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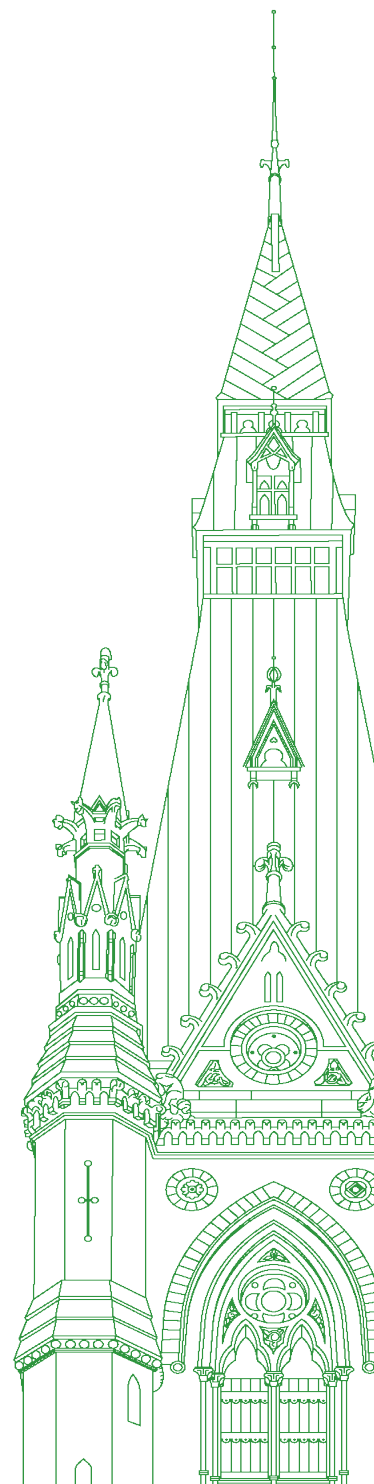
House of Commons Debates

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Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Science and Research, entitled “Pay Gaps Among Faculty at Canadian Universities”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

I thank our witnesses, our clerk and our analysts for the great work on this, and our committee members for some great questions.

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives believe that if people work hard, they should be able to get ahead, no matter who they are. That is why, unfortunately, we had to write a supplemental report to clarify where the Liberals fell short in this report, as in many other areas of governance.

The federal government must respect provincial jurisdiction. No one benefits when provincial jurisdiction is ignored. Doing so merely helps those who have a responsibility to pass the buck. The federal government should recognize that much of the responsibility for removing barriers to pay equity in universities falls on the universities themselves. We need to focus on who actually has the ability to make the changes that are needed.

The federal government must ensure that the federally managed research grants and programs do not enable discriminatory hiring practices. Conservatives believe that pay equity should be achieved by removing barriers that prevent the achievement of that goal, not by instituting new discriminatory hiring practices.

[Translation]

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present, in both official languages, the 16th re-

port of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, entitled “Canada Summer Jobs Program”.

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

The Canada summer jobs program is a very important program for both young people and employers. On behalf of the committee, I thank all the witnesses who were kind enough to come and share with us their knowledge and expertise and how much they value the program.

• (1005)

[English]

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the Canada summer jobs report, Conservatives are tabling a dissenting report. I will summarize some of the points from that report.

From the start, the program's accessibility to employers who must navigate through a complicated application process was repeatedly raised as a yearly challenge that they faced. A long application process leaves many non-technologically advanced employers confused about the steps they need to take to apply to receive funding from the program. As well, employers across the country can benefit from simplifying the application process and making it more accessible.

Another issue repeatedly highlighted with the Canada summer jobs program is a lack of clear service standards in responding to issues from confused applicants or relaying updated information on the program in a timely manner. The department also fails to communicate effectively to applicants about changes in funding at the beginning of the application process and a number of other key elements that employers rely on. The report makes no recommendations to ESDC to implement service standards in its review processes or processing times.

