our government. That is why we committed to introducing legislation to combat online harm and to hold social media platforms and other online services accountable for content that causes harm. As part of the development of an online safety act, the government undertook extensive consultations that began in 2021 in order to better understand the concerns of Canadians. We are committed to taking action on this fundamental issue, and we welcome stakeholder engagement in this important debate.

In the summer of 2021, the government sought public input on an initial proposal to combat harmful content online. Canadians told us they wanted platforms to be held accountable for the content they promote. They also shared their concerns about freedom of expression, proactive monitoring and the risk of platforms removing legal and legitimate content in order to avoid potential sanctions. Following our initial consultations and the important information we were given, we went back to the drawing board.

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• (1755)

We want to hear from Canadians and experts on this to ensure that the legislation will protect children and young people, that it will support the victims of online harm and reduce the harm that may have unintended consequences, including that which affects racialized and ethnocultural communities, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, indigenous peoples and victims of harm such as the sexual exploitation of children.

Over the past year, we have gathered more information on what might be an effective and productive legislative framework. The first step consisted in creating an expert panel on online safety made up of experts and practitioners from various backgrounds. They made important comments on the initial approaches and the improvements that are being made.

Then, the government expanded its consultations among Canadians. During summer and fall 2022, the government organized a series of roundtables across Canada to hear directly from citizens, victims groups and organizations that support them, indigenous peoples and industry. We heard from one group of citizens, whose members were chosen at random, who represented the general public and who spent years gathering information and reflecting on these types of issues.

In all of these phases, there was a clear consensus on the specific need to protect children online. They are extremely vulnerable online, and it is clear that the government needs to look at the big picture. Similarly, the dialogue must include members of various communities, business leaders and elected officials to find the best solutions and the best response.

Online content poses many challenges for parents and children. Children are spending more and more time online, and we need to recognize that that also increases the risk that young Canadians will be exposed to harmful content. The government heard the testimony of victims of harassment, bullying and other forms of hateful content. Many participants were worried about the impact that exposure to such content can have on children's mental health, self-image and personal and social development.

The impact of this harm is not limited to the online environment. One thing that we kept hearing at our interviews and meetings is that online harm can have consequences in the real world. Every aspect of a child's life is affected when they are the victim of online sexual exploitation. Online harm has real-life consequences.

Another important consideration that we also heard about is that overly rigid and specific measures can have unintended consequences, and that ways to correct this situation, although perhaps imperfect, already exist.

We heard that Canadians want their children to be protected, but they are also wary about invasions of their privacy. Canadians have very little trust in the ability of the web giants to manage their information and private data. They are also fearful of bad actors who could get around the rules and deliberately violate their privacy or breach their data security. Furthermore, online content controls that limit access to selected and harmful content are built into the software that run our many electronic devices, including smart phones, tablets and personal computers.

Clearly, it is essential that we move on this. Our government has committed to moving forward. As the government drafts legislation, protecting children and making platforms accountable remain central to our approach. We recognize that this is a complex issue and that we must strive to strike a balance between respect for privacy rights, freedom of expression and the need for adequate protection against content, including and especially for children, youth and other vulnerable individuals.

Protecting Canadians is a complex and important issue. It is essential that we get there.

• (1800)

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill S-210. Before I begin, I would like to say that the Bloc Québécois supports this bill. We are in favour of it being studied at committee so that we can have a more in-depth discussion to ensure that we protect minors, which is a major public safety challenge. The Bloc Québécois's position is consistent with initiatives to strengthen protection of the public, particularly for minors.

Introduced by Julie Miville-Dechéne, the independent senator with whom I co-chair the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Bill S-210 seeks to put in place safeguards to restrict minors' access to sexually explicit material on the Internet. I will begin with an overview of the issue, then I will further explain the Bloc Québécois's position, and finally I will close with examples of other support for Bill S-210.

First, let us note that making sexually explicit material available to minors for commercial purposes is a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to \$250,000. This makes it a criminal offence for organizations to make this type of content available to young people. The term "organization" echoes the definition in section 2 of the Criminal Code. Furthermore, the Federal Court could order that websites contravening the law be blocked. The definition of "organization" includes any public body, body corporate, society, company, firm, partnership or association of persons that is created for a common purpose, has an operational structure and holds itself out to the public as an association of persons. This makes it possible to directly target commercial pornography distributors.

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The bill is motivated by a concern to better supervise access to sexually explicit material online, as age verification is currently limited to a simple declaration. Under Bill S-210, pornographic sites will be required to verify the age of their users. The bill essentially replicates Bill S-203, which was sponsored by the same senator. That bill died on the Order Paper at the end of the 43rd Parliament, and now the senator is trying again.

The digital landscape our young people have grown up with makes it easy to view degrading and even extreme content that normalizes the objectification of women and dominant relationships. This type of video and image content is available on platforms owned by companies that do not fulfill any meaningful requirement to ensure that the people viewing it are adults. It would be unrealistic to entrust companies that disseminate pornographic content with verifying the age of the individuals accessing it. Bill S-210 would assign that responsibility to a third party, an intermediary designated by regulations.

With the emergence of computer technology that enables parties to disseminate and access sexually explicit content, the government has a responsibility to prevent minors from accessing it, as much as possible. Given the obscene nature of this material and the harmful impact on young people's brain development, things cannot be kept in check by self-regulation alone. Bill S-210 lays out broad principles for verifying the age of people accessing pornographic content in order to prevent those under 18 from accessing it. Once this bill is passed, it will provide authority to make regulations prescribing the specific methods to achieve that.

Bill S-210 will also have consequences for pornographic sites, whether hosted on Canadian soil or not, that might contravene it. The government will be able to block sites that fail to comply with future regulations on age verification. Let us not forget that the minimum age to view pornographic films is 18.

Obviously, I am not a magician and I do not have a magic wand. No one can ignore the fact that this bill is not a silver bullet. A minor who wants to view pornography illegally could resort to circumvention methods like virtual private networks and so on to get around the age validation mechanisms. I remain realistic and I am not naive. However, even if Bill S-210 does not turn out to be the silver bullet that completely eradicates this scourge, there is a good chance that it will have beneficial effects and further restrict access for minors. In that respect, the objective will be met.

Second, I would like to remind the House that the Bloc Québécois will always support measures that seek to protect the public and promote a healthy lifestyle. Bill S-210 responds to a real concern in our communities. The Bloc Québécois reacted when disturbing revelations were made about MindGeek's Internet Pornhub, which is one of the most popular pornographic sites in Canada and well-known in Quebec, since the company is based in Montreal. We knew that data was being collected on the most popular video categories, common themes in video titles and the best-known actors in the adult film industry. While the United States held an inquiry and other parts of the world, including Europe, are considering this issue and taking action, Canada has been slow to act.

● (1805)

There is data confirming that access to explicit material is harmful if it ends up in the hands of minors, particularly young girls. With femicide and violence against women on the rise, our society has a duty to restrict access—to the greatest extent possible—to explicit content that is said to promote such violence.

In fact, we are just a few days away from the sad commemoration of the Polytechnique femicide, which occurred on December 6, 1989. I recently heard on the radio that there are still people today who worship Marc Lépine and wish women dead. It is chilling. Misogyny still exists. Keep in mind that many cities are passing motions to declare gender-based violence an epidemic and to pressure legislators to act on it within their respective jurisdictions.

Third, other groups also support this bill. Many stakeholders and civil society groups, including the Association des pédiatres du Québec, support the initiative embodied by Bill S-210. Allowing young minors to be exposed to pornography has consequences. Viewing pornography early in life has extremely negative effects, including the inability to develop healthy relationships. These young people can also develop a misconception that women and girls are sexual objects, available for sex 24-7, with no consent required. Worse still, it can create a dependency on pornography. In some cases, this can even lead to financial problems that can ruin lives, because pornography is not free. In fact, the industry is highly lucrative.

This proposal therefore crosses party lines and will likely receive support from all political parties represented in the House of Commons. This is no trivial matter.

It is also important to know that the Standing Committee on the Status of Women is currently studying the trafficking of women, girls and gender-diverse people. Although we may not be able to comment yet on the committee's eventual findings, many stakeholders pointed out in their briefs that human trafficking is closely linked to pornography and the coercive relationships that pimps maintain with their victims in order to get them to perform sex acts.

In the studies that follow our committee, from the study on intimate partner violence to the one on change of culture in sport, the concept of educating young men and women constantly comes up when we talk about preventing all forms of violence. In particular, this includes the need to offer an education on healthy sexuality.

*Private Members' Business*

For young girls, mental health problems are exacerbated by the pressure they feel from seeing manipulated, even degrading, images of the female body and sexuality that are projected by pornography. They may even end up being subjected to unwanted sexual acts that are dangerous to their health and unsafe for their body. By its very nature, Bill S-210 will help curb the dissemination of pornography on the Internet and protect the victims from the humiliating exposure of illegal material.

The bill will make organizations accountable and subject them to a new offence if they make such content available. This will give victims an additional tool to help them reclaim their dignity and punish their abusers. We have also been hearing that young women are often filmed without their knowledge and that those images are being posted when the young women are not even aware that they have been filmed. It is really worrisome to see so many images that were taken without consent being freely shared on the Internet.

In closing, Bill S-210 is important to create tools to ensure that women, children and girls are protected from the negative effects of early exposure to pornographic images online. As a new mother, I must admit that I worry about the future of my daughter, and I truly hope that, unlike me, she will never have to say “me too”. We need to do something about the femicides that the Secretary General of the United Nations described as a shadow pandemic. This problem was exacerbated by overexposure to the Internet during the pandemic. It created all sorts of problems, including these ones. We need to take action so that we can say collectively, “not one more”.

[English]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to Bill S-210, an act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material. As we know, the bill is intended to protect children from access to sexually explicit materials. This is a very important bill, and I am happy we are speaking to it today.

One thing I want to address from the outset is that an important consideration of this bill is not only ensuring that we look at protecting children from access to sexually explicit material, but also ensuring that mechanisms are in place to protect the personal information of Canadians when developing what is required to protect children. Witnesses testified at the Senate on this exact issue, speaking in favour of using a responsible third party service provider, as an example, to conduct age verification rather than sites. Many Canadians, of course rightly so, do not want their personal information to be provided to those who are seeking profit, so we need a responsible third party provider.

I want to quote Kevin Honeycutt, an educator. He said, “Kids are growing up in a digital playground and no one is on recess duty.” I thought that was a really powerful way to show what is happening online right now. I am a former educator who worked in the school system, and I can say there are always many eyes on the playground to ensure that children are playing respectfully with one another and to identify any concerns. Now we have children accessing online content without any such supervision and it is highly problematic.

Kerri Isham is a constituent in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith. She is an educator, author and award-winning presenter with

25 years of experience in the field of sexual health education. She is also the founder of a company called Power Up Education. I wanted to bring her up because she has dedicated her professional career to the safety of children and responding to the needs of communities. I want to highlight the work of people like Kerri Isham and so many across our country who are working tirelessly to make sure that children and youth have access to the education they need around sexual health.

Kerri Isham was so kind to provide me with the wealth of information she uses when she is in the community and in our schools educating parents and children on the importance of not only having the appropriate information and safety mechanisms in place around online access, but also having the information and tools needed to know what it looks like to be safe among this wealth of information.

One interesting point Kerri Isham pointed out to me is that 30% of all Internet traffic is pornography-related. That is a huge number. Tragically, 10% of visitors to pornography sites are under the age of 10. I found it interesting to hear my colleague talk earlier about whether the people accessing it intended to or not. A large portion of people are accessing these sites from a very young age. The average age when boys first view pornography is nine years old, so at nine, boys are seeing this information online. This content is made for adults, not children.

Pornography is shaping sexual imaginations, expectations and practices. It is designed for what is called “adult fantasy”, which is an abstract concept. Teens are concrete learners at a stage of development when they are learning and when their brain is in a much different state. When they watch pornography, they are learning that this is what sex should look like, which is highly problematic. We know that what pornography often showcases is not at all what a healthy sexual relationship looks like, and our children are learning through pornography that this is the way a healthy sexual relationship should look. It is not realistic what children are seeing, and they need to be presented with healthy images and access to the information they need.

● (1810)

We know that pornography has steadily increased. There is violent pornography, horror pornography, child pornography and racist pornography. We are seeing an increase in pornography that, tragically, supports or promotes racial inequality and an increase in revenge pornography, which too many youth right now are experiencing and seeing the impacts of. Misogyny is deeply embedded in so much of what we are seeing, with violence against women, and many are profiting from abuse through the pornography available. The National Child Exploitation Crime Centre, in 2020-21, received 52,306 complaints, which represents a 510% increase from 2013-14. That is a huge increase.

Neurologists have found that brain activity among heavy pornography users showed a behavioural addiction similar to what we would see in substance and gambling addictions. The study, which was conducted in 2017, showed that similar brain activity was present in people who are heavy pornography users, which is highly problematic.

Dr. Megan Harrison, with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, testified before the Senate legal committee that developing brains are affected by images it sees. The process is called neuroplasticity, which is something many of us are familiar with. However, to ensure we are all on the same page, I will note that it is the forming of new neural networks and pathways when the brain is optimizing itself. That is probably not the best descriptor, but the point is that through neuroplasticity, when the brain sees pornography repeatedly, it adjusts and determines that this is normal content to see. The exposure of pornography can create a distorted view of sexuality that can damage children's and teens' understanding of sexual relationships and their self-image as they mature.

• (1815)

The result of the excess viewing of pornography, which is often misogynistic and violent, is an increase in violence against women, one of the many symptoms. Violence against women is a global public health crisis, and pornography contributes to cultural conditions in which violence against women is tolerated, acceptable and even desirable. It unfortunately creates a sense of entitlement to have sex at any time, in any way, with whomever a person wished, and it regularly depicts sexualized aggression toward women. We know that 44% of women have experienced abuse from a partner in Canada. This is a statistic from 2018, and we know that these numbers have increased since then.

I want to highlight the work of my colleague, the member for Victoria, who recently brought forward a private member's bill, Bill C-332, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding controlling or coercive conduct. This work was carried on by the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke. The reason we are seeing support in the House for this bill to move forward is that we know, given the science surrounding the development of adolescent brains, graphic sexual images and how they affect an adolescent's understanding of sexual relationships when they are older, that protections and preventions need to be in place from the outset. Instead of us having to create bills that would criminalize behaviour of controlling, coercive and abusive behaviour, I would like us to put in place more preventive tools to ensure that children are accessing appropriate, healthy information from the outset.

We know that key to this work, in addition to having mechanisms in place to control online access to pornography, is prevention so that we do not always have to react to abusive and coercive behaviour after it happens. Sexual health education promotes, among other things, consent, safety and respect, both for ourselves and within our relationships.

Overall, I am happy to support this bill and clearly have a lot to say on it. I hope it gets through committee quickly, as we have a lot of information and want to see it move forward.

### *Private Members' Business*

• (1820)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak. I am in a good mood because, so far, we have heard speeches from colleagues from various political parties who have decided to support Bill S-210, an act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material.

It is important to mention that the sponsor of this bill is Senator Julie Miville-Dechéne, who is very well known in Quebec. She is a former Radio-Canada journalist who had a lot of credibility in that profession, just as she still does today.

I am pleased to speak today because Saturday, November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Unfortunately, we know that violence against women and girls still exists around the world. The UN is calling on us to show how much we care about violence against women on November 25.

First of all, I would like to point out that none of my colleagues in the House wants to pass judgment on pornography, whether to support or oppose it. That is not the point. That is not what Bill S-210 is about. Many of us are parents. Many of us are now grandparents. What matters to us as parliamentarians is protecting the mental health of young people by limiting their access to sexually explicit material. What we also want, and what most of our colleagues have said, is to dissuade all organizations that make sexually explicit material available on the Internet for commercial purposes from allowing young people to access that material. We really need to have some means of verification before users enter these sites, in order to have screen out our young people and protect them.

Why are we doing this? Let me put this into context. I will read out some information and statistics that will give my colleagues a better idea of how easy it is for young people under the age of 18 to access pornography.

There are nearly 4.5 million pornography sites around the world. Most operate on the model of content uploaded by individuals, completely for free and with no access restrictions. We know that our young people are very adept at using the Internet, much more so than many of my colleagues. Young people are knowledgeable, they are agile, and they are far more interested in technology. Knowing how adept young people are at using the Internet, we should not be surprised at how easy it is for them to get into pornography sites. Of course they know more than their parents.

### *Government Orders*

In 2021, pornography sites got more traffic in the United States than Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Netflix, Pinterest and Zoom combined. Studies show that most young people are exposed to pornography starting at age 13. More than half of these minors see explicit sexual material without even wanting to. That is exactly what we heard earlier from my colleague from Elgin—Middlesex—London, who, I would remind the House, is also the sponsor of this bill. There is a false sense of security.

Research commissioned by the British Board of Film Classification revealed a discrepancy between parents' views and what children were actually experiencing. Three-quarters of parents, or 75%, felt that their child would not have seen pornography online, but more than half of their children, or 53%, said they had in fact seen it. This shows that we cannot simply fall back on parental supervision or rely exclusively on parental responsibility. We have to go one step further and push a little harder, because parents are living with a false sense of security, as these statistics show.

• (1825)

On average, children have their first encounter with pornography at age 11. Here in Canada, 40% of high school boys have seen pornography online, 28% seek it out at least once a day or once a week, and 7% of girls also watch it. According to the National Centre on Sexual Exploitation, 87% of scenes in pornography depict acts of violence against women. That is a lot of figures and a lot of information, but I think that we need them to do our work and to understand the issue properly, because it is so important. Here is some more information, and I quote:

Scientific research is making more and more worrisome connections between the consumption of pornography and the health or behaviour of young people. When adolescents frequently view pornography, it can lead to compulsive consumption, create unrealistic expectations about expected activities, generate fear and anxiety, damage their self-esteem by distorting their perception of their own bodies, cause symptoms of depression and impair social functioning.

What do young people, boys in particular, absorb from what they see? Repeated consumption of pornography by adolescents reinforces gender stereotypes and perpetuates sexist beliefs and the objectification of women.

I want to take this issue a little further. Pornography is not reality. Pornography contains a lot of violence. As I said, 87% of pornographic scenes depict acts of violence. Boys who view pornography see behaviour that they will consider to be normal. Teenagers or young people may want to copy some of those behaviours because that is what they have as a model, these gender stereotypes. Everyone here knows very well that that is not reality. I do not think that I have time to give some of the quotes from experts that I wanted to share with the House, but I think that my colleagues have already talked a lot about that.

This week, the newspaper *La Presse* published a very interesting series of articles about a paradigm shift in what boys think of girls. Right now, there is a trend of sorts happening that is being led by a very influential and important man who is very present on the Internet. He is the subject of one of the articles in that series, entitled "Becoming a fan of Andrew Tate at age 15". This man, Andrew Tate, is spreading a negative image of women and girls. He says that a woman's place is in the kitchen and that women should not be working. He says that, even if women do work outside the home, they are not smart enough or talented enough to do so.

I read that this week in *La Presse* and I took it as a warning. It is high time that the House of Commons supported a bill like the one before us today to protect our young people when they go on the Internet, to block their access to pornography and to ensure that companies conduct age verification checks as they should.

The bill is sure to be referred to a parliamentary committee. The format and process remain to be determined. I have neither the skills nor the knowledge today to say what process should be chosen, but I think we have reached the point where this is necessary, and we need to take care of our young people.