Routine Proceedings

Lastly, it also mentions faith-based organizations' submissions, in passing, but it does not clearly present their concerns surrounding the fairness of eligibility screening processes. The absence of their points of view in the report does not fully represent the contrast in opinion the committee received in the briefs submitted.

* * *

PETITIONS

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Earl Dreesen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Stella Quinn Crawford, a three-year-old from Alberta, was killed by an impaired driver on the afternoon of April 15, 2023. Falon Milburn, Stella's aunt, reached out to my office to sponsor petition e-4710, and I am honoured to table this petition today to call upon the government to make these changes.

The petition calls upon the Government of Canada to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to require individuals convicted of multiple impaired driving charges for the same incident to serve prison sentences consecutively.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present from residents across Canada, drawing to the attention of the House of Commons the following. Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline that consists of meditation, exercise and moral teachings based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance. In July 1999, the Chinese Communist Party launched an intensive nationwide persecution campaign to eradicate the Falun Gong. Hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been detained in forced labour camps, brainwashing centres and prisons, where torture and abuse are routine, and thousands have died as a result. The European Parliament passed a resolution condemning the organ harvesting abuses in China and calls for the government of China to end immediately the practice of harvesting organs from prisoners of conscience.

Therefore, the petitioners request the Canadian Parliament and the government to pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs, to amend the Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and to publicly call for the end of the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

INDIGENOUS ARTIFACTS

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to give voice to a number of local advocates who would like to see greater recognition for the 5,000-year-old Mnjikaning fish weirs, which are older than the Egyptian pyramids and one of the oldest, best-preserved wooden fish weirs in North America. The world knows too little about these fish weirs.

The City of Orillia, Chippewas of Rama First Nation and the Township of Ramara have been working together to provide greater recognition. Even Parks Canada recognizes that these fish weirs have a profound cultural and spiritual meaning for first nations peoples and are a critical component of our country's cultural heritage.

These petitioners request that the government work with the Chippewas of Rama First Nation, the City of Orillia and the Township of Ramara to provide greater recognition for this wonderful Canadian historical artifact.

● (1010)

FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a huge honour to rise today to table over 70 petitions in support of Bill C-310, which is calling for the first responders tax credit for search and rescue volunteers and for volunteer firefighters to be increased from \$3,000 to \$10,000.

I want to give huge kudos to every member in the House and to every party, because we have had petitions tabled from the Green Party, the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the Bloc and of course the New Democratic Party on behalf of firefighters and search and rescue volunteers from coast to coast to coast, calling for the government to make this change in the upcoming budget.

This is a tribute to all the selfless hours those search and rescue volunteers put in. They put their lives on the line for us. It is critical that we support them and that the government supports them in this call to action. Again, I put my hands up to the 165 communities that have written letters, to the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs for the really important work and advocacy its members have been doing, but most importantly, to those who put their lives on the line for each and every one of us to make sure we are safe, especially in rural Canada.

SPECIES AT RISK

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, you know what a stickler I am for the rules, but I support the member for Courtenay—Alberni breaking those rules in order to point out that on one petition at least, we really are in strong support, even though we are not supposed to say so, and that of course was the petition about the volunteer firefighter tax credit.

I am presenting a petition that I will briefly summarize. Many of my constituents have asked me to present a petition to protect critical old-growth habitat, which is absolutely necessary for the survival of a species at critical risk. It is threatened under the Species at Risk Act and is the marbled murrelet. Its Latin name is *Brachyramphus marmoratus*. Its habitat is limited specifically to old-growth forests along the B.C. west coast.

Petitioners propose that the government take action to protect that critical habitat.

FIREARMS

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions to present.

The first one is a petition of the House that comes from Canadians who are concerned about Bill C-21, a bill that targets law-abiding firearms owners. The petitioners say that hunting and firearms ownership play an important role in Canadian history and culture. The petitioners are concerned about the government's intent to ban several hunting rifles and shotguns, including bolt-action rifles.

The petitioners ask that the government leave their guns alone, that it votes against Bill C-21 and that it protects the property rights of Canadian hunters.

I support that wholeheartedly.

FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also have another four petitions here, all along the same line. I am going to consolidate them. I am going to do it because I am eager to listen to my leader speak about axing the tax.

In the interest of time, I am going to consolidate these four petitions from the RM of Emerson-Franklin, the RM of Springfield, the community of Niverville and the community of Kleefeld. They have signed petitions in support of Bill C-310, which recognizes the many volunteer firefighter first responders we have. They are asking that the increase in the tax deduction be applied for them.

I support that as well. Having been a former volunteer ambulance driver attendant, I am sympathetic to the lifestyle that those guys choose for themselves and the volunteers who are in each and every one of our communities to keep Canadians safe.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to give a quick reminder that we cannot support petitions. I know this has happened a couple of times today, starting from over on that side, and then it went over to this side. Whether we support a petition or not, make sure that we keep that to ourselves.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be tabling a petition today signed by dozens of people in British Columbia, including the Fraser Valley and Okanagan Valley regions, in support of the member for Courtenay—Alberni, who has just spoken, and his bill, Bill C-310, which would provide support for volunteer firefighters.

As one is well aware, volunteer firefighters increasingly, because of the climate crisis, are called upon to try to save our villages, towns and communities across the length and breadth of this land. They receive very little for all the sacrifices they make. The member for Courtenay—Alberni has started a movement across the country. MPs from all parties have tabled petitions in support of this important legislation.

This would increase the tax credit for volunteer firefighters and for search and rescue volunteers from \$3,000 to \$10,000.

The government has the opportunity in next week's budget to make this a reality. These petitioners are urging the government to do that and to actually support volunteer firefighters across the country.

Routine Proceedings

● (1015)

AIR SERVICE TO INDIA

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as one knows, once again, with the Indo-Canadian community's growth, we have seen exceptional relationships that continue to be built between Canada and India. As such, there has been an increased demand for direct flights internationally, from Canada going to India.

The people who signed this petition are calling upon the legislatures and, in particular, the airlines to look at ways we can have additional direct flights from Canada to India.

VENEZUELA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are joined today on the Hill by some great members of the heroic, freedom-loving Latin community here in Canada. It is a great pleasure for me to table a petition on their behalf, highlighting the plight of some political prisoners in Venezuela.

The people of Venezuela, the people of Cuba and of various other Latin American countries have suffered greatly under the scourge of communism, socialism and dictatorship. Petitioners wish to draw the attention of the House to the plight of political prisoners, and they call for stronger action by the government in defence of those supporting freedom and democracy in Venezuela in particular, and various other South American countries as well.

Petitioners highlight a number of the events in Venezuela, which include violations of fundamental human rights; persecution; unjust incarceration; torture and forced disappearance, in particular, of 257 individuals, including 146 military personnel. They also highlight individuals with close connections to Canada, who are among those who have faced this persecution.

Petitioners ask the government to include political prisoners with close ties to Canada, particularly Ígbert José Marín Chaparro and Oswaldo Valentín García Palomo, in any discussions or negotiations to restore diplomatic ties between Canada and Venezuela, to advocate for the unconditional release of prisoners of conscience Ígbert José Marín Chaparro and Oswaldo Valentín García Palomo, due to their strong family ties in Canada, and of all political prisoners in Venezuela before any concessions are given to the Venezuelan government by Canada and by the international community, and to request the release and further return to Canada of those two individuals before any concessions are given to Venezuela, such as sanctions release, reopening of mutual embassies or economic agreements.

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by the great people of Pickering, Uxbridge, Ajax and Whitby. They are calling on the House of Commons to immediately repeal the new regulatory constraints on natural health products passed last year. Millions of Canadians rely on the products, and the constraints have since affected their medical freedom and the choice and affordability of products.