• (1830)

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** 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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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 30—PROCEEDINGS ON BILL C-56

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I think it is important to also raise the issue, since we are talking about affordability, of the Canada emergency business account. For months, New Democrats have been calling for a year-long extension so that small businesses have the time to repay their loan. However, the 18-day extension announced by this Liberal government is a cruel joke.

I have just heard from small businesses in my riding, and I am proud to stand in this place and defend their interests to make sure that they can continue serving. I got an email from a business representative in my riding that says, "Our data shows that only 49% of businesses are back to prepandemic sales, and our last media release indicated that business start-ups are at a historical low and 20%, one out of five, will be out of business by next year if that CEBA loan is not extended until the end of 2024."

Given that we have been talking about affordability issues, I think we also need to address the shortcomings of the CEBA. On behalf of small businesses in my riding, I urge this Liberal government to listen to them. How does it make sense to let all of these small businesses fail when a one-year extension would be so meaningful?

*Government Orders*

To conclude, I think I have outlined all the reasons why the additions to Motion No. 30 are so important. I am glad to see, as a New Democrat at caucus, that all 25 of us have rolled up our sleeves, put in the work and offered some constructive amendments to the bill. We are looking forward to seeing it voted on, passed on to committee and making sure that we deliver that legislative fix to help Canadians get through the cost of living crisis and new rental housing start-ups.

With that, I welcome any questions or comments from my colleagues.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in regards to small businesses, the government has been very supportive of small businesses in Canada and continues to work with small businesses. I think that our record will clearly demonstrate that through the pandemic, prepandemic and to where we are today.

With regards to the legislation, my question to the member is with respect to the efficiency argument and how the legislation would actually ensure that there is a healthier sense of competition into the future by the amendments to the Competition Act, particularly with the Competition Bureau's ability and enhancing that ability, to ensure that Canadian consumers are taken into consideration far more than they currently are. Could the member give his thoughts on that issue?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I will respond to the member's first part of his intervention on small businesses.

The email I read was received today. I acknowledge that, yes, during the pandemic we were there with supports, collectively, the whole House was there, but small businesses are saying that the measures announced by this government are not enough; they need a further extension, otherwise one out of five are going to go out of business. It does not make sense to be holding the line, and I think the government needs to extend it to the end of 2024.

On the second part of the member's question, when I was at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, we were doing an in-depth dive into food price inflation, and based on a study that I moved at committee, some of our witnesses were from the Competition Bureau of Canada. They expressed a sincere wish to have not only more human resources but I think a little bit more of a legislative flex in the Competition Act. Bill C-56 would deliver that. There was a significant improvement made to the bill, thanks to the efforts of the NDP and particularly our leader, the member for Burnaby South. New Democrats are here to work. We are delivering some constructive changes, and we are looking forward to seeing this legislation progress.

• (1835)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, because of consecutive Liberal and Conservative government inaction over the years, we are seeing the housing crisis that we are in today. Canada needs to develop 5.8 million new homes, including two million rental units by 2030, to tackle housing affordability.

The member is my neighbour on Vancouver Island. I wonder if he can share what his constituents on Vancouver Island are saying is needed to be done today to move forward to have the housing that people need to keep a roof over their heads. What needs to be done in order for us to move forward?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my great neighbour to the north, the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith. It really is such a pleasure to serve in this House with her. I was first inspired to run back in 2015 because of the actions of the Harper government. I saw exactly how the policies and legislation enacted under that regime were affecting my constituents. I am glad that not only in 2015, but in 2019 and 2021, I have been returned to serve their interests.

What I mentioned in my speech is that we did not get here overnight. This is the result of consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments pursuing neo-liberal economic policies, and that has gotten us to where we are today. There is a solution. We do not have to look very far back. We could look at the post-World War II era. The federal government was directly involved in the construction of new housing to accommodate returning veterans and to also help rural communities, like mine in Lake Cowichan, that were experiencing incredible resource booms and needed to have the workforce housed.

We have had similar situations now, but we need to get the federal government more actively involved in building those units.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am kind of curious. This is basically a bill to address affordability in Canada.

For young families that have a mortgage right now that is coming up for renewal in the next month, and it is going to from 2% to 8%, what is in here that is going to help? What is in any type of Liberal legislation at this point in time that is actually going to help that family renew that mortgage, take the hit on the increase of the mortgage payment, and be able to heat their homes and put food on the table?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, Bill C-56 has a fairly narrow focus, but that is why we were hoping, not only through the fall economic statement but in the budget next year, to start to see measures that would address this.

I will remind the member that we got to the rates we are at today precisely because of the corporate profits that have been driving inflation. If Canadians want to understand why rates are so high, it is because we are trying to cool down a market that was caused by corporate greed. It was caused by oil and gas companies having net profits go up by over 1,000% in three years. It was caused by grocery CEOs digging in their greedy hands, off the backs of working families.

If we want to truly calm inflation down, we have to stop the policies that are championed by both the Conservatives and the Liberals. We need to swing the pendulum back in favour of working families, and stop the corporate deference that both of these parties love to champion whenever they are in government.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Bloc and the NDP agree on a number of points, including that the bill does not go far enough, but there are some good things in it.

I will still come back to my question. Why is the government using a closure motion, never mind a super closure motion?

I am well aware that there is filibustering. Filibustering harms everything. It is detrimental to our work, to what we want to achieve. Still, it seems to me that a super closure motion should be used as a last resort.

Does my colleague not get the impression that the cure is worse than the disease in this case?

*[English]*

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, time is of the essence right now.

These are powers, legislative fixes that the Competition Bureau was asking for months ago. I cannot control when the government decides to schedule Bill C-56 for debate. However, I do know that many members in this place have already had the opportunity to give their thoughts at second reading.

This is a vote on the principle of the bill, and I think everyone agrees on the principle, getting the GST off new rental housing construction and making sure the Competition Bureau has the powers to go after that corporate stranglehold that we have in so many critical sectors. It is something that we should be voting on.

I am proud that through Motion 30, we have taken the work that was put in the bill by the member for Burnaby South, and we are going to add those provisions to Bill C-56. I see this as an opportunity where the NDP has rolled up our sleeves, has put our heads down and are getting to work to make sure the changes are happening in this place, unlike my Conservative colleagues.

• (1840)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford has spoken very eloquently about the Liberals inaction up until the time that the NDP pushed them to actually do the right thing.

I want to ask the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, who lived through the dismal nine years, the dark years of the Harper regime, where housing prices doubled and 800,000 affordable housing units, thousands in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, were ripped away from the hands of the families that actually needed access to that affordable housing. Conservatives find that funny, the devastation that they reaped, including increasing the age of retirement, forcing seniors to work longer and harder.

Could my hon. colleague talk about the devastating impacts on Cowichan—Malahat—Langford and, of course, across Vancouver Island?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I will tell my colleague how bad it was. It was so bad that the Conservatives fell to third place in the 2015 election. My riding is not known to be a

Liberal stronghold, but they actually got second place because of how bad the Conservative government was.

Do members know that the current leader of the Conservative Party really motivated me to run for office because he was Harper's spokesperson. He was there front and centre, putting in the policies that wreaked such havoc in my community, and I am glad to say that we are finally in a place, in a minority Parliament, where I have the opportunity, as my community's representative, to bring in some concrete fixes.

We are only just getting started. We have a lot more to do, but I am glad to serve with a 25-member caucus that, every single day, is coming to this place to make the lives of Canadians better from coast to coast to coast.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place to join the debate. I will be sharing my time with the excellent member of Parliament for Prince Albert.

Bill C-56 is an interesting bill, and I must give the Liberal government some credit for taking a page directly from the leader of the official opposition's affordability plan and proposing to remove the GST from purpose-built rental housing. This is something that Conservatives support.

I must admit that I was a bit surprised to see the Liberal government admit that removing a tax, in this case, the GST, is a good way to increase affordability, much as I was shocked to see the Liberal government admit that removing its carbon tax on home heating oil is also a good way to increase affordability. If only it would remove its carbon tax on propane and natural gas to increase affordability for all Canadians and not just those in certain regions of the country.

*[Translation]*

Back to the bill, I also support the proposed amendments to the Competition Act, just as I supported my colleague from Bay of Quinte when he introduced his Bill C-339.

It is refreshing to see a Liberal government adopt Conservative solutions. I even have to give the Prime Minister a little credit. Removing the tax on goods and services relating to the construction of rental housing means that builders and developers will save money. It means that less money will end up here in Ottawa. We all know how much this Prime Minister likes spending other people's money. Despite reduced revenue, our perennially spendy Prime Minister did not label this an austerity bill—not yet, anyway. Maybe he will change his mind when he reads the bill and realizes he is endorsing Conservative ideas.

Regardless, the Prime Minister has demonstrated remarkable restraint by introducing a bill that will reduce Ottawa's revenue and not calling it an austerity measure.



• (1845)

[English]

I pause for a moment, though, to ask this place a question. If the Liberal government is capable of understanding that removing the GST from rental housing increases affordability and that removing the carbon tax from home heating oil also increases affordability, why does it still refuse to remove the carbon tax from natural gas and propane to increase affordability? Do Canadian families who heat their homes with natural gas and propane and who cannot pay their bills not matter?

I have heard the Liberal excuses around this. Home heating oil is expensive and the carbon tax makes it more expensive, so that is why they are giving them a carbon tax break, but the same is also true for those who heat with natural gas and propane. Basically, this government is telling them that they do not matter. This is a Prime Minister who once said, “a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian”, but that is no longer true if one heats one's home with natural gas or propane. Sure, one might be on the verge of bankruptcy or hitting the food bank every day, but this Liberal government just does not care.

I know some members would say that I am getting a bit off track, that we should be debating what is in this bill. That is my point. The things in this bill would help, but the things we could do to most help Canadians right now, such as removing the carbon tax from all home heating fuels, we are not doing solely because the government is punitive.

This morning, we read about the Liberals' so-called affordability retreat, where taxpayers got stuck with a bill for \$160,000, including rooms that cost anywhere from \$1,200 to \$3,200 apiece. The very Liberals who stayed in those rooms have the audacity to tell those who can no longer afford to heat their home at the end of the month that they will get no help. Worse, their carbon tax bill will actually be quadrupled. I would simply ask the obvious: Why not do more?

[Translation]

Why not offer Canadians who heat their homes with natural gas and propane the same carbon tax relief as those who heat their homes with home heating oil? Why does this Prime Minister always have to divide Canadians? This time, he is dividing them based on their heating fuel. Canadians have had enough of this.

Every poll sends the message loud and clear about where the Liberals stand, yet the Liberal government ignores that message. To what end? I know there are good people on the government side, but the arrogance of the Prime Minister and his powerful group of unelected insiders is hurting many Canadians.

Yes, the proposals in this bill will help. It is a start, but we seriously need to do more. That is why I talked about doing more. That is why the leader of the official opposition listens to Canadians every day. They are asking us to do more. Polls show they want relief from the carbon tax on their home heating bills.

[English]

Farmers want and need a break as well. Here in Canada, we introduced something called “marked gas”. The idea was that farmers

### *Government Orders*

could buy gasoline and diesel at lower costs, without additional taxes, because all of our predecessors from all political parties recognized that keeping farmers' costs low was in the public interest. Now the Liberal government is literally driving up the costs for farmers for ideological reasons.

I will share a story of a local small business owner. This small business owner is a value-added food processor. It is very important to this small business owner that, when his goods arrive at local grocery stores, they proudly say that they are 100% Canadian. Here is the thing: When he gets his raw goods, they come from Quebec and Atlantic Canada, and when he has them shipped out via transport truck, he now pays a carbon tax surcharge on the bill.

He must raise his prices to offset the extra carbon tax that he pays. If he were to get the same raw goods out of the United States or overseas, he would not have that same large carbon tax surcharge from goods being shipped across Canada. He might be at that point where the only way he can lower his prices and remain competitive would be to switch because many of his competitors in the same grocery stores cannot say that they are also made in Canada. They are made in other jurisdictions where there is no carbon tax. When times are tough, as they are right now, fewer people can afford to pay extra for goods solely because they are made here in Canada.

I hope the government realizes the long-term structural damage its carbon tax is creating. It would be a different story if our largest trading partners had the same carbon tax and it was a level playing field. The Liberals like to say that they are taking a leadership role with the carbon tax. However, when no one else is following, they are not leading the way.

• (1850)

[Translation]

Some may think that I was not objective in this debate, but when I go home and my constituents ask me what we are doing in Ottawa to make life more affordable for them, I would like to have more to offer than simply saying that I supported this bill. At least I can tell that small business owner and others like him that I shared their stories.

Unfortunately, however, we have a Prime Minister and a Prime Minister's Office who do not care about any of them, unless they use home heating oil, of course.

That said, yes, I will support this bill and I will continue to ask this Liberal government to adopt and better support our Conservative ideas. Let us put all home heating fuels on a level playing field and suspend the carbon tax.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Let us ensure that the carbon tax on farming is gone. Let us all read the Scotiabank report that tells of how government spending at all levels has created over 40% of the rise in basis points from the Bank of Canada. It is not austerity to think like a taxpayer and deliver value for money. What a concept. It is not an app that costs over \$54 million or funding the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. How about the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which does not deliver any infrastructure?

Literally every day, we read about a new spending scandal from the Liberal government and appointed insiders funnelling money to their own companies. How could someone not know that was wrong and unacceptable? How are people such as Laith Marouf on the government contract list? Why is there never any ministerial accountability?

Instead of fiscal waste, we should be doing more with what is here. I urge all members of the House of Commons to consider doing more and adopting our Conservative ideas to provide Canadians a carbon tax break on home heating, and let us have a carbon tax carve-out for our farmers.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Before we go to questions and comments, I would like to say to the member that his French is really improving. I would like to thank him for his efforts.

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there was not a lot in that on the bill in front of us on the Competition Act or removing GST from purpose-built rentals, but I will take the member up on his reference to plagiarism. We have certainly witnessed a lot of political plagiarism over the last several weeks. The Leader of the Opposition has almost taken every page out of Donald Trump's political playbook in threatening to defund the media. He has talked about firing people with our own Canadian version of *The Apprentice*. Of course, he has also taken on Mike Harris's common-sense revolution tag.

What is the Leader of the Opposition's fascination with political plagiarism? Does he have any original ideas of his own? If he does, when will we hear them?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I am going to ask for your patience with me because I am going to describe that particular question, not the questioner but the question, as political loser talk. If he wants to come to this place to talk about affordability, with doing things like increasing competition, which the member for Bay of Quinte originally proposed and is now incorporated in this bill, we could have that discussion.

Instead, he wants to trash-talk my leader. I am going to be holding the Prime Minister to account for the actions of his government. I am going to give some credit where it is due when he takes good ideas, such as tax cuts and increased competition, from Conservative benches and incorporates them into bills. I will give Liberals credit when they do that, but when they trash-talk, I am going to call them out. That member is guilty of trash talk and should be fined by the court of public opinion in his constituency.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind members to make sure their questions, comments and speeches are focused on the business before the House.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague. More than that, I want to congratulate him on his French. I think he delivered about half of his speech in French, which is amazing. Seriously, kudos to him, and I am very happy to hear French in the House.

At its press conference in Ottawa today, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities said that, to build the millions of housing units we need, they would require \$600 billion in infrastructure such as transportation, roads, public transit and sewers. I would just like to know what a future Conservative government—not that we want one—would say to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities about that.

● (1855)

*[English]*

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, the member is one hundred per cent right. We are going through a housing crisis, and it is because municipal gatekeepers, right across the country, have held tight to old ideas such as zoning that basically keeps municipalities as they are. As our immigration grows, and as our population grows, we see there are just not enough places for everyone.

In Bill C-56, the government's solution is a Conservative one, and it is to take the GST off and create more demand for something by lowering the cost of it. However, the problem is the spending-Liberal government's continued obsession with spending at any cost, any time, anywhere and any place, and we end up seeing much higher inflation.

As I said in my speech, the Scotiabank report said that up to 40% of the basis points of the Bank of Canada have gone up. We will not see significant market investments or significant government investments go forward unless we have lower interest rates. It is the economics that are a pressure here. Maybe Bill C-56 would allow some Venn diagram where everything falls into place of some projects now being viable, but I am already seeing in my area of the Okanagan projects dropping. We are seeing, in the Statistics Canada numbers, a drop in permits. That is inevitable until the economy turns around, and it will not do that if the government keeps spending like there is no tomorrow.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to question my friend from British Columbia on his last point because he was referencing the Scotia-bank number. Just so everyone understands, could he confirm that that number also includes all of the spending by Canada's provincial governments and that a great amount of it was approved spending during the pandemic, which, if I recall correctly, many Conservatives also supported to keep businesses afloat so people could continue working. Would he be able to confirm those figures?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I actually wrote in my MP report to my constituents this week exactly that: All levels of government have been overspending.

However, let us not forget what I called the Prime Minister earlier this week: “our deficit-maker-in-chief”. No one has the fiscal power like the current federal government. No one has the tax power like the current federal government. What were the members of the government doing this week? Instead of actually trying to show some leadership and actually reducing, they have been going through an NDP wish list, which is one of the reasons we keep referring to the fact that after eight long years of the NDP-Liberal government, it is just not worth the cost. It is Canadians who are paying that bill, and they will keep paying that bill until they kick the current government out.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, what a great presentation that was from my colleague from of British Columbia. The common-sense ideas that he presented just reflect the common sense of a young Conservative Party that is ready to take over the reins here in Canada and bring about some new ideas to help Canadians as it progresses, goes forward and brings back the Canadian dream of home ownership.

When I first read Bill C-56, I thought that it was not that bad and that there were some things in it that looked pretty good. Then I remembered: I know why they look good; it is because they are actually Conservative ideas. They are actually things the Conservatives talked about six years ago, and I am glad the Liberals copied them. I am very flattered they copied our ideas. That is great.

Then I looked at it and thought, “Wait a minute, the bill is regarding GST on rental properties.” If we are really looking at this and at affordability across Canada, we are dealing with such a small part of where there are affordability problems. Let us take, for example, the young family who owns a house. Let us say they have a mortgage of \$250,000. They bought their house three or four years ago. The mortgage is coming up for renewal now, and they are going from a 1.9% or 2.5% interest rate to roughly an 8.5% or 8.7% interest rate. Their monthly mortgage payment is going from \$1,200 a month up to \$1,800 or \$1,900 a month. They have to find another \$700 a month, so that is \$8,400 a year of after-tax dollars just to pay the interest increase. That is an affordability problem. Is there anything in the bill that would address that? No, there is not. Is there anything in the Liberals' ideas they talked about yesterday, moving forward, that would address helping those people out? Have there been any ideas to work with the banks to say they could extend things out? Have there been any ideas to work with institutions to say that we could actually help people manoeuvre so they could actually afford to stay in their house?

I can see why the Liberals talked only about rental properties in this piece of legislation, because what will happen is that people are going to give up their house because they cannot afford it, and they are going to have to have a place to rent. Let us look at the legislation again. Okay, we would build lots of apartments. When would they be done? Would it be two years or three years from now? People lose their house next month, and they have to wait three years for an apartment? Where do they go? What do they do?