*Business of Supply***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1020)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX EMERGENCY MEETING**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC) moved:

That the House declare that the Prime Minister convene a carbon tax emergency meeting with all of Canada's 14 first ministers; that this meeting address:

- (a) the ongoing carbon tax crisis and the financial burden it places on Canadians,
- (b) the Prime Minister's recent 23% carbon tax increase,
- (c) plans for provinces to opt-out of the federal carbon tax to pursue other responsible ideas to lower emissions, given that under the government's current environmental plan, Canada now ranks 62 out of 67 countries on the Climate Change Performance index; and

that this meeting be publicly televised and held within five weeks of this motion being adopted.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

Imagine for a moment a person who fell into a coma in 2015 and who wakes up today. Imagine the last impression that they would have had at the time, in 2015, when inflation and interest rates were almost as low as they have ever been in the history of Canada. At that time, taxes were falling faster than at any time in Canadian history. The budget was balanced. Crime had just fallen 25%, and small-town folks could even leave their doors unlocked.

Our borders were secure and our immigration system was working. It was not perfect, but overall, established Canadians and newcomers were satisfied with the situation, which was orderly and compassionate. Housing cost half of what it does today, the average rent was \$950, an almost laughably low number by today's standards, and take-home pay had risen by 10% after tax and after inflation. This represented one of the largest pay and income increases for Canadians in a half century. In fact, this was even making news internationally. The New York Times said that Canada's middle class was richer than America's for the first time. At the same time, trouble was brewing in the world, with wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Ukraine, none of which caused inflation here at home.

However, now the person has awoken, eight years later, to find a completely different country. Inflation, after hitting a 40-year high, is still higher than its Bank of Canada target. Per capita income is declining. In fact, Canada has the worst per capita income growth rate of all the G7 countries, and it is expected to have the worst

OECD growth out of 40 developed countries for the next five and a half years and the next 35 years.

Some families have had their existing mortgages extended to 90 years or even 120 years because their mortgage loan is higher now than when they took it out, due to interest rate hikes that the Prime Minister had promised would never occur. Houses in Canada now cost 50% more than in the United States. People can buy a castle in Sweden for a lower cost than they could buy a two-bedroom apartment in Kitchener. Toronto has the worst housing bubble in the world according to UBS Bank. Vancouver is the third-most expensive city when comparing median income to median housing prices. Vancouver is more expensive than New York, London, Singapore and other places that have more people, more money and less land. Fewer houses were built last year than in 1972.

That person waking up today would learn something else: Our national debt has doubled. When they fell into a coma, the national debt was about \$600 billion. Now it is up to \$1.2 trillion.

● (1025)

The debt has doubled. This Prime Minister has added more to our national debt than all other prime ministers combined.

The streets have become unsafe. There has been a 100% increase in the number of criminal shootings. People are afraid to walk down the street. Crime is everywhere. Cars are disappearing. When the person wakes up, they will hear Toronto's chief of police telling people to keep their keys near the door so that car thieves can peacefully steal their vehicles. That is the Canada they will wake up to. The Prime Minister's solution to all this is to increase taxes and deficits and to let more criminals loose. Another thing the person will see is that the Bloc Québécois supported all of the policies that led to this nightmare.

There is still hope, however, because there is something else the person will see when they wake up: a common-sense party that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. The first step will be for the Prime Minister to meet with the provincial premiers to reverse the policies that caused the hell we are experiencing across the country and to discuss axing the carbon tax and other taxes in order to allow Quebecers and all Canadians to succeed through hard work and pay an affordable price for food, housing and gas in a free country. That is good old common sense, and that is what we are offering.

[English]

Imagine that, in fact, someone had been in a coma for the last eight years. They would have gone to sleep in 2015 in a country where inflation and interest rates were rock-bottom, taxes were falling faster than at any time in Canadian history, the budget was balanced, crime had just fallen 25% so small-town folks could leave their doors unlocked, our borders were secure and our immigration system was uncontroversial, with everyone agreeing it worked and was the best in the world. Housing cost half of what it does today; the average rent was \$950, an almost laughably low number by today's standards. Take-home pay had risen by 10% after tax, and after inflation in the preceding years. *The New York Times* had just called Canada "the richest middle class"; in fact, it said that Canada's middle class was richer than America's for the first time.