There has been no imagination in the government. The Liberals are out of ideas. They are old and tired, and they have no concept of what is actually going on in this country. They have done nothing to work with the municipalities and the provinces to ask how they can make things more affordable and whether there are things they can do together and leverage among themselves to make life easier for Canadians. There is nothing. We have a few examples where maybe they worked with one city here and one city there, but generally, across Canada, have they worked with anybody? No, they have not. They have picked a targeted approach based on political will and political expedience.

We saw it with home heating when the Liberals removed the GST on oil. Did they apply that to propane? Did they apply it to natural gas? Did they apply it to wood or coal? I come from Saskatchewan. We still use coal; that is way worse than diesel. We still use wood; that is probably still worse than diesel. Was there any relief for that? No, there was not. We use propane and natural gas, which are better than diesel, but the cost has gone up so much because of the carbon tax that it is really hurting. People are saying to us all the time, “I cannot pay my bills.” They are going into winter now and are asking what they will do. They are saying, “My mortgage is going to go up. My heating is now going up. My property tax is going up. What do I do?” What does the government say to them? It says crickets. It tells them to pay it, and if their wallet is empty, to borrow more money at a higher interest rate and pay it. Is there any relief there? No, there is not. Has there been any compassion shown? No, there has not.

That is the reality of what the government has done, and do members know why? The government is tired. It is out of ideas. It has no imagination. It does not understand economics. The reality is that this is very true, because if the Liberals understood economics, they would have realized five years ago, when they started borrowing money like drunken sailors, that it was not a good idea. When they started putting money into things that did not have any type of return on GDP or efficiencies, that was a bad idea.

When we look at things now, we have to pay those interest rates. It is a tremendous amount of interest we are now paying on our debt. It is more than what we pay in health care. I was around before, when people had to wait two years to get surgery. My mother had cancer. She had to wait before she could get diagnosed, because those were the days when we were paying a higher amount in interest than we were paying for health care. It took a Liberal government, in co-operation with a Conservative government and the Reform Party in opposition, to get that tackled and under control.

*Government Orders*

• (1900)

Did we learn from history? No, we did not. What did the Prime Minister do? He started borrowing, not just a small amount like he promised in 2015, not just \$10 billion, but \$40 billion, \$60 billion and \$100 billion. The numbers are staggering, and now, we cannot get that back. How do we get back to a balanced budget? It is going to take a tremendous amount of effort.

Not only did we spend more, but we also brought in legislation that starves businesses. We brought in legislation that kicks people out of Canada so they invest everywhere else. We kept our natural resources in the ground. We did not defend our forestry sector when it was unfairly hit with tariffs out of the U.S. What has the government done? It has done nothing. It has shown no imagination. When we talk to it about this, it blames everybody else.

Affordability is the basis of what is going on here. Let us look at things in a more macro and holistic sense. Let us break it down to a family that buys groceries. Groceries are more expensive. The inflation rate for groceries is tremendous. There is the war in Ukraine and a variety of things that have brought commodity prices up through the roof, no question about it, but there are things the government could do to alleviate some of the pain.

I have no issues with change to the Competition Bureau. I have a few concerns, but no issues. Again, when would we get the results from the changes? Would they help us next week or next month, or a year, two years or 10 years from now? There are no deadlines. There are no time frames for allowing us to see any type of reduction in prices based on the changes. There is nothing there that would immediately help the family that needs the help today, so has the government done anything on affordability in the legislation? No, it has not. It has laid out some good targets to move forward in the future, four years or five years down the road when it is no longer in government, but what has it done today? What it has done is spend more money on things Canada cannot afford. It has put money into programs that do not help Canadians at this point in time. It has taken money out of their pockets that they need in their pockets.

This is why we asked the government to just freeze the GST. Never mind the quadrupling, even just freezing it would alone at least help Canadians. If the government reduced it, it would show compassion. If it reduced it for all Canadians, it would show that it genuinely cared about this country and did not pick favourites on one side or the other based on political expediency. If you showed some consistency, we would be in better shape and in a better position in this Parliament, but you have not; you have divided Canadians by region, by different sectors—

• (1905)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind the hon. member that he is to address all questions and comments through the chair.

The hon. member for Prince Albert.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, Canadians are being divided, and when they are hurting, they get divided even more. When one starts picking winners and losers, it gets even worse.

The government just spent \$30 billion on two companies for electric batteries. It is probably \$35 billion from what we are hearing now. It does not mean we should or should not do it, but that is \$30 billion. Let us make sure that investment is going to happen, that it is done in such a way that Canadians are going to benefit from it. We do not know, as we cannot see the agreement. Canadians do not know what is in it. It is hidden. Why is it hidden? Maybe there is a reason to have foreign jobs. Maybe they are training the trainer and things like that; I could live with that, but I do not know. The government should show the agreement to us and to Canadians so they understand. It has spent a lot of money at a time when Canadians do not have a lot of money. It has tried to build the next sector of industry with huge government subsidization. Did it try to create a competitive environment here in Canada so businesses want to be here? Did it want to take advantage of the natural advantages we have in Canada: our diverse population, our multiple languages and the abilities we have? Those are the things it has to look at.

If we look at the Canadian GDP per person, since 2017, it stagnated and now it has dropped. Basically, our standard of living compared to that in other parts of the world is going down. When we compare it to that of the U.S., ours has dropped 2.5%, and the Americans' has been rising 5.5% this last year. If we look at the graphs, theirs is going up and ours is going sideways and down. The government has to change that. If it continues, our families are going to get into worse problems.

Canada is at a crossroads right now. Canadians are hurting. They are in pain. The government has done nothing to relieve that pain and has shown no compassion or empathy in regard to that.

**Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think the member opposite needs a time machine, because if he goes back to the period from 2010 to 2015, he will know that the Harper Conservative government ran five straight deficits, with \$55 billion in deficits in 2010 to 2011 alone. Do people know what we got with that? We got the exact same plan. Every single time the Conservatives come into power, it is like a game plan that is always put in place. They make massive cuts, which hurts people. They even raised the age of retirement. With a Conservative government, we get cuts and deficits, and people get hurt.

To the member, is it true or not that the Harper government, over a five-year period from 2010 to 2015, ran deficits of almost \$100 billion, yes or no?

• (1910)

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, yes, we ran deficits, and I know why. It is because we were in the greatest global meltdown of our banks that Canada and the world had ever seen. Where did that money go? I can tell the House where it went in my riding. It went to lift stations, to water treatment plants and to sewer lines. It went to things that Canadians actually needed. It was spent to actually create jobs and employment. It was returned to the economy and came back in taxes. That is where that money went.

Tell me where the Liberal government's money went. Where did the billions of dollars go? I do not know. We got the ArriveCAN app; maybe some of it went there. Where else did it go? It is like the \$40 million; nobody knows.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the federal housing advocate, which is a body tasked by the federal government with ensuring that the right to housing is respected in this country, issued a report a few weeks ago stating that Canada will need a staggering 9 million housing units and 3.3 million social housing units in the next 10 years.

I want to know how many social housing units would be built by a Conservative government, not that we want one.

[English]

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, actually, it is not up to government to build houses. It is up to the marketplace to build houses. It is up to government to actually set the stage, to put the environment in place so houses get built. It is up to government to make sure the platform is there so developers and homeowners who want to build a new house can actually do that. What have we done here? We have taxed them. We have taken away all of their disposable income. We have made it tough to actually even afford groceries, so how are they supposed to build a house? Talking about revenue properties and social housing, there is a role for government in social housing; there is no question about that for municipal, federal and provincial governments. Let us have a proper game plan to see that happen.

Do members know what? It is pretty tough when the cupboard is bare because the money was spent on things we cannot find.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am at a loss in terms of the ridiculousness of the answer to the previous question, saying that the government has no place in housing. That is why we are in this crisis in the first place. It is because government has stepped away from the business of building houses and has left it to the market when, ultimately, housing is a human right. We cannot live without it, and we therefore expect that a government has to take it into account.

I have heard from home builders. They are doing wonderful things in our community, but they do not do it out of the goodness of their heart. They do it for a profit, and that cannot continue when people are left homeless and dying on our streets as winter comes forward.

How can the member possibly defend his position?

### *Government Orders*

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, the NDP have a philosophy that they should own and be involved in everything. They think that the government can actually do things better than the marketplace; that is their philosophy. The reality is that we have seen that when the government is involved in things—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** As I mentioned a while ago, when someone has had an opportunity to ask a question, they should not be wanting to participate again unless recognized. No member in the House should be trying to speak when somebody else has the floor.

The hon. member for Prince Albert.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate your defending me there, because there is a lot of battering coming from that side.

To get back to what I was trying to say, I think there is a role for government to be involved in social housing; there is no question about it. When it comes to homelessness, government can help people up from poverty and give them a hand up. We have seen that in the past with Conservative governments, and we will see it in the future with Conservative governments. This is done properly in partnership with municipalities, NGOs and the provinces.

When it comes to private housing, there is a place for the marketplace to be involved. When the government spends \$1 billion to build houses, the marketplace could probably spend \$100 billion. The reality of leveraging in the marketplace is a lot better than the government trying to do it by itself. We are never going to build all these houses through government. We have to get the private sector involved, and if we do not, it will never happen.

• (1915)

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Today I had the honour of participating in the discussion on Motion No. 30 and listening to remarks from our Conservative friends, which sort of made my hair stand on end. Our goal is to put an end to Conservative obstruction of this bill. That is what we are working on.

Bill C-56 is about affordable housing and groceries. It is most unfortunate that the Conservatives have resorted to filibustering and delay tactics to stop such a critical bill. This has led to over 20 hours of debate in five days in this chamber. I confess that I would rather be with my family tonight than here in the House debating this with the Conservatives.

*Government Orders*

They obviously have no intention of letting this bill to get to a vote even though some of their own members support it. For example, the Conservative member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon told the House he would vote in favour of the bill over a month ago. On October 5, he said, “I will be joining my Conservative colleagues in voting to move this bill forward to committee”.

That sounds great, but 49 days have passed since then, which is why I am looking forward to hearing where my Conservative colleagues stand now. Before they share that with us, though, I want to emphasize the importance of this bill and why passing it is crucial for Quebec, for Canada, and for the people of Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

We are all well aware of the toll that rising food prices and the lack of affordable housing are taking on Canadian families. I am very pleased to clarify the measures set out in Bill C-56 to address these urgent problems.

As far as affordable housing goes, home ownership is clearly slipping beyond the reach of many Canadians, especially young people and newcomers. I have two daughters who are about to buy their first home, and even buying a small house under the current conditions is very difficult for them. I have never been so proud of our government, which is trying to introduce these measures to help young people buy their first home.

Bill C-56 proposes improvements to the rebate on the goods and services tax, or GST, for new purpose-built rental housing. This improvement encourages the construction of more rental housing, including apartments, student housing and seniors' residences. The bill will also facilitate tax relief. For example, a two-bedroom rental unit valued at \$500,000 will deliver \$25,000 in tax relief.

These measures seek to create conditions that are conducive to building housing tailored to the needs of families, which is sorely lacking. What is more, the bill removes restrictions on the existing GST rules to ensure that public service bodies, such as universities, hospitals, charities and qualifying not-for-profit organizations, can claim the GST rental rebate, which has increased to 100%. We are also asking the provinces and local governments to buy in to our new rental housing rebate and to make it easier to have housing built near public transit and services.

At the same time, the rising cost of food is cause for concern. We have already provided targeted inflation relief to millions of modest- or low-income Canadians through a one-time grocery rebate in July.

● (1920)

To further stabilize the cost of groceries, Bill C-56 amends the Competition Act. These amendments allow the Competition Bureau to conduct in-depth market studies, eliminate the efficiencies argument to stop anti-competitive mergers and take measures to block collaboration efforts that undermine competition and consumer choice, especially those that put small competitors at a disadvantage compared to large grocery chains.

What is the next step in our government's economic plan? It is very simple. We will continue the government's work to support Canadians. The 2023 fall economic statement presented by the

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance earlier this week is directly connected to the initiatives outlined in this bill.

My colleague opposite just clearly stated in his speech that all responsibilities should fall to the private sector. I would like to remind him that, during the pandemic, we were there for businesses, for citizens, for workers and for organizations. We were there for the arts, for culture and for seniors. He voted in favour of our measures every time. Now he is saying that we should not have taken on all those responsibilities. Once again, we support our communities. My colleague's main argument seems to be that we should not be doing what we are doing for Canadians. He believes that we should make cuts to affordability and housing measures.

The foundations of our economic plan have produced encouraging results. We have seen that over one million additional Canadians have jobs today. We have recovered all the jobs lost during the pandemic, and more. Inflation is down, and wage increases are outpacing inflation, which is a testament to our resilient economic policies. This year, the fall economic statement focused on two key challenges: strengthening support for the middle class and accelerating the construction of new housing. When new housing is built, it directly helps families in need. It stimulates the economy, helps families and helps send young people to school to support them in their everyday lives.

We recognize the need to stabilize prices and ease the burden of imminent mortgage renewals for Canadians. Our government responded with targeted measures in the fall economic statement.

These strategic measures seek to stabilize prices, help Canadians overcome mortgage difficulties and make life more affordable for everyone. Similarly, we are injecting billions of dollars in new funding to support our commitment to accelerate the pace of housing construction. What is more, we are cracking down on disruptive short-term rentals in order to make housing more accessible and affordable across Canada.

The fall economic statement is fully in keeping with our ongoing efforts to improve the lives of Canadians. We have a strong record when it comes to providing benefits, as demonstrated by our historic investments in affordable child care, the quarterly carbon tax rebates, the enhancement of the Canada workers benefit and the increase in Canada child benefit payments.

Our government is also proposing crucial amendments to the Competition Act to make groceries more affordable by eliminating junk fees and to remove the GST on essential services, such as psychotherapy and counselling.

This statement is not just a plan for economic growth. It is something we are genuinely excited about. It is a testament to our commitment to a cleaner, more sustainable future. The key measures it outlines, such as tax credits for investing in Canada's clean economy, the Canada growth fund's carbon contracts for difference, and advancing the indigenous loan guarantee program, demonstrate our commitment to supporting a robust economy that can stand up to global changes.

Crucially, the fall economic statement builds on our ongoing commitment to making housing more affordable.

• (1925)

In conclusion, we believe that passing Bill C-56 is essential. I hope all members of the House will vote in favour of it.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is great that the Liberals stole our ideas to bring down the price of housing, especially units built for the rental market. We support that.

However, does the member not see that out-of-control government spending has resulted in rampant inflation and interest rates that are hitting Canadians hard? Does he not see that?

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Madam Speaker, earlier on, we were accused of wanting to manage affordability and housing. We are not to blame for the pandemic or climate change. We know that the Conservatives do not believe in climate change, which has caused tornadoes and flooding across the country, perhaps even in the member's own riding. I know that there have been some in my riding.

Today, the cost of inflation is due to the war in Ukraine and the whole global economic situation. Today, we still have an AAA credit rating. Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. Today, we can affirm that our financial position is good, despite the debt-to-GDP ratio.

Today, we are proud that we helped Canadians during the pandemic. I am pleased that my colleague voted in favour of all the measures we put in place during the pandemic to help his constituents and the businesses and workers in his riding.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the housing crisis is affecting the entire country. As we know, in New Westminster—Burnaby, a one-bedroom apartment costs \$2,500 a month. Because of this crisis, people simply cannot afford to put a roof over their heads. It is not an exaggeration to say that.

This crisis has been brewing for 17 years. We saw it first under the Conservatives, and after that the Liberals did virtually nothing for many years. Now, with pressure from the NDP, they are just starting to take action. However, the reality is that we are still far behind where we should be in terms of building houses.

I would like to ask my colleague the following question. Why is the government waiting two years before making the investments

that would allow the construction of social, co-operative and affordable housing to begin right away?

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Madam Speaker, in politics, it is never too late to take positive action.

We have adopted several good measures, including the family benefit for children and families. We have also helped Canadians with housing through other programs.

What we are putting in place today is aimed precisely at responding to the housing crisis. We know that when there is a housing crisis, investing in affordable housing has a domino effect. When we invest in affordable housing, other units become available. People who are a little better off will be able to afford slightly larger homes for their family. There are going to be more homeowners. The wheel keeps turning. We need to act quickly, now.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert for a brief question.

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am wondering what country my colleague actually lives in. I listened to him brag about what his government has done to deal with the housing crisis. The Liberals have been in power for eight years.

I did a tour of Quebec. I travelled all around the province. Homelessness has increased by 40%. Right now, 10,000 people in Quebec are homeless. There are homeless people everywhere: Saint-Jérôme, Val-d'Or, Lac-Saint-Jean, Rimouski, Gaspé, Sherbrooke and likely in my colleague's riding too. I heard what the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry said earlier. There are also homeless people in Shawinigan. It is a problem everywhere.

We asked for an emergency fund so that people are not dying on Quebec's riverbanks. There was nothing about that in the economic update. As my colleague—

• (1930)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry, but I must interrupt the hon. member. I asked him to keep his question brief.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Madam Speaker, I will answer his first question. I am in Quebec, in Canada, in my riding, and I am proud to be here.

*Government Orders*

As for homelessness, my colleague has been shouting at us since the beginning of this session about respecting our jurisdictions and not meddling in Quebec's jurisdictions. We take the issue of homelessness to heart. Even though we are the federal government, we care about people in need. We are investing in mental health. We are investing in housing. We want to get people off the streets, and we want to work with the Bloc Québécois to help the homeless.

[English]

**Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 30, which is designed to unlock the support for Canadians laid out in Bill C-56, the affordable housing and groceries act. I feel compelled to share that I met with many constituents from Ottawa—Vanier who asked me to support this bill, and I will explain why in the next few minutes.

It is unfortunate that the urgency of delivering on these priorities for Canadians has been pushed aside by the delay tactics employed by members of the Conservative Party. Despite members of their own party saying they support the measures, as the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon has done, they have spent over 20 hours of debate across five days filibustering this important legislation. While the opposition is focused on delays, our government is focused on pushing for results.

We know that the challenges of securing affordable housing persist. That is why, in addition to Bill C-56, the fall economic statement unveiled by the Minister of Finance earlier this week underscores our commitment to the middle class by introducing measures to mitigate the impact of high prices and impending mortgage renewals, offering targeted relief to make life more affordable for Canadians.

In addition, the fall economic statement focuses on accelerating home construction as a critical solution to the housing crisis. The need for more homes across Canada is acute, especially with young individuals and newcomers finding home ownership increasingly out of reach and the rising cost of rent straining household budgets. This is a priority that Ottawa—Vanier residents have compelled me to work on. One of my focuses is to make sure that this measure, along with all the other measures we have been bringing forward in the national housing strategy, works to accelerate home construction.

Moreover, the fall economic statement proposes significant funding increases to bolster home construction efforts. The infusion of \$15 billion in new loan funding is expected to support the creation of over 30,000 additional homes throughout the country. These initiatives, combined with removing the GST on new co-op rental housing and tightening regulations on non-compliant short-term rentals, signify our dedication to fostering a more accessible housing market for Canadians.

It is important to note the stark contrast between our government's proactive stance on housing and the lack of substantive proposals from the opposition. While Conservatives offer slogans and rhetoric, we remain steadfast in our commitment to building a fair and accessible housing market for all Canadians. This year, federal investment in housing is \$9 billion higher than it was in 2013-14.

Since 2015, the average annual federal housing investment has more than doubled compared with that of the previous government.

Bill C-56 plays a pivotal role in these ongoing efforts. It introduces enhancements to the goods and services tax, the GST and the rental rebate, encouraging the construction of purpose-built rental housing. This measure aims to alleviate the housing shortage by incentivizing the development of rental properties, including apartments, student housing and residences for seniors.

Earlier this week, the Leader of the Opposition actually described our plan to deliver more homes for Canadians as “disgusting”. What is disgusting is Conservatives delaying this important bill. While Conservatives provide nothing but slogans, the bedrock of our economic blueprint is yielding results. With over a million more Canadians gainfully employed today compared with the prepandemic era, coupled with a downward trend in inflation, as we witness wage increases outpacing inflation rates, the resilience of our economic policies is unmistakable.

● (1935)

This year's fall economic statement zeroes in on two paramount challenges: supporting the middle class and expediting the construction of more homes. These pivotal actions are aimed at stabilizing housing prices, extending support to Canadians, navigating mortgage challenges and rendering life more affordable for all. In parallel, our commitment to accelerating home construction is underscored by the injection of billions in new financing. Furthermore, we are taking resolute steps to curb the disruptions caused by short-term rentals, ensuring greater accessibility and affordability in housing across Canada.

Building on the measures outlined in Bill C-56, the fall economic statement seamlessly aligns with our sustained effort to elevate the lives of Canadians with an intensified focus on housing. Our unwavering commitment to affordable housing is emphasized by the substantial increase in federal investment, paving the way for the creation of more than 30,000 additional homes across Canada through new funding. Notably, the removal of GST from new co-op rental housing and protective measures introduced via the Canadian mortgage charter serve as a crucial step in our ongoing mission to make housing more accessible and affordable.

While the federal government is leading the national effort to build more homes by bringing together provincial, territorial and municipal governments in partnership with home builders, financiers, community housing providers, post-secondary institutions and indigenous organizations and governments, we are also doing more work to stabilize prices.



A point of critical importance about Bill C-56 is that it would make changes to the Competition Act to ensure more effective and modern competition law. This would promote affordability for Canadians and help our economic growth. That is why we are introducing amendments that would stop big business mergers with anti-competitive effects, enabling the Competition Bureau to conduct precise market studies and stop anti-competitive collaborations that stifle small businesses, especially small grocers.

Our government recognizes the fundamental role that housing plays in fostering economic stability and societal well-being. The efforts outlined in Bill C-56, supported by the fall economic statement, reflect our dedication to both ensuring that all individuals and families have a place to call home and stabilizing prices for Canadians. Again, I have been knocking on doors and talking with residents of Ottawa—Vanier, and they have told me time and time again that we need to continue to bring those measures for housing.

In closing, I urge all members to support Bill C-56, the affordable housing and groceries act, as a crucial step forward in our mission to create an economy that works for everyone.

● (1940)

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the Liberals are patting themselves on the back for introducing the bill. Actually, what they should be doing is congratulating the member for Carleton, the Conservative Party leader, for bringing forth the building homes not bureaucracy private member's bill. They have taken pieces of it and highlighted it in their plan. Well, they have only taken half measures; there is a lot more to it.

I want to bring up one point. I met with the CEO of a company that does purpose-built rentals here in Ottawa, and he says that the biggest issue they are facing is bureaucracy. It takes him a lot longer to get through some of the bureaucracy than to actually get things built.

According to the member, does the bill address bureaucracy?

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. colleague for sharing his thoughts on this bill. It would be great if he could support this measure, which has been brought forward by developers for the last many years, who say that the GST removal would give them a break and help them move forward in building. This is one of the many measures we have been bringing forward.

The other one that I know is big talk in Ottawa right now is about how we are going to bring forward the accelerator fund. The housing accelerator fund is another measure that will help everyone, such as the builders, the community housing associations or organizations and also the federal government, to support the city to move forward. I believe we are on a path where we have many measures that will accelerate access to safe homes for Canadians, especially in Ottawa—Vanier.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Ottawa—Vanier talked a lot about housing and affordable housing. No doubt here in Ottawa there is a desperate need for housing. If the member really supports her community and her constituents in getting access to safe, secure and affordable housing, why then would she not raise the issue with her own government

slow-walking the delivery of housing in the fall economic statement? There are two major initiatives the government is going to delay the funding for until 2025. Just as an FYI, the average time to get a project off the ground is five years. Add another two years to wait for the funding to come in and that is seven years. It will not be until at least 2030 before real housing gets built for people to access. How is that supporting her constituents? Will she actually do what is right and tell her own government to fix that problem and roll out the money now?

[Translation]

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to respond in French because I want to make it clear to the residents of Ottawa—Vanier, and to all Canadians, that since we took office in 2015, the Government of Canada, the Liberal government, has been focused on a housing strategy across the country, and that includes affordable housing. I can say that there is a big difference in the riding of Ottawa—Vanier and in the national capital region. I have seen a number of construction projects that suggest we are taking advantage of different levers, different tools to make progress on housing affordability.

We know we need many more such tools. That is why the federal government is putting measures in place today and will continue to do so in the coming years.

● (1945)

[English]

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my friend and colleague highlighted the difference between our housing platform and the opposition's. While the Leader of the Opposition seems to be applying for the position of the Canadian *The Apprentice* host, we are busy working with stakeholders. Instead of threatening to fire people, we have used the carrot approach in incentivizing the private sector and not-for-profit sector. I ask my friend and colleague to comment on why it is important to work with stakeholders in this space in order to see new affordable supply across all of Canada.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague makes it easy to see why this is the only way forward and the only way to create more housing across the country. We have to work with partners, including cities, the provinces, co-operatives and organizations. This affects everyone, and that is why partnerships at the federal level and investment in our communities make things better.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise tonight to speak on Bill C-56 and on Motion No. 30. I think that these are important initiatives that the NDP has brought forward.

### *Government Orders*

I want to start off my speech by expressing my disappointment in the fall economic statement. There are two things that I believe need to be highlighted.

First off, and this is something that the NDP will continue to fight for, the fact that in the fall economic statement, there was no money allocated to the Canada disability benefit, to provide supports for people with disabilities, is a profound disappointment. It is disrespectful to people with disabilities.

We know that half of the people who go to food banks to make ends meet and half of the people who are homeless are Canadians with disabilities. The government has a responsibility to put the Canada disability benefit in place immediately. That is something that the member for Burnaby South, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam and the entire NDP caucus is not going to stop fighting for.

Second, we have all, across the country, heard from small businesses that are concerned about the fact that there is not an extension of the CEBA loans. Small businesses are struggling. I know that in New Westminster—Burnaby, many small businesses have been approaching us, needing that extension for that repayment.

I am reminded by my colleague, the member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, that businesses in her riding as well are raising those concerns, including Dan Osborne from Gore Bay, who has said that the NDP needs to keep fighting to have that CEBA loan extension. New Democrats are committing to continue to fight for the CEBA loan extension for Dan Osborne, for businesses in New Westminster—Burnaby and right across the country, to ensure that this is in place. There is no doubt that we are going to keep fighting.

When we talk about this bill, I think it is important to talk about the last 17 years and what we saw first under the corporate Conservatives and now under the Liberals, in terms of what has actually happened in housing. Housing costs doubled under the Conservatives. We saw this during the dismal years of the Harper regime. They doubled again under the Liberals. Between the two of them, both the Liberal government and the Conservative government lost over a million homes that were affordable, homes that people could live in, homes that were based on 30% of income or a little bit more, homes that Canadians could afford.

I had a press conference last week with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, where we talked about rents in our area.

In New Westminster, it is \$2,500 a month for a one-bedroom, on average. In Coquitlam, it is \$2,600. In Burnaby, it is \$2,500. These are all costs that are simply too heavy for Canadians to pay. The idea that we would put into place immediate measures to help housing is why we are supportive of some of the measures that we forced to be in Bill C-56.

Motion No. 30 helps to improve that and includes, as well, important issues that help to support the Competition Bureau and the fact that, as a federal government, there is a responsibility to crack down on food price gouging, as my colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford has been so outspoken on, as well as the member for Burnaby South.

As for the food price gouging and the fact that the Competition Bureau does not have the powers that it needs, this is absolutely essential. That is why we are very supportive of this bill and of the motion as well. It is NDP-inspired, because New Democrats stand up for their constituents.

When we talk about the years of the Harper Conservatives and what they did to housing, losing over 800,000 units across the country, we have to really think about what planet the member for Carleton is on when he talks about the golden age of the Harper regime. I remember something quite different. I remember the erosion of affordable housing units.

The average Conservative MP, of course, is a proud owner of having lost over 2,400, on average, affordable housing units in their constituencies, as housing costs rose under the Harper regime and as affordable housing units disappeared, were either sold or converted to corporate landlords.

● (1950)

We think of the member for Carleton now in Stornoway. He lives a gilded-age life, with the French cravat and everything. It is so clear to me that he is out of touch with Canadians when he pretends that somehow the housing crisis is going to magically be solved just by giving more leeway to corporate landlords. That is the way it was under the Harper Conservatives. It certainly did not, in any way, make a difference.

In fact, it was the contrary. We saw a deterioration right across the country of housing stability and housing affordability. When the Conservatives say we do not have to do anything and we just have to give corporate landlords more leeway, we see what Doug Ford in Ontario has brought. He has brought the destruction of the Greenbelt, the unbelievable selling out of the public good for private profit. It is simply not a solution.

If we want to bring it home for people in this country, we need to make the kinds of investments the NDP is calling for, some of which are reflected in Bill C-56. Some are reflected in the improvements that we have made, that we forced the government to put into place.

The reality is, on this side of the House, the NDP absolutely believes that every Canadian has a right to have a roof over their head each night and that they should have the ability to put food on their table every day. It is more than that. We actually believe that Canadians have the right to a universal health care system and that they have a right to universal pharma care.

We should not have constituents struggling, as some of mine are a few blocks from my home. It is a thousand dollars a month for heart medication and families have to make that tough choice between whether they keep a roof over their head by paying their rent, or whether they pay for that life-saving heart medication. In a country as wealthy as this, there should be no Canadian who has to make the choice between life-sustaining medication, putting food on the table and keeping a roof over their head. Not a single Canadian should have to face that choice every day, and that is the reality.

That is why we are here in this House. There are 25 New Democrats who are fighting, along with our leader, the member for Burnaby South, to change that situation and to make a difference for people so that we actually take that enormous wealth that we have in this country and ensure that we are actually providing essential needs for every single Canadian across the length and breadth of this land.

Conservatives and Liberals, as they are wont to do, usually ask at this point who is going to pay for it. If people heard the response of our finance critic, the member for Elmwood—Transcona, to the fall economic statement, he raised the issue that we have the lowest corporate taxes in the OECD. We should actually be thinking potentially of raising business taxes by 1% or 2%. It used to be 28% and now it is 15%. For every percentage point rise, there is \$3 billion available for essential needs for, for example, affordable housing in this country.

Let us talk more about the Harper record because the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who is an independent, non-partisan officer of Parliament, who does objective work, evaluated the total cost of the Harper tax haven treaties just a few years ago. How much did we give away in Harper tax haven treaties, these sweetheart deals that the Harper government signed in order to allow billionaires and wealthy corporations to take their money offshore?

Members know how it works, or they may not, so let me explain it. If someone takes their money offshore to a tax haven treaty holder, like the Bahamas that has a 0% taxation rate, and declares income there, then they do not have to pay taxes in Canada.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer looked at all of that and made the conservative estimate that the Harper tax haven treaties, and the fact that the Liberal government sadly signed more of those treaties after it came into power, costs Canadians over \$30 billion each year in taxpayers' money. This figure is profoundly disturbing.

• (1955)

What is the cumulative impact of that over the eight years the Liberals have been in power? Members can do the math. A quarter of a trillion dollars was handed over to billionaires and wealthy corporations and then to overseas tax havens. Now let us look at what the Conservatives did over the same period. This is a conservative estimate. The PBO was very clear that the estimate could go well beyond the figures in its landmark study on the impact of the Harper tax haven treaties, back in 2019. Over a nearly 10-year period, it was \$300 billion.

If we put the two figures together, we are talking about over half a trillion dollars that has been spent not on housing, not on pen-

### *Government Orders*

sions, not on health care, not on pharmacare, not on providing clean water for indigenous communities and not on providing for reconciliation or indigenous-led housing developments. No. It has gone to the wealthy. It has gone to billionaires. It has gone to corporations that are extraordinarily profitable and not paying their fair share of taxes.

When Conservatives and Liberals ask how to pay for it, our response to them is to ask how they have paid for the massive tax breaks they have given to wealthy Canadians and profitable corporations over the course of the last 17 years. How did they pay for that? They paid for it by depriving seniors of their pensions. They paid for it by forcing students to go into debt. They paid for it by not putting in place a Canada disability benefit. They paid for it by not having affordable housing in place. They paid for it by undermining our health care system.

It is time that wealthy corporations pay their fair share, that wealthy Canadians pay their fair share and that Canadians stop paying for the incredible largesse of Conservatives and Liberals. It is profoundly disappointing to me that the resources of our country are mobilized for the very rich when they should be mobilized to pay for the needs of Canadians right across the length and breadth of this land.

I only have a few minutes left, so I want to come back to the vote that took place on the Day of Dignity and Freedom, on Tuesday, to be in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, commemorated in Ukraine, of course, and around the world in the Ukrainian diaspora. Tuesday was the 10-year anniversary of the fight for freedom and democracy in Ukraine.

This is an important symbolic date because of the force of the violence of the Putin regime. The Putin regime is violent, of course, domestically. There are human rights' violations, as we have seen, and hatred. We have seen the defenestration of political opponents. However, the violence that has been reaped on Ukraine, the Ukrainian people and Ukrainian democracy is profoundly sad to freedom-loving people, the people who stand for democracy and human rights.

That day, the Day of Dignity and Freedom, was being commemorated around the world because Ukrainians could not celebrate. They are defending their homes. They are defending their farms. They are defending their communities. They are trying to keep their hospitals open. They are trying to avoid their schools from being attacked by missiles and bombs. They could not commemorate it, but it was that day that every single Conservative MP chose to vote against Ukraine and vote against the principle of having a trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine. Not a single Conservative member stood up and said to the member for Carleton that this was wrong, that his obsession with the price on carbon is unhealthy, that this unhealthy obsession doesn't make any sense when we're talking about supporting people who are fighting for their liberty. However, every single Conservative MP stood in their place and voted down the Canada-Ukraine trade deal.

*Government Orders*

• (2000)

That was profoundly sad to me. It was shocking, I think, to Canadians of Ukrainian origin, one and a half million strong, who were calling on Conservatives to do the right thing and support Ukraine. Not a single Conservative was willing to do that.

It was shocking to the Zelenskyy regime, his government. President Zelenskyy was here in this House asking Conservatives to vote for the deal, to vote for that agreement, that symbolic and important support for the Ukrainian people, yet every single Conservative MP said no.

This is tragic. I want to say how profoundly disappointing it was to all the other members of Parliament in this House who heard President Zelenskyy's call and who responded appropriately. All the other parties, all the other members of Parliament, voted in favour of the principle of a trade agreement with a people who are fighting for their democracy, their lands, their cities and their freedom. However, because of the extremism of the member for Carleton, the Conservatives were all forced to vote against it.

I know they are hearing from constituents—

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think it is time for the member to move on to the topic of debate tonight. I know it is late and there are very few people in this room and that he can go on and on with his misrepresentation of the facts. I am a proud Ukrainian person from Canada, and I am tired of hearing this in our House. It is time to move on.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for bringing that up.

I will remind folks that we are speaking to a specific motion, Government Business No. 30, on Bill C-56. I want to make sure we all do that.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I can understand the member being embarrassed by her vote, but she should not have voted the way she did.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think my colleague's message was very clear, yet the first thing my NDP colleague did was carry on with his insinuations and disinformation about the deeper reasons why the Conservative Party voted against an agreement imposed on Ukraine when it was in a position of weakness.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I believe that is a matter of debate again.  
[English]

Relevance is important when we debate. I have called for a little relevance.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I mean no disrespect by remaining standing. Unfortunately I toppled over my water glass, so my seat is wet. That is why I am not sitting down.

I do want to respond to my colleague. Disinformation is the Leader of the Opposition standing in this House and announcing a

terrorist attack because he saw on the Fox propaganda network that—

• (2005)

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable on a point of order again.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, for the third time, I would urge my colleague to ensure his comments are germane. He is currently using his right to speak to spread more disinformation. I urge him to keep things relevant.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Once again, this is a matter of debate, but relevance is very important to the discussion.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby has three minutes to finish his speech.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I think that the member for Carleton should apologize for making comments that fuelled disinformation—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have another point of order from the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I make a plea for relevance.

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is the fourth time I have asked for relevance. Let us get to the crux of the issue, because I think we all want to get to the next part.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are in an awkward position. It is up to them to manage that—

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have a point of order from the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby seems to have trouble with relevance and is acting like a Russian disinformation officer, which he generally is in the House. I would urge him to stick somewhere close to the truth.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I want to thank the member for South Shore—St. Margarets for bringing that up. That is, again, mostly debate, but I know the hon. member was just finishing up his speech on the issue at hand.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I have just three words to conclude: He should know.

In terms of Bill C-56 and Motion No. 30, the important thing for Conservatives to remember is that, rather than blocking this bill, which is what they have been trying to do, they should be looking to support it. They say they are concerned about affordable housing. Their record shows the contrary; they have a deplorable record on affordable housing. However, if they really believe in ensuring there is more construction in this country of affordable housing, they should be supporting this bill, which, of course, has been inspired and pushed by the NDP. Like many of the other good things that have happened in this Parliament, it is because of the member for Burnaby South and a very dedicated NDP caucus that this is happening.

Canadians should have more consumer protection, and more weight should be given to the Competition Bureau to crack down on the food price gouging we have seen from corporate CEOs, the gas price gouging we have seen from the very profitable oil and gas sector, with profits of over \$38 billion last year, and all of the other ways that Canadians are being gouged, like through cellphones and Internet, which Canadians are paying the highest fees in the world for. If the Conservatives truly believe in that, they should be supporting this motion, which would enhance the Competition Bureau and would ensure that Canadians finally get some protection.

For 17 years, Conservatives and Liberals have not protected consumers at all in this country, and the NDP and the member for Burnaby South are standing up and saying that enough is enough. They need to make sure we have protection for consumers in this country. That is what the NDP is fighting for. If Conservatives really believe in all the things they have been saying, they can make up for their past track record, which is absolutely deplorable, and vote for the motion and the bill.

We are not going to stop fighting for Canadians. The 25 members of the NDP caucus have had a huge weight in pushing the government to do the right thing. We are very proud of our record. We expect all members of Parliament to adopt the bill and adopt the motion. Then, of course, we will move on to anti-scab legislation that all members of Parliament should be supporting as well.

● (2010)

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 8:10 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of Motion No. 30 under Government Business, which is now before the House.

[English]

The question is on the amendment.

If a member participating in person wishes that the amendment be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

*Before the taking of the vote:*

## Government Orders

● (2040)

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We all learned a few minutes ago that there have been problems with the voting application for members participating remotely. As we can see, many members are participating remotely.

I would therefore like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to adopt on division the amendment moved by the Conservatives and, subsequently, to adopt on division the motion as amended by the Conservative amendment.