This was with lots of trouble in the world, with wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and, yes, Ukraine, none of which caused inflation here at home. At the time, of course, we had former prime minister Harper, who was able to keep inflation and unemployment low even while the world suffered turmoil.

However, now the person has awoken, eight years later, to find a completely different place. Inflation, after hitting a 40-year high, is still 50% higher than its 2% target. The economy is shrinking in per capita terms; it is smaller than it was six years ago, perhaps the first time that has ever happened in Canadian history. Canada is expected to have the worst OECD growth out of 40 countries for the next five and a half years and the next 35 years.

It now takes 25 years to save up for a down payment for a mortgage in Toronto, and many people have had their existing mortgage extended to 90 years and 120 years, meaning their great-grandchildren will still be paying it off. Houses in Canada now cost 50% more than in the United States. People can buy a castle in Sweden for a lower cost than for a two-bedroom home in Kitchener. Toronto has the worst housing bubble in the world. Vancouver is the third-most expensive when comparing median income to median housing prices.

This is the nightmare that would have been unimaginable to someone had they fallen into a coma and just awoken now. However, there is good news. They do not want to fall back into a coma, because the best is yet to come. We now have a common-sense Conservative alternative that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. We call on the Prime Minister to meet the premiers and talk to them about their desire to see the tax cut or eliminated altogether.

● (1030)

Let us grant relief to our people now until there can be a carbon tax election, where the people of this country will restore the common-sense consensus that will allow anyone from anywhere to do anything their birthright is, so that with hard work they can afford a good home and good food in a safe neighbourhood in the country we love, which is all of our homes. It is their home, my home and our home. Let us bring it home.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr.

Business of Supply

Speaker, one of the problems with the leader of the official opposition's speech is that it is often, whether it is inside the House or outside the House, factually incorrect. If they are axing anything, it is the facts, and the reality they portray is exceptionally misleading.

For example, he talks about there being no immigration problems. He can tell that to the thousands of people who could not sponsor parents or he can tell that to the thousands of people who could not sponsor a spouse when he was actually in government, when immigration was a so-called no problem. Those are the actual facts.

He talked about the economy. It took Stephen Harper 10 years to create a million jobs. In less than eight years, we have doubled that. We have created over two million jobs. I am wondering if the member could be a bit more honest with the facts, whether it is here or outside of Ottawa.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I do not need to criticize the government's immigration policy because the Prime Minister has done it for me. He has said that the immigration system is out of control. Those are his words, reiterated by his immigration minister, both of them apparently blaming the preceding immigration minister for screwing the entire system up so badly that they allowed hundreds of thousands of students to come in to study at fake institutions that do not even exist. They are diploma mills, by the government's own description. Now those kids are abused, taken advantage of and forced to work 20 hours a week. They are going home in body bags and forced to rent out half a bed for four hours a day, paying \$700 a month.

It is absolute chaos in our immigration system after eight years of the cocktail of total incompetence and radicalism that has defined the Prime Minister and his appallingly incompetent immigration and now housing minister, the member from Nova Scotia, who has given us 35 homeless encampments in the biggest city in his home province.

That is the deplorable record that someone, having fallen into a coma eight years ago, would be shocked to wake up to.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a simple policy question. It should have a simple yes or no answer.

The industrial carbon tax on big polluters has been doing the lion's share of emissions reduction. It is one of the most important climate policies. We all know where the Conservative leader stands on the consumer carbon tax, but he has avoided answering questions on the industrial carbon tax on big oil and gas. Could he please answer a simple yes or no question?

Would he scrap the industrial carbon tax?

Business of Supply

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, there is no industrial carbon tax on the oil and gas sector, so the member should do her research before she asks questions like that. In Alberta the province has something called the TIER system, which is a provincially administered system. It stands for technology innovation and emissions reduction. It allows the large industrial players to invest in green initiatives to reduce their emissions at no cost to consumers. It is one of the reasons our oil and gas sector is the most advanced in the world.