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

**Some hon. members:** No.

● (2055)

[English]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 454)

## YEAS

### Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Gill	Gladu
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kniec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrice

*Government Orders*

Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Poilievre	Redekopp
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seebach	Shields
Shipley	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson— 138

**NAYS**

## Members

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

Kelloway	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	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	Miller
Morrissey	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Rayes	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sorbara
Sousa	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Weiler
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 174

**PAIRED**

## Members

Chabot	Fry
Housefather	Khalid
Lantsman	Mendicino
Morantz	Morrison
Perron	Rempel Garner
Sarai	Sheehan— 12

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the amendment defeated.

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.

• (2100)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

• (2110)

[*Translation*]

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

*(Division No. 455)*

## YEAS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gainey
Garrison	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
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
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough

*Government Orders*

Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh	Sorbara
Sousa	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Thompson	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Virani
Weiler	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
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## NAYS

## Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Gill
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Poilievre
Redekopp	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer

*Government Orders*

Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vuong	Wagantall
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
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## PAIRED

## Members

Chabot	Fry
Housefather	Khalid
Lantsman	Mendicino
Morantz	Morrison
Perron	Rempel Garner
Sarai	Sheehan— 12

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

\* \* \*

● (2115)

[English]

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND GROCERIES ACT**

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-56, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Competition Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to say that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Don Valley East.

We are here today to talk about Bill C-56. This bill, unfortunately, has been delayed by the Conservatives, time after time. We have seen their obstructionist policies throughout this Parliament, but specifically on this bill, which would bring relief to Canadians.

It is interesting to watch. I have been sitting here for a while, listening to speeches. The argument from the Conservatives is that they did not have enough time to debate this piece of legislation. At the same time, when they have gotten up, none of the members have actually talked about the legislation. They have not talked about what is going on. They talk about the carbon tax or whatever else it is they are interested in, except what is going in the bill. It is fascinating.

It is a sign of a sure filibuster that the Conservatives do not want to talk about this, because they know it is beneficial and it would help Canadians. They know it would get housing built, especially in eliminating the GST on purpose-built rentals. We are already seeing the benefits. We are already seeing developers across Canada switching their construction to purpose-built rentals, because they know this is coming. We need to build more housing in this country.

There is this mythical 45 minutes a day during question period when the Conservatives pretend to care about getting housing built and the concerns of Canadians. They churn out slogans and repeat them, repeat them, repeat them, repeat them. Did I do that four times?

Clearly, as they are shouting at me about the carbon tax again, the only environmental plan the Conservatives have is recycling slogans. They are so obsessed with it that they would vote against Ukraine in a time of war, even though Ukraine already has a price on pollution. The Conservatives would abandon Ukraine during war, when Ukraine asked us to pass that legislation.

The Conservatives are yelling about a price on pollution. They are clearly eager about that. It is getting under their skin, because they are hearing from their constituents, who expected the Conservative Party to stand up for the Ukrainian people. They are yelling. They cannot handle it. They cannot take the heat on this file.

The hon. member from Newfoundland cannot handle it, that his constituents expect him to stand up for—

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, order. We just had a great vote, and everything went really well, I thought. Let us continue that collegiality on this.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, since this is time allocated, I am happy to be up here as long as they want me to be, through points of order. I am happy to be here until 11 o'clock or whenever the next series of votes happens.

The hon. member from Newfoundland, from the Conservative Party, was and still is yelling at the top of his lungs. I guess it is his first day here. He does not know that it is not his turn. He is from the island of Newfoundland. He is from the province of Newfoundland and Labrador—

**The Deputy Speaker:** When it is time for questions and comments, I will put the hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame up first. I will make sure he gets an opportunity to ask the hon. member a question.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, to be clear, I am sure the member for Avalon will back me up on this. It is the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, but I believe the hon. member is from the Island of Newfoundland proper. I am sure he will yell out something a little later.

Clearly, the embarrassment is real for what the Conservatives have done and how they have betrayed Ukraine. It is absolutely shameful.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** That is a good point from my colleague, Mr. Speaker, that MAGA politics are making their way into the Conservative Party. It is an embarrassment.

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



**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to respond to all the comments. I was going to move on, but it is clear that the Conservative Party is getting upset any time we mention Ukraine. We cannot mention Ukraine, because they are going to get—

• (2120)

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have a point of order from the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, it is a rule in the House that we address the matter at hand, which is the bill up for debate. I would ask you to bring this member to order. We have had enough of this nonsense. He is spreading misinformation, which is not unlike what we see coming out of the Kremlin. I would like him to bring it back to the matter at hand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We should all try to stick to the bill we are debating. We are later in the day than normal, so maybe people are getting tired.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are not allowed, according to the government's Speaker in the chair, to do something indirectly that we cannot do directly. This has happened over and over today, and now this speaker is challenging my Canadian-Ukrainian heritage on this side of the floor, as though somehow, because I made a choice in the House to vote a different way than he did, he has the right to stand here to challenge—

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Speak through the Speaker and not to me.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** I said “he”.

Mr. Speaker, he is challenging my heritage. My grandfather came to this country just before the Holodomor took place. I would encourage him to get off of his rant—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I want to shut this down as soon as I possibly can because I want to get on with the orders of the day.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I listened very attentively, and there was no challenge to the member's heritage. There was a challenge of her vote, and that is something that she—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his intervention.

I will say that members should be judicious in their discussions here tonight and stick to the debate on Bill C-56 as it is before us. If there were fewer attempts to create a diversion in the House, that would be wonderful.

The hon. member for St. Catharines.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, it is funny because I have been sitting here all afternoon and not one Conservative member has actually talked about what is in the bill. Not one of them has, yet any point—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I am responding to their heckles, and the hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner is screaming at the top of his lungs because he does not want me to—

### *Government Orders*

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is a common practice of the House to allow members to withdraw a comment when they make misleading or false statements.

The member said that no Conservative had addressed this bill in debate today. That is untrue. The member for Prince Albert addressed it quite well in his speech not that long ago. I invite the member to withdraw his comment and apologize for misleading the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will say that the hon. member for Prince Albert did speak to it. The hon. member for St. Catharines could maybe withdraw just that piece and get back to the bill at hand.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, that was the member who said that the government had no business in the place of housing. The speeches I have heard have not been relevant to the—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I did ask the member to withdraw that piece in which he said that no one has spoken to it because the member for Prince Albert has spoken to it.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I withdraw that with respect to the hon. member for Prince Albert. Wow, the skin is thin.

Back to the point—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

**Mr. Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, on that point of order, I would be happy to provide my notes, as I spoke to the issue as well.

• (2125)

**The Deputy Speaker:** We are starting to get into further debate, and I will be happy to call on members to ask questions when the hon. member is done. I am sure the hon. member for St. Catharines has a point to make in his speech.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I have been making a clear point throughout the entirety of my speech and the Conservatives have been trying to shout me down, which they also tried to do to the member for New Westminster—Burnaby because they are embarrassed of their record.

What they should be embarrassed of is their record on housing. I was talking about, before I was interrupted, this mythical 45 minutes during the day which is question period when they pretend to care about Canadians who are struggling with housing, but they come up with a plan that would raise taxes on construction of housing. It would actually cut funding to municipalities. This is their plan.

The member who got up and said that there were Conservatives talking about the bill said that the government has no business in housing. It is shameful, but it shows where the Conservatives are at with respect to this. They talk a big game in question period and deliver nothing. They talk about Mike Harris' common-sense revolution, but we saw what happened during that time. We saw cuts. We saw hospital closures. We saw horrific things that communities are still dealing with to this day in Ontario, and the Conservatives seek to mimic it.

*Government Orders*

As I said, question period for them is about recycling slogans. There is no seriousness about their effort to fight homelessness and to build more housing. It is absolutely shocking that the Leader of the Opposition would go across the country to say that he is going to get housing built and not have a serious plan to deliver on it.

We have shown, in the fall economic statement, that we have a serious plan through the housing accelerator fund. We have seen announcements across the country, and we are seeing growth in housing starts through Stats Canada. We are seeing the results of this government's plan of action, and we are serious about this issue. The Conservatives are not. They have delayed and obstructed and they are continuing to do it. I do not know how many points of order the Conservatives have risen on during my speech.

The Leader of the Opposition even called co-op housing “Soviet-style” housing. It is absolutely shameful. I have constituents in my riding, and I think they would have constituents in their ridings, who rely on co-op housing as an effective means to get housing built. It is an effective means for affordable housing and a good way to build housing, and the Leader of the Opposition dismisses it. Again, he does not have a plan at all. He does not have a plan on climate change, and he does not have a plan on housing. They get up to talk about a big gain, but offer nothing except obstruction, yelling and heckling, and they are continuing the heckling. It is absolutely shocking.

They talk about food prices, and I genuinely believe them. We hear from our constituents, but the Conservatives have no plan. They talk about the price on pollution, but do not talk about the cost of food with respect to the costs of climate change. They do not talk about Bill C-56, which would enact competition law that would bring forward better regulations on competition and would have impacts. Again, it is just delay and deny. If only the rhetoric of question period, that 45 minutes of the day when the Conservatives pretend to care, could match the reality of the crisis. I wish that were the case. Sadly, it is not.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will remind the hon. member that question period is more than 45 minutes these days because it does go on long. It would be lovely if we could get it back to 45 minutes.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for St. Catharines seems to have forgotten to fit into his speech, which is supposed to be about the affordable housing and groceries act, that his Prime Minister had this big meeting with officers from all of the major grocery chains, and he promised to bring down the price of groceries by Thanksgiving. How much did that meeting bring down the cost of groceries by Thanksgiving?

• (2130)

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives talk a big game, but this legislation was tabled well before Thanksgiving. All we have seen is delay, obstruction and no action by the Conservatives. There is no care of Canadian food pricing. Again, the Conservatives talk a big game. They heckle, shout and yell, but their voting record speaks for itself, and it is not for Canadians.

[Translation]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is going to be a long night.

I thank my colleague for his speech because it went in all directions, especially at first. If we truly come back to Bill C-56, the Minister of Finance said that there were studies that prove that Bill C-56 would lower the cost of rent. My question is on the housing crisis, which has become a national emergency.

After the Bloc Québécois asked officials the question during the briefing for members, the officials said that there were no studies and that they may contact us later. That was on September 21. November 21 just passed and we are still waiting for the studies.

Does the member have any studies on hand proving that Bill C-56 will lower the cost of rent?

[English]

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis is about getting more housing supply built. Reducing GST on purpose-built rentals will get more rentals built. We are already seeing the results with developers announcing thousands of units of housing being built. The member can wait for studies; I am going to listen to experts. We are seeing the results on the street and on construction sites. It is going to get the job done.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked a lot about housing. The government, of course, purports that it wants to see more housing built faster, yet in the fall economic statement, it has slow-walked the rollout of money that would actually build housing Canadians could afford. That does not make any sense.

Now, on this particular bill, another thing that does not make sense is that the government is not making the GST exemption available to existing co-op and social housing projects. If they do not get access to that funding, some of these projects may actually become unviable.

If the member truly supports housing and seeing social and co-op housing being developed in this country, will he call on his own government to allow the exemption for existing projects?

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the government's record on housing. I was proud to cut the ribbon for the first affordable and subsidized housing units in the city of St. Catharines in my lifetime.

More work needs to be done, which is why I am excited by the announcements in the fall economic statement. Let us see more purpose-built rentals getting built under Bill C-56. The hon. member can keep yelling, but we are focused on Canadians, and we are going to get more housing built.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, when an individual is elected to this place, he should know a little bit about geography and that the name of the province that I come from is not Newfoundland but Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am not going to ask a question. I am going to call for this member to apologize to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador for calling our province simply “Newfoundland”. Will he do so?

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I think I was specific in my comments. I specifically said that the province was named Newfoundland and Labrador and that the member is from the Island of Newfoundland. The province is the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, which I acknowledged in my speech.

That is if the member was listening. Clearly, he was yelling too loudly during the heckling portion of his time over there, unfortunately. I did say that, and he can go back to Hansard or he can keep heckling all night long. I am sure that is what he is going to do.

**Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to stand in the House of Commons on behalf of the good people of Don Valley East and speak to this important bill that really looks at housing. It looks at providing a GST rebate, and it really does speak to making life more affordable for Canadians.

I am proud to be a Liberal. I have always been proud of being a Liberal. I am proud to be a Liberal because I believe that the government can help to make life easier for people, to put in place programs and services that are designed to help people.

There is something I remember when I was back at Carleton University learning about the social contract. It is really the relationship between the state and the citizen. I remember learning a bit about Rousseau, Hobbes and Locke, and the development of the social contract. I believe that there is an obligation of government to put in place different types of services, programs, understandings and agreements that look for ways to better position people. I think that Bill C-56 does exactly this.

This bill will look at ways to build more capacity in the system to build more homes. We know that during the Conservatives' time in power under former prime minister Harper from, I believe, 2009 to 2015, a lot of changes took place in this country when it came to housing. For example, there were 800,000 fewer units of affordable housing. The price of homes from 2009 to 2015 doubled in this country. According to TRREB, the Toronto real estate board in my area, homes went from about \$300,000 to \$600,000. That was under the Conservative government.

The big question is: What did the Conservative government do to actually look at maintaining affordable prices in the city I represent, Toronto? The answer is simple. The Conservatives did absolutely nothing. On top of that, they ran massive deficits. The Harper government, back in 2009-10, ran a \$55-billion deficit that year. In 2011, it was \$33 billion. In 2013, it was \$18 billion. That amounts to over \$100 billion in a six-year period by the Conservative government when it was in power. At the same time, it made massive cuts. It did not invest in affordable housing or housing in general.

What it did was to actually make cuts in the system and hurt people.

There is an ideological difference between being a Conservative and being a Liberal in this House. On one side, the Conservatives will make massive cuts and reward the richest and big businesses by giving out subsidies and, at the same time, run massive deficits. The largest deficit to date, during those time periods, was under the government of Stephen Harper.

When we run deficits, it is to invest in people. When we invest in public education, infrastructure, health care, dental care and child care, we are investing in the people of this country, unlike the Conservatives when they are in power. They actually wanted to take things like the retirement age and move it from 65 to 67. They made life harder for people. Under the previous Conservative government, 800,000 affordable units were gone and now Conservatives have the audacity to stand up in this House and say they believe in making these types of investments.

The member for Prince Albert was very clear. I wrote this down as I was here listening. He said that “it is not up to government to build houses.”

• (2135)

On one side we have a government that is making the types of investments that are put back into investing in people, and on the other side we have an opposition that has a track record. Conservatives do have a track record in this House. One just has to look a few years back to see their track record. It is about making cuts to the system.

I have been in this House for two years, and in two years I have seen the Conservatives opposite vote against some really good pieces of legislation that invest in people. Removing the GST from homes is about building more capacity in the system. Investing in dental care for young people is about investing in our future. Investing in child care in this country, which Conservatives for months spoke against, is the best investment. I have always said that, from day one.

The best investment a country can make is to invest in the young people of tomorrow, but the Conservatives have an ideological difference compared to the Liberals on this side. They believe in making cuts to these types of programs. They believe in providing more resources to those who have the most. They do not believe in taking those resources Canadians bring together through that social contract, though that belief system that we can all work together to build a better country. They do not believe in making those types of investments in people.

We provided a grocery rebate. They voted against it. On the \$10-a-day child care, they voted against it. Maybe a few of them changed their mind near the end, but throughout the entire discourse, they were ideologically against it. With dental care—

• (2140)

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable is rising on a point of order.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to offer my colleague a chance to do the honourable thing.

While he was speaking, he realized that he had said something that was untrue. He said that we voted against the grocery rebates, when that is completely false.

I am asking him to withdraw his remarks.

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I will continue, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for the advice.

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

**The Speaker:** Before you continue, the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable raised an issue, and I hope it will be reflected so that the record will stand.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, maybe tomorrow the member opposite can go through Hansard to look at exactly what I said, and he will find the answer in Hansard because it is recorded. I will continue. I do not appreciate the interruptions. Sometimes the truth hurts.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Again, in another case, the member indicated we did not support with our vote the child care bill, which is not true. I would appreciate it if he would correct his record.

**The Speaker:** In consultation, it is clear the voting record is a voting record, but it is not a point of order that can be raised here. However, I would encourage all members to please make sure they do reflect accurately what has gone on and what is a matter of record in the House of Commons in order to make sure members do not introduce comments that could be disorderly to the House if they are inaccurate.

The hon. member for Don Valley East has the floor.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, sometimes the truth hurts. When Conservatives stand in this House and vote against a free trade agreement with Ukraine, it hurts members on the other side because sometimes they do not have the power to stand up and actually do what they believe and they just follow the direction, through party discipline, of their leader. I understand it can hurt sometimes. Then they look for other ways to compensate by standing up and using procedural processes, or—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville is rising on another point of order.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Mr. Speaker, you have made it clear that we cannot say indirectly what we cannot say directly. This individual, like all others across the floor who spoke to our vote on Ukraine, has misled this House. I am a Canadian Ukrainian and I chose my vote. No one told me on this side of the floor how to vote. This is inappropriate and misleading.

• (2145)

**The Speaker:** That is ranging into debate at this point.

I will turn the floor back to the member for Don Valley East.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, I have been interrupted several times by members opposite, because it does hurt Conservatives. Half of them probably believe in climate change and maybe

the other half do not. I am making that assumption based on previous statements and voting records. It must really hurt to be part of a party that does not believe in climate change or a free trade agreement with Ukraine to help support the folks who need the help in Ukraine.

My main point at the end of day is that there is an ideological difference between Liberals and Conservatives when it comes to how we invest in people. Conservatives have a track record of always putting in place the same plan no matter where they are. They could be in a provincial legislature, a school board, a council or in the federal chamber, but it is the exact same formula. They say they are going to cut taxes and then they invest in those who have the most. They place the burden on the people who need the most help and cut programs and services.

We can look at their track record. This is a proven fact. The Harper government is a perfect example. It had a \$55-billion deficit in 2010-11, and what did Canadian citizens get? They got nothing, except cuts. This is the track record of the Conservative government and that is why it is important for us, as Liberals on this side of the House, to make sure we continue to support Canadians by making sure bills like Bill C-56 go forward, continue to invest in people and build this country up.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question for my hon. colleague concerns the parliamentary secretary's response to my colleague from Repentigny.

My colleague asked him about the goods and services tax rebate on rental buildings. What is its impact? How many more housing units are we expecting to be built as a result of this measure? How much can we expect rents to drop?

We want to base our decisions on science and scientific knowledge, but the parliamentary secretary practically told my colleague to take a hike by saying it was not important, that she could wait for studies, and that it was a question of ideology.

Does the hon. member agree with his parliamentary secretary?

I was very disappointed in his response.

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for recognizing this important program that is essentially going to build thousands and thousands of units across this country. I am proud to be part of a government that is investing in a GST rebate that will not only be for apartments. We are going to be investing in co-ops, in first-time buyers and building the next generation of homes across this country.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Liberal times are always tough times. All we have to do is look at their record. When we look at the misery index, which is the combination of inflation rates, unemployment rates and mortgage rates that usually lead to the highest suicide rates, they happened 40 years ago under Pierre Elliott Trudeau and they are happening today under the Liberals. Housing costs have doubled, violent crime is up 39% and two million people are standing in lines at food banks because these guys have mismanaged the economy.