What I propose is that we produce more of our clean Canadian oil and gas to displace the dirty dictators of the world. The real question is why the NDP wants to put good union workers in western Canada on the unemployment line, steal their jobs and send those jobs to foreign dictators around the world. We common-sense Conservatives would bring home those powerful paycheques for our people in this country.

• (1035)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we will be spending another day in the Conservative Party's mythical carbon tax bubble. What a shame.

However, I do agree with the Leader of the Opposition about the Liberal Party's abysmal record when it comes to housing. Its record is absolutely atrocious. I toured Quebec this past year. No one I talked to ever mentioned eliminating the carbon tax as a potential solution to the housing crisis. What people did tell us is that the cities are not the problem. The cities are not the ones causing delays. The federal government is the one holding up the work by launching program after program.

One possible solution that the Bloc Québécois will shortly be proposing is to have the federal government pay a single transfer for housing like it does for health care. That would reduce both delays and costs. Is the leader of the Conservative Party in favour of such a measure?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has supported every program that the Liberals have brought to the table. The Bloc Québécois voted in favour of this government's \$500-billion discretionary spending in the estimates. That money will be used to centralize and expand the government's powers. I want to clarify that I am not talking about spending on health care or seniors, which is already legislated and does not need to be voted on in the House. I am talking about spending on bureaucracy, consultants and large centralizing programs here in Ottawa.

Ottawa needs to stop building a bigger bureaucracy. Ottawa needs to shrink the bureaucracy and ensure there is more construction, less red tape and more houses. That is the Conservatives' common-sense policy.

[English]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I offer my thanks to the Leader of the Opposition for this motion, which calls on the Prime Minister to listen to the calls of the premiers to talk about the carbon tax.

After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, food bank usage is at record highs. Young people cannot afford to buy homes.

Canadians cannot afford to put food on the table. Gas is over two dollars a litre in British Columbia. Despite the Liberal media misinformation, this is a direct result of the failed carbon tax and a \$1.2-trillion national debt. In fact, that is the policy intention of this tax. Canadians are hurting because of it, but the Prime Minister is not listening and does not care. Instead, he chose to hike the carbon tax by 23% on April 1. Worse, he plans to quadruple it by 2030, which is not sustainable.

The premiers of Saskatchewan, Alberta and New Brunswick recently wrote to the Liberal chair of the finance committee asking for an opportunity to express their frustrations with the carbon tax and relay the concerns of their citizens who are struggling with rising costs. The Liberal chair, the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville, ignored the premiers and refused to call a meeting.

I will take this opportunity to recognize and thank the brave chair of the government operations committee, my colleague, the member for Edmonton—West, who demonstrated principled leadership. He convened meetings at government operations so that the committee, and by extension Canadians, could hear from the premiers directly. Sadly, their concerns fell on deaf Liberal ears.

The premiers of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and even the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador have written to the Prime Minister, demanding a meeting to address carbon tax issues. They understand an urgency that the Prime Minister ignores.

Last week, the Leader of the Opposition also wrote to the Prime Minister, echoing the demands of the premiers and asking for an emergency meeting to hear from them directly. The Prime Minister's response was that he had a meeting with them in 2016. That is an absolutely pathetic response. None of the premiers he met with in 2016 is still in office today.

Here is the reality. The NDP-Liberal carbon tax is a scam. It is nothing more than a tax plan disingenuously disguised as an environmental plan. It is a behavioural science tool designed to control people's behaviour, not to reduce emissions. In fact, it has not reduced emissions but continues to punish Canadian families for the crimes of buying groceries and filling up at the pumps. The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed as much, saying that "most households will see a net loss". To put it simply, the carbon tax is just like the Prime Minister: a failure and not worth the cost.

Skyrocketing food prices have resulted in record food bank usage, including in my community of South Surrey—White Rock. It was recently reported that more than 1,000 residents are now using the South Surrey food bank every week. That is a 35% increase. The Guru Nanak Food Bank, which operates in both Surrey and Delta, is not even included in the B.C. food bank statistics. It is now helping support three times more families than in 2020, when it opened. It even has a special section for international students.

Food banks in my community are also dealing with a significant shortage in donations, raising concerns that they may not be able to accommodate the increase in demand. This is heartbreaking, but it is the reality after eight years, despite what the government would have us believe.

The carbon tax is not popular. In fact, there is only one provincial party that is enthusiastically embracing the carbon tax, and that's the B.C. NDP. Mainstreet Research recently asked British Columbians who they agreed with when it came to the carbon tax dispute between the federal Conservative leader and David Eby. Fifty-four per cent of respondents agreed with our leader and our position that the carbon tax hike should not have been spiked on April 1. Only 34% of respondents agreed with Premier David Eby.

● (1040)

British Columbians are being forced to choose among filling up their cars, heating their homes and feeding their families. Over 200,000 British Columbians are using the food bank every month, yet Premier Eby is happily implementing this federally mandated tax grab.

On page 75 of the 2024 B.C. budget, it states, "Budget 2023 implemented annual increases to the tax to align with federal requirements. B.C.'s carbon tax is currently at \$65 per tonne, and will increase every April 1 by \$15 per tonne until rates are equal to \$170 per tonne in 2030." He is telling us now that B.C.'s carbon tax will increase to comply with the Prime Minister's mandate. According to the Vancouver Sun, B.C.'s carbon tax will rise by \$9 billion over the next three years and only credit back \$3.5 billion. Liberal math defies understanding. That is a net cost to British Columbians of five and a half billion dollars.

This brings me back to the motion we are debating today. Whether or not the NDP-Liberal government can admit it, we are in a carbon tax crisis. Despite the opposition of 70% of Canadians and seven out of 10 premiers, the Prime Minister refused to spike the hike April 1 and, instead, chose to inflict more pain on Canadians when they can least afford it.

When it comes to emissions reductions, the carbon tax has been a demonstrable failure. COP ranks Canada 62nd out of 67 countries on climate performance. Once again, the NDP-Liberal government does not have an environmental plan; it has a tax plan. Provinces need the flexibility to determine what is best in their jurisdictions. Conservatives believe in using technology that actually delivers results, such as by green-lighting green projects, exporting LNG to end Europe's dependence on Russian oil, and capturing and storing carbon. We do not believe in virtue signalling and taxes that only inflict pain on struggling Canadian families.

Business of Supply

The reality is that the carbon tax crisis is the Prime Minister's own making, and his response to the premiers is unacceptable. What is he afraid of? Although we are separated by thousands of kilometres, our citizens are all facing the same grinding issues. For a Confederation such as ours to work, we need to bring people together; if there was ever a time to do so, it is now.

The Prime Minister must call a meeting, sit down with the premiers and let Canadians into the conversation. After all, the Prime Minister said, "Government and its information must be open by default." Now is his chance, his big moment. The Prime Minister needs to do the right thing. He needs to show some courage, sit down with the premiers, whom he has never met with before, and end the carbon tax crisis that he created. He needs to do his job.

● (1045)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am curious to know how I am going to vote on today's opposition day motion that we are talking about, at least peripherally. The discussion around carbon taxes always brings to mind, because it is a complex problem, the H.L. Mencken comment, "For every complex problem there is a solution which is clear, simple and wrong." I could add, as an update, that it very rarely rhymes. I would love to see a discussion that is fact-based, listening to the experts, such as the 200 economists who say carbon pricing works, or to sit down with the premiers and listen to the science.

I recently, in this place, spoke of the record of the late Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, who definitely worked with provinces, imposed additional costs to stop pollution and made actions count. We do not have a carbon tax crisis; we have a climate crisis. I would welcome an opportunity to listen to the scientific and economic experts and bring everyone together.

Could members of the official opposition confirm that, should this meeting with premiers take place, they would listen to the top experts on climate science at the meeting about the threat to our economy posed by wildfires, heat domes, floods and storms of all kinds that are driven by the climate crisis?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I always welcome questions from a fellow British Columbian member of Parliament.