We have a situation where the Liberals continue to talk the game, but, in reality, have made things worse. The member wants to talk about deficits. They have not balanced the books yet. Under the Prime Minister, they have doubled the national debt that is more than all previous prime ministers in the history of Canada combined. The member has nothing to brag about. Liberals are making things worse and they are going to be punishing our kids, our grandkids and our great-grandchildren with these huge deficits, high interest rates and high mortgages.

• (2150)

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about hard times. As he was asking the question, I reflected on the fact that I had the opportunity to meet three young people from Ukraine in the back today. I was thinking about their hard times. In Canada, we have some pretty rough times. There is an affordability challenge. Ukraine right now is going through a war, and the Conservative Party, the opposition, voted against a free trade agreement to help stabilize that region. To me, that is unacceptable, and I think it should reconsider how it can support the free trade agreement in the future.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP got the government to include co-ops in the GST exemption. We are also calling on it to apply the GST exemption to existing co-operatives and social housing projects that may otherwise become unviable, in which case we would lose those units. Will the member support the NDP's call to apply the GST exemption to existing social housing and co-ops?

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, it takes many of us in this room to build good strategies and good plans to put in place to really help Canadians.

The government believes in what the member just said with respect to co-operatives. We believe in co-operatives, and we believe that they are a pathway for the future to build more affordability. We will continue to work with the NDP and any member of the House, even Conservatives, if they would like to support co-ops. However, I think it was the leader of the Conservatives who called co-ops Soviet-style housing. I was a bit offended, because my mother lived in a co-op. I just want to make sure that, at the end of the day, we can all work together to do what is best for every citizen in this country.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and I look forward to hearing her speech.

It was October 5. What is so special about that date? That is the last time we debated Bill C-56. It was October 5.

At the time, I was prepared to deliver a speech to share my comments and my position on Bill C-56. Since October 5, this government, and only this government, is responsible for the fact that Bill C-56 still has not been adopted.

Now it is urgent. That is what the minister said. She said today that time is of the essence and her government was going to get the bill passed following a motion to muzzle the opposition once again, to limit the speaking time of members when we are at a very critical time in our economy.

People across the country are suffering. The cost of living is high. Inflation is at a peak. The cost of food is so high that people are using food banks by the millions. There were two million people in just one month, numbers we have never seen in the history of our country.

However, as I was saying, Bill C-56 could have been debated a long time ago, but the Liberals did not see it as urgent. I have been waiting since October 5. For over 50 days, I have been asking the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons almost every week when we would be debating Bill C-56 so that we can finally talk about homes, housing and solutions to help Quebeckers and Canadians. It has been radio silence.

The government was in no hurry to pass Bill C-56. We could have passed this bill at second reading six, five, four or three weeks ago. The bill could have already been sent to committee, but no, they did not put the bill on the agenda. All of a sudden, it is urgent this week.

By doing it this way, the government even prevented its own members from giving voice to the suffering and hardships faced by people in Liberal ridings, but that was not important. There was no hurry.

Quebeckers and Canadians are paying the price for this incompetence every day. We have come to realize that the Liberals are simply incapable of managing the business of the House properly. The only way they can get anything passed is to find a partner and impose a gag order. Apparently it took longer to convince the NDP this time, but they succeeded. There was nothing stopping the government from putting Bill C-56 on the agenda much sooner.

There is one thing I agree with. Today the minister said that this is urgent, and I think she is right. Half of Canadians say they are living paycheck to paycheck. More and more people are having to find a second job just to get by. The government did nothing for two months and now, as time goes on, it is becoming increasingly urgent because people simply cannot pay the price for Liberal incompetence any longer.

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The Liberals' inflationary deficits were back again in this week's mini-budget. Not only did they prove that they cannot do anything about the inflation crisis, the cost of living crisis, but also, they continue to make it even worse. We were horrified to learn that, as of next year, Canada will spend more on the interest payments alone on the national debt than on health transfer payments. Next year, Canada will spend twice as much on interest payments on the national debt as on national defence. That is what we get after eight years of Liberal government incompetence. Nobody else is to blame. The Prime Minister has been in power for eight years. The Liberals have been promising the world and spending recklessly for eight years. Now, because of them, Canadians everywhere cannot make ends meet and are having to resort to food banks.

• (2155)

This is happening in my riding. Last week, the headline on the front page of our local paper, the *Courrier Frontenac*, read, and I am not making this up, "Requests for food aid skyrocket". The number of people who have had to use food banks has gone up by 40% in recent months.

The Liberals will say that this is because of the global economic situation and wars. There are all sorts of reasons, but Scotiabank is telling it like it is. The bank calculated that this government's inflationary spending drove interest rates up by 2%. Do members know what 2% can mean for a family with an average house? That is \$700 a month. People need wage increases to be able to afford \$700 more a month for their mortgage payment, but unfortunately, wages are not keeping up.

How many families will lose their homes because of the Liberals' wilful blindness? Who will pay in the end? It is families, mothers and children.

Before, people in Canada had hope. Every young person had the hope of being able to buy a house one day and of being able to pay it off in 25 years. They had the hope of a decent retirement with a house and, one day, being able to sell that house and have even more time to enjoy life. Today, it takes 25 years to save up for a down payment on a house. I have spoken with so many young people who no longer have any hope that they will be able to find a house and live the Canadian dream, which has basically become a nightmare. Once again, all of this is because of eight years of wilful blindness.

I remember when the Prime Minister asked if we knew why the government was going into debt, that it was to prevent Canadians from going into debt and that we needed to take on the debt so that Canadians would be able to live a good life.

This attitude and this Prime Minister who said that he was not really concerned about monetary policy, that it did not interest him, have created the worst crisis in the history of Canada when it comes to access to housing and land. We are in Canada to boot, a country with a lot of land and places to build. Unfortunately, that dream is shattered. It will take years to fix the mistakes of these Liberals.

The Conservative leader presented a plan to find solutions, or to at least help with the housing crisis. It is a very clear and precise plan. Let me share a few points that would have enabled us to move forward. The government could have put it on the agenda. I am

talking about Bill C-356 from the member for Carleton. The bill called for cutting unnecessary bureaucracy and holding Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation executives to account. It is common sense. We will push cities to speed up construction projects and encourage density to increase construction in cities by 15% a year, reward the good performers and make sure the laggards get moving. Since Bill C-356 was introduced, cities have started moving. As if by magic, cities have realized they have a role to play, and that is because the Conservative leader has made it clear. He told them they had a role to play. The cities got the message. So much the better, but with Bill C-356, it would have been even easier and quicker.

This will breathe new life into empty federal offices and free up federal lands for development. That is what the Liberals promised years ago. There has been zero construction, and zero federal buildings have been converted into housing. I believe one development happened on federal lands, but I am not even sure it is done.

The bill does have the GST refund to stimulate the construction of units that cost less than the average.

What Canadians want is efficient, competent, common-sense government. That is what they will get with a Conservative government.

• (2200)

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about his leader's bill, Bill C-356. With that bill, Ottawa would require all municipalities with high housing costs—the list is getting longer and longer—to increase housing starts by 15% over the previous year.

If a municipality's housing starts do not increase as required by Ottawa, the Conservative leader is proposing to cut its gas tax transfer and public transit transfer by 1% for every percentage shortfall from the target he has unilaterally set. For example, in Quebec, housing starts are down 60% this year, mainly due to interest rates, rather than up 15%. That is a difference of 75%, so transfers would be reduced by 75% for cities and towns in Quebec.

In the economic statement, the Minister of Finance said that she wants to do something similar. Could my colleague comment on that?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader said that he would compensate municipalities that meet the new housing start targets. There is a need for 860,000 more housing units in Quebec, and something needs to be done. We cannot stand back and do nothing. The municipalities are in charge.

Since we talked about that and introduced that bill, what have we heard from the Government of Quebec? All of a sudden, it is saying that it will eliminate the red tape so that projects can be approved in just one month. Just talking about it got things moving.

I think that, when we take office, people will understand that it pays to build housing. There will be many more advantages than disadvantages for them, as my colleague was trying to suggest.

[English]

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that was a bit hard to listen to, because I was a municipal councillor at the time the member for Carleton was the housing minister. Municipalities begged and pleaded with the minister of the day for housing resources and none came.

When we talk about support for municipalities, the leader continues to play the blame game. He is not helping municipal councils. He is blaming municipalities today, the small-town mayors and councillors who are trying to get housing supply out the door. He had his chance as part of a government to support municipalities for many years. In fact, we came individually and then went through FCM, and all of those efforts were rejected by the member and his government.

It is hard to listen to the speech today by the member opposite when he talks about supporting municipalities. The Conservatives have no intention of doing that. If they did, they would have done it when their leader was in government prior.

• (2205)

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, here are a few numbers that show just how empty the Liberal rhetoric is.

When the member for Carleton was minister, the average cost of rent in Canada was \$950 a month. It is now over \$2,000. The average mortgage payment on a new home was just \$1,400. Now it is \$3,500. When he was housing minister, housing was not just affordable, it was cheap. Canadians could still afford to buy a home. Young people could still dream of owning a home.

The Liberals have completely killed the dream of young Canadians who had one day hoped to be homeowners. That is the sad reality after eight years of this Liberal government.

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives always sound a bit off when they talk about human misery. They talk about food banks being at capacity. They talk about people struggling.

A month ago, the mayor of Quebec City, the only place where the Conservatives are able to get their people elected, held a summit on homelessness. Oddly enough, I did not see a single Conservative MP there. A lot of provincial elected representatives were there. I was there too. We talked about homelessness and tried to come up with solutions. Not a single Conservative MP was there.

I have one very specific question for my colleague. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities held a press conference in Ottawa today. Its spokespeople said that municipalities would need \$600 billion to support the construction of the millions of housing units the country needs. That money is needed to pay for roads, public transit and sewers.

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How much would a Conservative government—which nobody here wants—be prepared to give municipalities to address those needs?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I find it rather ironic to hear a member question my good faith about food banks and my willingness to help people. I think it is totally unacceptable and inappropriate of him.

What I gather is that this member in particular wants to make life even more difficult for all Canadians. It is this member who supports a drastic increase in the carbon taxes to the detriment of all Canadians. A drastic increase in the carbon taxes would mean groceries will cost more, shipping goods will cost more. It means a higher cost of living for all Canadians. That creates poverty.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to note that it is the Parliamentary Budget Officer who said that and my colleague simply repeated what he said.

**The Speaker:** The member for Joliette knows that is not a point of order and more a matter of debate.

[English]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of my constituents in the food-producing riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Normally, Canadians would have to first elect a Conservative government before they could receive Conservative legislation. After eight years, it is possible that the gravity of the financial hole the Liberal-NDP government has plunged us into is warping space and time. The other possibility is that a desperate Prime Minister, down in the polls, will steal any idea he can to save his tired, worn-out, socialist coalition. It might be a tired cliché, but if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Bill C-56 might just be a Liberal love letter to the Conservative Party. The Liberals think that if they can walk like Conservatives and talk like Conservatives, maybe they will poll like Conservatives.

The bill is what the Internet likes to call “copypasta”, which refers to any text-based meme copied and shared on the Internet, what people born in the last century used to call “quotes”. The bill copies and pastes text from the member for Bay of Quinte's private member's bill on competition reform into the legislation before us. The bill also copies and pastes the policy of the leader of His Majesty's official opposition to eliminate GST on purpose-built rental housing.

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Nonetheless, even when the NDP-Liberal government takes a break from bankrupting the country to pass Conservative legislation, it does so in the most deceptive way possible. It is calling the legislation the “affordable housing and groceries act”. Back in the days when Canada had a strong, stable economy and a strong, stable Conservative prime minister, the Liberals used to complain constantly about our approach to naming legislation with obvious political messaging. The Liberal member for Winnipeg North rose 22 times to complain about the presence of a single word in a short title. Since we are debating cospasta legislation, I am just going to borrow four sentences from the member for Winnipeg North when he sat on this side of the House. He said:

One of the biggest issues I have with the [Liberal] government is the type of propaganda and political spin it puts on the legislation it brings to the House of Commons. We see this yet again with Bill [C-56]. The Government of Canada and the Prime Minister are trying to give the impression that if we pass this legislation there will be [affordable groceries]. If the [Liberals] were honest with Canadians, which is a rarity with the government, they would acknowledge that achieving [affordable groceries] is not as easy as just saying it in the title of a bill and then having [338] members of Parliament voting in favour of the legislation.

The actual bill the member for Winnipeg North was referring to was the Drug-Free Prisons Act. The bill specifically addressed the issue of drugs in our prisons. He said that the Conservative government was trying to give the impression that passing this would mean prisons were drug-free. Any reasonable Canadian could look at the bill and say, “Yes, the Conservative government wants prisons to be drug-free.” It was not called the “100% drug-free prisons act”. It was not called the “totally drug-free prisons act”. It was just the Drug-Free Prisons Act, yet that was enough for the Liberals to accuse us of misleading Canadians.

The hypocrisy of the Liberal Party truly knows no limits. For Liberals to call the legislation before us the “affordable housing and groceries act” is a slap in the face to every single Canadian struggling with the cost of living. Canadians are struggling to afford food, and the Liberal government is trying to gaslight them into thinking the legislation would somehow undo the grocery cartels, but the bill would address only threats to competition from mergers going forward. That would be an important change to make in a country that suffers from a lack of competition in banking, transportation and telecommunications, which are, not coincidentally, all federally regulated industries. The NDP-Liberal government knows the legislation would have zero impact on food prices, yet it calls it the “affordable housing and groceries act”. That is pure propaganda, and it is insulting.

However, Canadians are not stupid. They can clearly see the NDP-Liberal government's real grocery policy is higher prices. Every Canadian knows this is the official policy of the Liberal Party: to increase the cost of energy. It is Liberal policy to increase prices on everything made using energy, everything shipped using energy and everything grown using energy.

• (2210)

That is the purpose of the carbon tax. That is the purpose of the costly fuel regulations. That is the purpose of the blackout electricity regulations. Together, these policies represent a triple threat to affordable food prices—

**The Speaker:** The member for St. Catharines is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I know we have been hearing a lot about the price on pollution in debate today, but when I stood up, the Conservatives were very eager to keep us on track with the bill, and we are wavering on relevance here. As loud as the hon. member yells, she needs to get back to the bill.

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

**The Speaker:** Order. Relevance is always important, but the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke appears to me to be on message.

I will return the floor to the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, together, these policies represent a triple threat to affordable food prices, but that was not enough for the proudly socialist coalition. They were not happy enough with Canadians sucking up bad policies through paper straws. That is why the minister for Communist China's environment is using a pollution prevention order to ban plastic food packaging. The Liberals are not passing legislation. They are not even using regulation. They are issuing an order under the Environmental Protection Act.

The government was given extraordinary power by Parliament to protect the environment from actual danger. Past orders included requiring dentists to prevent mercury from getting into the environment when disposing of dental amalgams. They were never meant for taking recyclable food containers off store shelves. This is another obvious abuse of power.

It is the same as when the Liberals illegally banned plastic straws. They knew this sneaky policy will increase the price of food, the same way they knew imposing the carbon tax and the costly fuel regulations would hammer Atlantic Canada especially hard. They knew it and they did it anyhow. They knew their policies would make life unaffordable. They knew making energy more expensive would make food more expensive. They knew it, but they did not care about Canadians struggling with the cost of living.



Their ideological obsession has morphed into a religious obsession. The church of climate socialism believes we must repent for the sin of capitalism or else we will face a climate apocalypse. Anyone who dissents from climate socialism is branded a heretic. The Liberals need this deep faith in their own righteousness to justify to themselves that it is okay to call this an affordable groceries bill when it has nothing to do with grocery prices. As I said from the start, the contents of the bill were lifted from Conservative bills. Conservatives put forward positive policies. We look forward to seeing how they can be improved in committee.

The government could have chosen plenty of positive-sounding political titles to market the bill. Instead, the Prime Minister made the decision to gaslight Canadians. He will fly around the country dumping tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere claiming he has an affordable groceries bill that proves he is not completely out of touch. Meanwhile, the environment minister, the unrepentant vandal who once attacked the home of Ralph Klein and terrorized his wife, seeks to increase the cost of food with more plastic bans. Not only will this plastic packaging ban lead to higher prices, but it will also reduce competition. This would be like Harper introducing the drug-free prison act while Peter MacKay and Jason Kenney are going around handing out crack pipes to convicts. I can just imagine what the member for Winnipeg North would have to say about that.

Let us get the bill to committee. Even though it has been plagiarized from Conservative bills, we have to go over it with a fine-tooth comb. We know the Liberals like to copy and paste things into legislation. We know it because they did it when they tried to ban hunting rifles. That bill was riddled with the kinds of typographical errors that come from copying and pasting text between different types of documents. That Liberals are lazy and lackadaisical about legislation is not a surprise to lawful firearms owners, but after eight years, one would have thought they would be making fewer errors with experience.

The truth is that they are tired and worn out. That is why we have seen a steady march of senior Liberal staffers out of government and into senior lobbying positions. The smart ones are fleeing a sinking ship. The desperate ones are trying to bail it out. The bad ones claim the ship is not sinking. The Liberals claim the ship is flying full of affordable food. Canadians will pay a heavy price for Liberal delusions. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

• (2215)

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There seemed to be such enthusiasm in the House for the member's speech. If she has anything more to add, I wonder if there is unanimous consent to give her a few more minutes.

• (2220)

**The Speaker:** Is there consent?

**An hon. member:** No.

[Translation]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is not easy.

I tried to keep up, but it was very difficult, because the member's speech was all over the map. I will try to narrow the focus, because—I just have to say it—I am very professional. We are talking

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about Bill C-56, so I will talk about Bill C-56. If we were talking about something else, I would talk about that.

Let us get back to Bill C-56 and take a look back at the Conservative opposition day on April 28, when the Conservatives announced that they wanted to penalize municipalities that were not building enough housing. I would like to come back to the importance of municipal politics. Municipalities know their area and the needs of their population. They provide services directly, and they are the ones that manage the living environments in their neighbourhoods.

When I hear the Conservatives say that municipalities and cities are the ones delaying the process, what message does that send? We are led to believe that they might want the municipalities to dodge public consultations so that real estate developers can take over. I would like to know what the member thinks about that, although I admit that I do not expect to get a real answer to my question.

[English]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise to hear this kind of question from the “block everything” party. In fact, what our legislation was going to say is that what would happen is that we would—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are the “block everything” party.

**The Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

I will allow the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke to answer the question.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, Conservative legislation would have provided extra incentive for the municipalities that chose to build more housing and remove the barriers, such as costly development fees that do not justify what the work being done is or the building permit cost that, right now, is \$15,000 a house in some places.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to give it to the hon. member. She did something that is quite unique in this place. She brought a lot of us together tonight in agreement on, maybe, the ridiculousness of the speech. However, I really want the member to continue to explain to me what the “church of climate socialism” means.

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**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, I am a Christian. I only hear the proselytizing from the other parties, so I have not joined that and I have not attended one of their religious meetings. I think this time it is going to be held in the United Arab Emirates, or perhaps it is going on right now. Perhaps they will tell one of the crowd of people who have been dispatched from Canada to tell us about it when they come back and explain that particular curriculum.

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, honestly, if I did not work here, I would pay money to just hear stuff like that every day of the week.

In all seriousness, we have heard a couple of references this evening and today about plagiarism. Political plagiarism reigns supreme on the other side of the House. The Leader of the Opposition continues to steal political themes from former president Trump. He has adopted Mike Harris's "common sense revolution" tag. If the Leader of the Opposition has any original ideas when it comes to housing or the bill that is in front of us, when can we expect to hear them in the House?

• (2225)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, that is misinformation, disinformation and malinformation. Call up the Kremlin and have them bring their spy back over there. The next thing we know, we are going to be watching an episode of what the member of Parliament has been doing on *Spy Ops*. We will have to tune into Netflix if it is not censored yet.

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was wondering, to wind up, if the member had anything to add to her remarks.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, I can say that Canadians, especially the ones I have been talking to across the country, know they are being gaslit and are tired of it. Not only that, they are tired of the carbon tax being applied to the gaslighting fuel the Liberals are gaslighting them with.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing to see that the House will have to once again sit until midnight to discuss this bill. Why? Because this government chose to impose a super closure motion. We think that this approach, the muzzling of parliamentarians, makes a mockery of democracy. Everyone here was elected by the people in our ridings, and this government should give more weight to our voices. This just shows how much respect the Liberals have for our democratic institutions.

An even more serious problem with this super closure motion is the short period of time allocated to study the bill in committee. Only two evenings are allocated, and that is it. Even though my party supports the principle of the bill, we think it is essential to study it in depth in committee. However, this super closure motion forces us to skip over the study in committee. It would therefore not be surprising if there are still problems with the bill after it is studied in committee, and that is really disappointing.

Let me give an example. The first part of the bill exempts rental property construction from the GST. It applies as of September 14. If the bill becomes law, construction projects undertaken on or after September 14 will be able to benefit from the measure. However, the bill does not say what constitutes the start of the project. Is it

when the first shovel hits the ground? Is it when the first payment is made for the plans? Is it when the land is purchased? If the building has a dual purpose, what constitutes the beginning? We have no idea, because the bill does not define these concepts.

Let us use a concrete example to illustrate the uncertainty this creates for businesses. A company is planning to build a rental property. The ground floor will be occupied by commercial premises, so not part of the project, but all the upper floors will be used for rental housing. On September 14, work had not yet started on any of the rental housing floors, but work had begun on the ground floor. I repeat, the ground floor will be used for commercial purposes, so it is not a part of the rental project. The company does not know whether it will be entitled to benefit from the measure for the upper floors because of the date and the lack of definition in the bill. We also know that with skyrocketing construction costs, high interest rates and a shortage of skilled labour, developing a housing project is complex, and not having clear information from the government about its bill does nothing to help the company in its current choices. The fog caused by this bill, which was drafted too quickly, is creating uncertainty for businesses.

Will we be able to clarify the situation in committee in just two evenings? There are no guarantees. We will work on it, but I would like to remind the House that it would have been really important not to shut down the committee's work in this way.

As members know, Bill C-56 has two parts. The first part provides a GST rebate to the builder of a rental housing building. The rebate will be given during the sale or pending sale if the builder becomes an owner.

The rebate does not apply when the buyer is already totally exempt, as in the case of a government agency or a municipality, or partially exempt, as in the case of a not-for-profit organization or a housing co-operative. Bill C-56 will have no impact on the cost of social or community housing projects. It only pertains to private housing.

In practice, the rental housing builder will bill the GST to the government instead of to the buyer at the time of sale. To qualify for the rebate, the building will have had to have been under construction between September 14, 2023, and December 31, 2030, and the project will have to be completed before December 31, 2035.

However, the bill does not include any details on the type of building or housing nor does it specify any affordability requirements to qualify for the rebate. Instead, the bill gives the government the power to clarify these issues through regulations. We are seeing the government gloss over its bills by giving too much power to the minister, who will be able to complete the bill with his own regulations once it has been implemented. That is not an approach that we appreciate.

It would be hard to impose affordability criteria on builders because they do not own buildings once they are built. However, it is possible to make the buyer pay the GST after the fact if the units are rented at exorbitant prices. These are the kinds of amendments and clarifications the committee should look at, but will it have time?

• (2230)

I would also point out that, in our view, it would have been possible to do more to promote the construction of housing, particularly social housing, by allocating the same amount, but implementing other measures. Obviously, we are debating what the government is proposing, and that is what we will be voting on, but we will continue to make suggestions, just in case it decides to listen.

The second part of the bill makes three amendments to the Competition Act.

The first amendment gives the commissioner of competition real power. Right now, when the Competition Bureau examines the competitive environment of a given sector, it cannot compel anyone to testify or order the production of documents. It will be able to do so under Bill C-56. The Bloc Québécois has been calling for that change for 20-odd years.

The second amendment broadens the scope of anti-competitive practices prohibited by the act. Right now, the act prohibits agreements between competitors to remove a player from the market. With this bill, it will also be prohibited to reach an agreement with someone who is not a competitor in order to reduce competition. Let me give an example. When a grocery store rents a space in a mall, it is standard practice for the contract to contain clauses prohibiting the landlord from renting a space to another grocery store. This type of practice, which limits competition, will now be prohibited under Bill C-56. We applaud that measure.

The third amendment will make mergers and acquisitions more difficult. Currently, when a company wants to buy a competitor, the Competition Act states that the Competition Bureau will allow it if it can be demonstrated that the takeover will result in efficiency gains, even if the merger shrinks competition. This provision, which favours concentration and is unique in the industrialized world, is repealed in Bill C-56. We have also been calling for this change for a long time, and the member for Terrebonne has been particularly keen to see it.

We strongly support the principle of this second part and even feel it is long overdue. We have been asking for these changes for years, decades even.

We understand that, thanks to the government's super closure motion, Bill C-56 is going to be amended. Government Business No. 30 authorizes the Standing Committee on Finance to broaden the scope of the bill to make three amendments.

The first change is an increase in fines. It is taken directly from Bill C-352, which was introduced by the leader of the NDP and amends the Competition Act. Many of its provisions would become obsolete because of Bill C-56. The other two changes have to do with abuse of dominance and investigating powers when the Competition Bureau conducts a market study. Subject to the wording of

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the amendments to be submitted in committee, these changes have no real effect. They were probably added to the motion to please the party that is supporting the closure motion, but the changes will have no real effect.

Let us come back to the first change, which is to “increase the maximum fixed penalty amounts for abuse of dominance to \$25 million in the first instance, and \$35 million for subsequent orders, for situations where this amount is higher than three times the value of the benefit derived (or the alternative variable maximum)”. As I was saying, that is taken from Bill C-352.

Currently, in addition to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years for executives who commit an offence under the Act, the bureau and the tribunal can impose a maximum fine of \$5 million on the offending company. The motion proposes increasing the maximum fine to \$25 million, and to \$35 million for repeat offenders. In the case of a large company, the maximum penalty could be even higher, up to three times the value of the benefit derived from the practice.

We know that the NDP bill went even further and specified the following: “if that amount cannot be reasonably determined, 10% of the person's annual worldwide gross revenues”. Clearly, the government was not prepared to go that far. It is a good change. The maximum fine of \$5 million could be seen as the cost of doing business. The revised amounts are designed to have a real deterrent effect. That makes the Canadian legislation comparable to the U.S. and European laws.

The second amendment is “allow the Competition Bureau to conduct market study inquiries if it is either directed by the Minister responsible for the Act or recommended by the Commissioner of Competition, and require consultation between the two officials prior to the study being commenced”. The Competition Bureau has significant power. It can compel witnesses to appear, demand documents and request searches if necessary. However, these powers are available to the bureau only when it is investigating a clear infringement following a formal disclosure. The investigation then becomes quasi-criminal.

• (2235)

However, when the bureau is conducting a study to determine whether competition is working properly in a given field or market, it has no such powers. For example, in its report on the state of competition in the grocery sector, published in June 2023, the bureau noted that the grocery chains did not really co-operate with its study. They refused to hand over the documents it had requested and refused to answer some of its questions. Bill C-56 solves that problem and gives the Competition Bureau investigative powers when it is conducting a market study.

The NDP's Bill C-352 did basically the same thing. Government Business No. 30 proposes a technical amendment to the manner in which the bureau can initiate a market study, but it does not really do much to change the current practice. This aspect was likely only added to the motion to please the NDP, but it really does not do anything.

### *Government Orders*

It is the same thing for the third amendment, which proposes to “revise the legal test for abuse of a dominant position prohibition order to be sufficiently met if the Tribunal finds that a dominant player has engaged in either a practice of anti-competitive acts or conduct other than superior competitive performance that had, is having or is likely to have the effect of preventing or lessening competition substantially in a relevant market”.

Currently, a company that monopolizes a significant share of the market cannot take advantage of its dominant position to limit competition, for example, by preventing a supplier from working with a competitor. The existing act prohibits several of these kinds of practices, which effectively limit competition, prevent it from working properly or make it virtually impossible for a new player to enter the market. On the other hand, there is nothing stopping a company from taking advantage of a lack of competition to sell products at excessive prices. If, for example, a grocer enjoys a monopoly in a given region, there is nothing to stop that grocer from taking advantage of the monopoly to gouge consumers by charging exorbitant prices.

Bill C-352 addressed this loophole. A whole range of anti-competitive practices were already prohibited, and it added a new one: “directly or indirectly imposing excessive and unfair selling prices”. It was a good measure, but clearly the government did not want to move in that direction. To please the NDP and hide the fact that it has given up on defending consumers against the major players, the government's motion adds a procedural amendment to Bill C-56 to give the tribunal the power to prevent an anti-competitive practice that the current law already prohibits anyway. Again, it is nothing but hot air.

The day before yesterday, the Minister of Finance tabled the fall economic statement. As we all know, an economic statement is not quite as big a deal as a budget. It usually includes measures the government intends to take to deal with emergencies that have arisen since the budget was tabled.

There are emergencies aplenty, including the housing crisis, homelessness, the media, the rising cost of living, the small business emergency account deadline, seniors' buying power and scandalous oil industry subsidies, not to mention EI reform, the plight of seasonal forestry workers following the summer's forest fires, support for culture, support for the market garden and horticulture sectors following the summer's floods, and the funding that was promised for school breakfasts but has not yet been delivered, to name but a few.

However, the only emergency mentioned in the economic statement has to do with housing. Ottawa does need to do a lot more for housing, especially social housing. Unfortunately, the government's response is nothing more than what has already been announced in Bill C-56. In fact, the rest will not be delivered until after the next election, and only if the Liberals are re-elected. Responding to the urgency of the housing crisis with election promises that are two years or more away is simply unacceptable, especially when we know that once the money is available, it takes two to three years before it is actually flows. It is like the \$900 million that was finally announced for Quebec this fall, but that had been budgeted two years earlier.

We in the Bloc Québécois had proposed an acquisition fund for non-profit organizations, as well as an interest-free or very low-interest loan program, to stimulate the construction of affordable social rental housing, while waiting for a comprehensive policy in the next budget.

Still on the subject of housing, I would like to point out that the minister brought forward a good measure concerning Airbnbs, which will have to comply with municipal rules, or else the people and businesses that manage them will no longer have access to federal tax deductions for their operations. It remains to be seen whether the Canada Revenue Agency will be able to properly apply this new constraint.

One not so good measure is the creation of a new department that specializes in interference: the department of housing, infrastructure and communities. The purpose of that department is to impose its conditions on Quebec, the provinces and the municipalities. If they do not abide by the interference, Ottawa will cut their transfers. The Liberals come here to steal the only bill that the Conservatives introduced, their plan to build more housing, by threatening the provinces and municipalities with cutting their infrastructure funding. I should note that it was the Conservative leader himself who introduced Bill C-356 in the House.

• (2240)

With this bill, Ottawa would impose an obligation to increase housing starts by 15% compared to the previous year on all municipalities where the cost of housing is high, and that list is growing longer and longer. If the housing starts in municipalities do not increase as required by Ottawa, the Conservative leader would cut their gas tax and public transit transfers by 1% for each percentage point shortfall under the target that he unilaterally set.

For example, housing starts in Quebec dropped by 60% this year rather than increasing by 15%, largely because of rising interest rates. If the Conservatives' bill were already in force, this would mean a roughly 75% reduction in transfer payments to the Quebec government. This is a really dangerous and unfair bill that centralizes power in Ottawa. The fact that the Minister of Finance is making use of the principle of that bill is a major offensive action in terms of centralization of power. We will have detailed numbers shortly.

I would like to say a few more words about the new department of housing, infrastructure and communities. This announcement essentially creates a federal department of municipal affairs. Since municipal affairs fall under provincial jurisdiction, this is nothing less than a department of interference, which is threatening to cut transfers, exactly as the Conservatives are hoping for and proposing in their bill.

Here are a few more details about this new department. It is worth noting that Trudeau senior's government tried to do much the same thing. In 1971, it created the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. A Library of Parliament research document states that, "[g]iven the inescapable constitutional limitations, the ministry had no program responsibilities". Faced with a lack of co-operation from the provinces, this attempt from Trudeau senior's government to interfere in municipal affairs ended in failure. The research document also states that "[i]n view of the Ministry's lack of credibility and the government's desire to cut expenditures, the [Ministry of State for Urban Affairs] was abolished on 31 March 1979".

In the coming years, we will see whether Quebec and the provinces will once again be capable of defending their jurisdiction against this new department. This is the same story a generation later, so I would like to quote a philosopher: "All great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice...the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce". I believe that is what we are witnessing now.

In closing, let me reiterate that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of Bill C-56 because it contains a few good measures and nothing that is downright harmful. However, Bill C-56 is but a drop in an ocean of need. On housing, there is no indication that the bill will help lower the cost of rent. If nothing is done to correct this problem, we are headed for a major national tragedy. We need three times more rental housing in new construction to stop the housing crisis from getting worse. If Bill C-56 did even a little to increase the proportion of rental units in new construction developments, that would be something, but we are light years away from meeting those needs.

The changes to the Competition Act are good, and the Bloc Québécois wholeheartedly supports them. Still, the government's claim that these changes will help lower grocery bills seems like misrepresentation. Removing from the act the section that called for mergers and acquisitions to be allowed if the company could demonstrate efficiencies is a good thing. This section of the Competition Act encourages concentration, which often leads to higher prices.

Since 1996, the vast majority of grocery chains have disappeared and been bought up by competitors. I am talking about companies like Steinberg, A&P and Provigo. IGA was bought by Sobeys, and Adonis by Metro. The same is true in Canada. Think of Woodward's, Comissos's, Safeway, Whole Foods, T&T, Longo's, Farm Boy and so on. Of the 13 chains we used to have, now there are only three, or five if we include Costco and Walmart. They control 80% of the market. It is an oligopoly.

While Bill C-56 proposes some good measures, it is inconceivable that this is the government's only response to skyrocketing housing and food prices. When it comes to housing, we need to review and improve the failed Canada housing strategy.

• (2245)

Regarding competition, we need to review the concept of abuse of dominance to prevent the big players from taking advantage of their disproportionate share of the market to increase prices will, for lack of competition, or to abuse farmers and processors, whom

they are holding hostage. These two things need to be done, whether or not Bill C-56 is passed.

[English]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy the speeches from the member from the Bloc. I always learn a lot and I really appreciate the research that is done.

Just in the closing remarks, the member talked about the oligopoly of the grocery chains in Canada. Really, only three families take so much profit away from Canadians and leave Canadians hungry.

I wonder if the member would not mind sharing whether they would support the NDP's ask for an excess profits tax on big grocery chains.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her kind words. I feel the same way about her. It is always a pleasure to listen to her speeches, for which she does a lot of research.

I want to specify that, when it comes to the oligopoly in the food sector, passing Bill C-56 will prevent the situation from getting worse, but it will not bring back the competition there used to be.

Taxing the excess profits of giants in these situations may be very useful, and we are in favour in principle, as we have said often. Obviously, this needs to be done scrupulously to respect the rights of these companies. When it is conclusively established that they have excess profits, we have to be able to tax them.

[English]

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when looking at this legislation and looking at the title, we know that here in Canada, inflation is still high and has been high for a long time and that inflation is the cause of high interest rates, which is then causing high mortgage payments.

When we look at the title of this particular legislation, one would think that it would actually, truly be affecting affordability for Canadians, which is the cost of everything that they are buying and then also their mortgage costs.

I am wondering if the member can speak to whether this legislation will actually be affecting inflation, the cause of inflation and also the cause of interest rates.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. colleague for her very deep, content-rich question.

As I said, Bill C-56 has some good measures for fighting inflation, but they are just a drop in the bucket. They are inconsequential.

### *Government Orders*

Will eliminating the GST on the construction of rental housing lower the price of homes and apartments? The answer is no, far from it. Even the government is unable to tell us how much it expects and by how much the rents could go down. If it has any research or models, it is keeping them well hidden and we cannot get any access to them. It is a principled position. It is limited.

We know that improving the Competition Act will help lower prices, but we cannot turn back time. It will help stop or slow down the situation, nothing more. Many other measures need to be taken. Fighting inflation is complex. If the government's response to inflation is just that, then it is lacking. It is a drop in the bucket.

• (2250)

[English]

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for taking this debate seriously, unlike the previous MP, who chose to use her time to entertain people and possibly create some kind of platform for future entertainment.

Knowing that Canada's three largest grocers, Loblaw's, Sobeys and Metro, made more than \$3.6 billion in combined profits in 2022, it is good to see that the Liberals are finally talking to CEOs and asking them to stabilize prices, although just nicely.

I hear from this member that we have to be more serious about how to make better efforts to amend the Competition Act and bring more grocery competition into Canada.

I wonder if the member can share his thoughts on how we could make sure that we can bring grocery prices down.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. Bill C-56 amends the Competition Act. This should have been done at least 20 years ago. If we look at what was happening in 1986, we see that there were 13 major players. As my colleague said, now there are only three. That number goes up to five if we include the two big American retailers that sell groceries, Walmart and Costco. These five companies form an oligopoly that controls 80% of the market. The Governor of the Bank of Canada told the Standing Committee on Finance that the problem is that there is no competition in that market because they are able to pass on 100% of the increase in input costs to consumers without reducing their profits. The competition is not working.

Bill C-56, when implemented, will prevent further issues in the long run, but it will not automatically restore a competitive market ecosystem in the food sector. Major challenges will remain. There is still a lot to do. Reducing food inflation requires many micro-interventions involving farmers, primary processors, and so on. It is a complex challenge, but there is certainly room for intervention in terms of large retailers that constitute an oligopoly. Bill C-56 is a step in the right direction, but it is not the only solution.

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who is always interesting, always brilliant, always thorough and always has relevant things to say.

As we have heard, the GST rebate will not solve the entire housing crisis. Housing is a complex issue. At the current rate of construction, we know that we will never be able to build the amount

of housing we need. We are talking about 3.5 million units in Canada and 1.1 million in Quebec. We have never built more than 70,000 units. We will never get there.

We also need to tackle the financialization of housing. That is extremely important. We proposed a measure, and I would like my colleague to talk about it. It is an acquisition fund. We know that we are losing affordable housing. In fact, we are losing more than we are creating right now, which is rather interesting, because these large groups and real estate funds, which are often international, are buying up the affordable housing stock right now. It is a real tragedy.

What we need is an acquisition fund. The government needs to make a fund available to not-for-profit organizations to be able to buy housing that is still affordable—there are still some out there—and remove them from the market to guarantee affordability. I would like my colleague to talk a bit about this measure and tell us how this might greatly improve things in the market.

• (2255)

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I want to first point out that my hon. colleague did a tour of Quebec to talk about housing. He stopped in Joliette. We had a full house. Everything he is contributing is wonderful and informative.

My colleague spoke about the financialization of housing and how to put an end to that. For example, that is what we are seeing in Montreal, and it is mainly the Bronfman family's company that is doing it. It is hard to get any closer to the Liberal Party than that. These people are taking affordable housing off the market, and not enough housing is being built to counter that.

What we suggested is to offer an acquisition fund interest rate, which is something that the Union des municipalités du Québec has been calling for. This would involve implementing a measure to fund the purchase of these buildings at an interest rate that is lower than the market rate, to get them out of the financialization spiral that is causing people to be evicted and rents to go up.

The current market rate is very high. However, with the borrowing authority of the government or the CMHC, we could simply pass the better rate on or even subsidize it to make this acquisition possible. Let me give an example. The government borrows at 3.6%. Suppose we want to give a non-profit organization an interest rate of 2% for one billion housing units that we want to get out of the financialization trap and that we are going to make truly affordable in the long term. That would cost \$16 million. The difference between 3.6% and 2% is almost nothing for the government.

By using its leverage, the non-profit would have an advantage. That would prevent financialization, which is what happens when big conglomerates like the Bronfmans get their hands on housing that is affordable and make it so that it is no longer affordable. This is one possible solution we are proposing to the government.

[English]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

I am here today to talk about the affordability act. We know that right now Canadians across the country are facing a huge financial challenge. It has been a hard period of time. We lived through the pandemic and then we moved on to a high inflation reality. Things are just starting to cost more and more.

One of the things this bill does is remove GST for builds of rental housing. In my riding, these are the average rents in just a few of my communities: in Campbell River, it is over \$1,500; in Powell River it is close to \$1,500; and then in Comox, it is a whopping \$1,849. Those are just the average rents. If someone lives on a fixed income or has a low income, it is just a huge challenge to pay for the things they desperately need.

I am the spokesperson for seniors in my party. Just last week, a 77-year-old gentleman walk into my office, almost an octogenarian. He shared with me that he has been living in the same location for 40 years. It recently was purchased and he is going to be renovicted. That is appalling. He needs to have a stable home to age in. I think we all know that we cannot just build houses by yelling out abracadabra and there will be a house. They do not just build themselves. Although I support this movement, we know from what we are seeing done by the government that the Liberals are just continuing to delay the process. That means that housing will be delayed up to seven years or more.

This is a crisis point. The urgency in the communities that I serve is profound. They need to see money on the ground, supports for municipalities and regional districts, to get that money out the door in the most efficient way possible.

I read an article yesterday from Oxfam. It talked about how the richest people in the world are emitting as much as the bottom 66% of income earners on the planet. Now, I love a French rosé, but when I look at what I see happening with the ultrarich, I swear they are bathing in it. They are bathing in it at the expense of everyday Canadians, who desperately need this support. What we have not seen from the government, or from Conservative governments in the past, is a willingness to actually say to the ultrawealthy that they have to pay their fair share. In my riding, people are paying their fair share. They pay their taxes. They work hard every day and they are being punished for doing that when the ultrawealthy are getting away with bigger and bigger profits.

We know the reality is that Canada has the lowest tax rate for corporations, at 15%. Ultrawealthy corporations in this country like oil and gas have seen an increase to their profits in the last year or so that is higher than the 30 years previous. We cannot say that it is just inflation, when we can see how much they are taking home of profit after inflation is accounted for.

### *Government Orders*

We know that grocery stores are making more profit now than they were prior to the pandemic. That again is adjusting for inflation. Even with those extra costs, they are still making a huge amount of money and their profits are popping like popcorn everywhere. They cannot justify that when the very basics are not affordable for most Canadians. I think that it is time that we start to address these issues and take them seriously because, really, we need to build a more fair society.

I talk a lot in this place about having a bar of dignity that no one falls below. What we are seeing in this country is more and more people falling below that. I think of people with fixed incomes, people who are single parents; people who are working; and two people with decent jobs who are living out of an RV because they cannot afford even a simple apartment to live in because of how high the cost of living has become.

• (2300)

The other thing I am hearing from my constituents again and again is that they can hardly afford the cost of food. In my riding, there are a lot of small farms that are doing everything they can to grow food in our area and provide as reasonable a cost as they can, because they really believe in food security. I want to thank them. They do that because of what they believe in. It makes a huge difference. We also know that grocery stores are making a huge amount of profit, and they are getting away with it.

I am really relieved that the Liberals have finally listened to our leader, the member for Burnaby South, about making sure that the Competition Bureau has more teeth to crack down on price gouging. It is as though they were looking through the windshield and, suddenly, the windshield wiper moved all the dirt out of the way, and they can now see clearly that they need to do the right thing. I am grateful that they are finally listening to us, and I cannot wait to see this done.

Many Canadians are trying to buy the basic necessities of food to feed their families. We are seeing so many children whose parents care about them desperately, but they do not have enough to send them to school with a good lunch or make sure they have a good breakfast. That is shameful in this country. If we have a Competition Bureau that can do its job, it is going to make the biggest difference; it is about time.

Without having a strong Competition Bureau, having processes where grocery stores can be held to account, we are censuring consumers. We are telling consumers that we will not put anything in place. We had the Liberal government call grocery CEOs and ask them to stabilize prices because they are upsetting people. That is not putting teeth in and telling them this is serious, because our people in this country matter. They matter more than grocery stores bringing home a huge amount of profit.

I am glad the changes that the NDP has made for Bill C-56 will actually help everyday Canadians. It is not as far as we would go. There are a lot of things we would definitely have in the bill, but we got something in there that is going to make a difference.

### *Government Orders*

I have been watching this place for many years, before I even got here in 2015. Sometimes I feel like I am experiencing déjà vu, because what I see happen again and again is the continued betrayal of small businesses by both Conservative and Liberal governments. I know that, in my riding, small businesses make the difference. They are the ones that stand up every day and look after our community. They care about the people they employ, and they work hard to better our communities.

During the pandemic, it was terrifying. I have to say that my community did an amazing job of supporting local businesses the best it could. Community members talked to one another. We talked to communities. We made sure that people were taken care of the best they could be. When that struggle was still there, we fought like heck to have a good loan that was helping people get through that time. The CEBA loan was created.

Now we are in a situation where the government is refusing to listen to these small business owners and make something work for them so that they do not lose their businesses. It was really sad for me to see nothing to deal with this in the financial update. I would have loved to see this in the bill, because small businesses work hard.

I was talking to a business owner in my riding, who said that rural communities have particular challenges, both with the pandemic and then later on with inflation, as well as waiting for more people to come to our small communities for tourism. They are struggling the most. To see the government not take that important connection seriously and to see it really betray those small businesses has been very concerning to me.

I will wrap up, but I just want to say that, in this House, we all have to work collectively to make sure that life is more affordable for Canadians. They deserve it, and it is really our job to maintain a bar of dignity that no one falls below. In this country right now, too many are falling; we need to do better by them.

• (2305)

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech from my colleague from North Island—Powell River. She speaks about the bar of dignity a lot. I hear it a lot. I do a lot of work with the disability community, and they appreciate the human rights lens the member always talks about.

Does she mind sharing a bit about the fact that the disability benefit was not mentioned in the fall economic statement? We know it disproportionately impacts women and indigenous people, and I wanted to hear her thoughts on that.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, the member brought up an important reality.

We know that people across this country who are living with disabilities have particular challenges, are all too often marginalized and fall below the bar of dignity that I talk about, and really have a hard time making ends meet. This is important. When we see people from various communities supported in a good way, the amazing thing that happens is that opportunity grows. However, if we leave people in a situation where they cannot make ends meet and

they are struggling every day just to get by, it is really hard for them to maintain the creativity they may have in their spirit.

When we talk about a bar of dignity, we are talking about the disability benefit. If people were lifted out of poverty and had the space to expand what they might be able to do to look at a life that is not fraught with concern and terror every day, what a better community we would have. It makes me think of my friend Karen, who teaches me a lot about living in the disabled community. She always says that when we make something accessible for everyone, we make it accessible for everyone. Let us make it accessible for everyone and see what a beautiful culture we could create in this country.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-56 touches on housing. It is a priority, actually.

I said it earlier, when my colleague made his speech. It will be difficult to build millions of homes. That has never been done in Canada. We have to find ways to rise to the challenge. We talked about an acquisition fund, which could be an interesting tool.

The elephant in the room when it comes to the housing crisis is the financialization of housing. Big real estate empires are buying up the housing stock. In Montreal alone, it is estimated that less than 1% of owners own a third of the rental stock. That is outrageous. We need to do something about these people who buy up buildings with 60, 80 or 100 units, either to demolish them or renovate them. They double the price and it becomes very problematic.

I am certain it is the same in Toronto and Vancouver. Ottawa needs to tackle this. Could my colleague speak to that? I imagine that the NDP has been thinking about these issues. Do they have any ideas about how to deal with this?

• (2310)

[English]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, this is a really important question.

We know that, right now, what we are seeing across the country and, sadly, what we have seen the government participate in is giving money to corporations that are building housing and basing it on market or above-market value. That means we are just continuing to see housing built that is not going to make a difference for everyday Canadians. The financialization of housing is taking away everyday, common people's rights in this country. We need to do better. Part of that is having non-market housing. I want to thank the member for Vancouver East, who has been very clear on this. If we do not have an investment in housing that makes a difference for people, we are letting them down.

This country does not need that. The government is abandoning people who are living on the streets every day. All of the members of this place have a safe place to go home to at the end of the day, and it is shameful that we allow other people to not have a safe place. What it does to their spirits destabilizes our country, and we need to do better by them.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know this issue has come up, if not from this member, then from one of her colleagues. It is the issue of extreme anti-competition that we are seeing, in particular with regard to the grocery retail giants. I know that in Canada, Loblaws, which owns Shoppers, occupies about 40% of the retail grocery market. Compare that to in the United States, where Walmart, the largest, owns only 18%.

I am wondering whether the member could expand on how she thinks the legislation would help with anti-competition practice.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, this is a big, broad and complex question I am being asked.

First of all, I would say that part of it is this place's fault. Under both Liberal and Conservative governments, we have not seen an active stance around competition. In fact, recently, we have seen mergers in this country that mean there will be less competition. The people who pay when there is less competition are always the hard-working Canadians.

What we need to see is more legislation like the leader of the NDP brought forward, to make sure we have teeth in these processes to make a difference for everyday Canadians.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the comments that my colleague from North Island—Powell River just made on how the grocery chains have made it harder for people to eat healthy food. This morning, there was a meeting of parliamentarians, senators and stakeholders on anti-poverty, and when I say “parliamentarians”, I mean all but the Conservatives. They came together to talk about the intersection of health, housing, food security and disability. The urgency that I heard in that room is not being expressed by the Liberal government in the House. This follows up on the idea that the fall economic statement was a real disappointment for many of those groups. It was certainly a disappointment for the disability community.

It was the expectation of the community, the NDP and other members in the House, that the Canada disability benefit would at least get a mention in the fall economic statement, and it did not. I am here to say that that is not acceptable. As my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby said earlier tonight, New Democrats expect to see some movement on the Canada disability benefit right away. People are suffering, and not just at the grocery store, but also when it comes to housing, which is the next thing I want to talk about.

When we talk about the housing and grocery affordability act, we have to acknowledge that people are losing their housing every single day in this country. We are losing affordable housing at a rate of 15 to one. It was mentioned earlier that seniors are being re-novicted today. As we have the debates today, seniors are getting notice of above-guideline rent increases. Their rents are going up 30%, 40% and 50%. They cannot afford it and are out on the street.

I am getting phone calls at my office from residents who have lived in the same units in my community for 20, 30 and sometimes 35 years, and they are being re-novicted. They are in their seventies, and they have nowhere to go. Their safety net is their community,

and they have nowhere to live because of, as one of my colleagues said earlier today, the financialization of housing. I blame the Liberals and the Conservatives before them for not protecting people's right to housing and allowing large corporations to buy up affordable housing and not replace it.

As has been said earlier today, the NDP is supporting Bill C-56. This is a move toward affordability in the areas of food and housing, but, at the same time, there is so much more to do. I think about the fact that purpose-built rentals in this country have not been invested in for decades.

I can talk specifically about what happened in Coquitlam. I was a city councillor at the time, and an application came forward for a purpose-built rental building. The Liberals at the time, in 2015, had promised a GST exemption on purpose-built rentals. A company came forward in good faith to build purpose-built rentals. It was expecting relief on the GST and was going to pass it down to renters. The company was excited to do that work in my community to make housing affordable for frontline workers, whether they were nurses, firefighters or people who worked in grocery stores. It was excited to do that work, only to be disappointed with the Liberal government not following through on its promise of a GST rebate.

The Liberals, at that point, decided to go with their corporate buddies who were asking them to please give them low-interest loans instead. The commercial loan interest rates were so low, but still the Liberal government decided to follow up with their corporate buddies and give them low-interest loans. That would contribute to the loss of 15 affordable units to every one that was built.

I cannot express my disappointment enough that the Liberal government waited eight years to bring this GST rebate forward. I am happy we have it. The Liberals have at least moved the needle a tiny bit, but they really need to start taking this seriously because, as I said, people have lost their homes today.

● (2315)

I want to note the infrastructure gap, which is so wide. We are talking about the small movement on groceries and the Competition Act, which we are happy about, and we are happy about housing, although there is so much more to do. I want to speak about infrastructure because mayors and councillors were in town all of this week talking about the massive infrastructure gap, and my colleague from Nunavut was talking about the exorbitant infrastructure gap in northern Canada, in Nunavut, and the housing crisis going on there. The federal government has walked away from almost \$8 billion in funding for indigenous communities and infrastructure. That is totally unacceptable, and we expect to see that rectified in the spring budget, that is for sure. We cannot continue to not invest in infrastructure and we cannot continue down this path of abusing human rights in this country.

*Government Orders*

I am going to zip my speech up, but I want to make sure that I talk about transit. When we talk about affordability, we need to talk about public transit. The mayors out in my area of British Columbia have been talking about the fact that they expect the federal government to be involved in funding public transit. If we are going to make these investments in housing, which are desperately needed, if we are going to make these investments in accessibility, which are desperately needed, and if we are going to really get serious about reducing emissions in this country, we need to invest in public transit. The mayors out in British Columbia are asking for that, and I am expecting the infrastructure minister will come forward with the public transit funding that has been promised. We cannot wait until 2026 to get transit funding. We need to change behaviour now. We cannot wait.

I want to close out by talking about the member for Burnaby South, who has a bill on the floor, Bill C-352, that also addresses the Competition Act. NDP members are so proud of this bill and of the fact that we are finally in this country going to force the government to get serious about the Competition Act. We know that Canadians right now have the highest cellphone bills and the highest Internet bills. We are now looking at conglomerations of the largest banks, which already charge too much in consumer charges. We need to stop this conglomeration of the largest corporations in this country and give some power back to consumers.

I am looking forward to the passing of Bill C-56. I am also looking forward to the passing of Bill C-352.

• (2320)

**The Speaker:** I would like to remind members that they have to be in their seats to ask questions and make comments.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for taking a moment. I was having a conversation. I am sorry to the member for that.

The member talked a bit about the financialization of housing, and I shared in my speech not too long ago how expensive rents are in my communities, which are significantly smaller than some of the communities the member represents. I wonder if she could share with this place why the need for non-market housing is so important when we are seeing the cost of rents go up higher and higher every day.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, that is such an important question. For eight years, I sat at a city council table and saw that perfectly affordable housing was being bought by large corporations and upzoned for them, and then almost a quarter of the condos they were building were sitting empty for years. The efforts of the development industry to pull profits out of communities at the cost of affordable homes for Canadians of all ages were very difficult to watch, because we could see the profit leaving communities. Those developments were not building communities, and we can see now that we have a lot more work to do in the area of bringing back affordable units. It is 15:1. People cannot afford to live in these communities anymore when they are taken over by real estate trusts and development groups that build luxury condo after luxury condo.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank my colleague for reminding the House about some of the is-

ssues I have brought up regarding indigenous peoples. It is absolutely an injustice indeed that there are so many cuts being anticipated and that there are great gaps, such as the \$350-billion infrastructure gap for first nations.

That figure does not even include infrastructure gaps for Métis and Inuit, but I will get back to the debate on this important bill. It could have great impacts for Nunavummiut, who suffer the most for lack of housing, as well as the cost of living. Could the member share with us why this bill is so important, not just for northerners but for all Canadians?

• (2325)

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, I raise my hands to the member for Nunavut, who has stood up so many times in this House to explain to the Liberal government why it is so important that it live up to its human rights commitments, especially in regard to housing. There are absolutely unacceptable conditions in Nunavut, and there is a partner there ready to go.

I will follow up on the question from the member, though. We know food prices are extremely high across the country. We know this is about food price gouging. This is about profits. Because there is not competition in the grocery chains, they are taking home extreme profits. They are not being taxed fairly, and they are taking advantage of Canadians. That is why this bill is so important: We need to get serious about addressing that competition.

The other thing I will talk about is the fact that the rental, co-op and not-for-profit housing in this country needs extreme investment, and this is a tiny move forward. We are hoping for more from the Liberals. We need more from the Liberals. Affordability is just so important across the board.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the importance of getting affordable housing off the market in order to protect it from financialization. I would like her to talk about the importance of defining affordability based on tenants' ability to pay rather than comparing it to the average market price.

[English]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, I know the member is very adept at research, and he knows this as well, but I just want to say here that housing prices have increased exponentially over the last two decades, and wages have not. Wages have not kept pace with the cost of living or with housing, and this is one of the reasons, as a New Democrat standing here today, I am so happy to know we have the anti-scab legislation coming forward, that a well-paying job is a union job. We are so looking forward to more Canadians being able to take advantage of those kinds of work conditions.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** There being no further members rising for debate, pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on the 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. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, I ask for a recorded division.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** Call in the members.

● (2410)

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

*(Division No. 456)*

## YEAS

## Members

Aitchison	Albas
Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blaney	Block
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg

Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Fillmore
Findlay	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Gainey
Gallant	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genuis	Gerretsen
Gill	Gladu
Goodridge	Gould
Gourde	Gray
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Hoback	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Jeneroux
Johns	Joly
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelly
Khanna	Khera
Kitchen	Kmiec
Koutrakis	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kusmierczyk
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Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lantsman	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauson	Lawrence
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lehoux	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lightbound
Lloyd	Lobb
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Majumdar	Maloney
Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
McLeod	McPherson
Melillo	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Moore	Morantz
Morrice	Morrissey
Motz	Murray
Muys	Naqvi
Nater	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Petitpas Taylor
Poilievre	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes

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Richards  
Robillard  
Rogers  
Rood  
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Scheer  
Schmale  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Shipley  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Sinclair-Desgagné  
Small  
Soroka  
Ste-Marie  
St-Onge  
Stubbs  
Tassi  
Thériault  
Thomas  
Tolmie  
Turnbull  
Valdez  
van Koeverden  
Vandal  
Vecchio  
Vien  
Vignola  
Virani  
Wagantall

Rempel Garner  
Roberts  
Rodriguez  
Romanado  
Rota  
Sahota  
Saks  
Sarai  
Scarpaleggia  
Schiefke  
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Sarai

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Morrison  
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**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

**The Speaker:** It being 12:14 a.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

Good night.

(The House adjourned at 12:14 a.m.)





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