It is hard to speculate on what a dialogue would look like if we have a Prime Minister who effectively says, "Well, I met with him in 2016." He has not even opened the door yet to such a conference.

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Certainly, details can be arranged after that, but there has to be a willingness by the government to sit down and show courage where there is a national crisis and actually put bones onto solutions by talking to the first ministers in this country. This is a big country, but this Confederation was built on dialogue. If there is no dialogue, there are no solutions. Talking to each other is always the way forward.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the biggest problem that I anticipate in the debate coming from the Conservatives today is that they will axe the facts throughout. At the end of the day, I think it does a great disservice to Canadians.

I put this out to the member across the way. I have had a difficult time trying to get a Conservative member of Parliament to actually debate this issue with me, whether in Ottawa or in Winnipeg at any public school. I would welcome any member of the Conservative caucus to debate me on this issue, on the carbon rebate versus the carbon tax, any day if they had the courage to do so. However, I suspect not one of them will take me up on that. If the Conservative Party is so confident of its policy position, why is it scared to actually have a public debate on the issue?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Well, Mr. Speaker, that was incredible. The reason it is incredible is that the member is talking about people going to public schools in his riding, which he is probably afraid to lose in the next election, and talking about this issue. We want the first ministers of this country, the people elected by our citizens. There is only one taxpayer after all. We want them to get together and show leadership. Leadership starts with the Prime Minister calling a meeting.

We will debate this any time. My goodness, the Leader of the Opposition has been out at rallies, bringing in thousands of people right across the country, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, talking about this issue. Seventy per cent of Canadians and seven out of 10 premiers agree with us on this. Let us get the job done.

• (1050)

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we know that greenhouse gas emissions are the cause of considerable climate change and have led to significant increases in the price of vegetables, grains and fruit in recent years. The whole point of the carbon tax is to lower greenhouse gas emissions. That is one thing.

For another thing, Quebec decided to join the Western Climate Initiative, which is a kind of carbon exchange. California and British Columbia both participate. As a result, Quebec is unaffected by the carbon tax.

Would our Conservative colleagues be willing to join Quebec and British Columbia in the carbon exchange? It would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and keep inflation in check, without monopolizing our time every day simply trying to reduce or eliminate a carbon tax that plays such a useful role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

[English]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I would just say that we are aiming for co-operation and dialogue in this motion. We want to include the premiers of all provinces, including Quebec. Therefore, let us just get to the table, have the discussion, show leadership at both the provincial and national levels, and show how this Confederation can actually work at a time of crisis for Canadians right across the country.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back in the House of Commons, although it is sad that we are debating the same tired argument that the Conservatives have been bringing forward for the last two years. It is clear that the Conservative war on facts, evidence and science continues, even since the Harper era. Now it is math they disagree with.

The failed former leader of the Conservative Party from Regina—Qu'Appelle and the petro-puppet from Carleton are on this cover-up campaign with the Premier of Alberta, Danielle Smith, who raised the price of gas on April 1 by more than the price on pollution. By the way, that price increase did not include any type of rebate, so it is clear why the Conservatives are here and who they are here for. It is not for Canadians or to stand up for affordability; it is to play a role in the cover-up campaign for the Premier of Alberta and to defend the greedy corporate interests of big oil and gas giants, as they always have.

Nothing changes with the Conservative Party, but things are changing with our climate. In fact, March 2024 was the hottest March ever on record. Guess what, Mr. Speaker: February had the highest temperature and was the hottest February ever on record. January was the same. Actually, that has been the case for the last 10 consecutive months. Every single month has been a record-breaking month for temperature. The hottest year on record was 2023. Now, in 2024, it is only April and there are already wildfires burning. Last year, 5.7 million acres of Canadian forests burned down because of out-of-control wildfires, and the Conservative leader blamed it on arson, which we know is not the case. Climate change has dried our forests out and increased the severity of wildfires.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, even still, the Conservative caucus of climate change deniers is heckling over there. I know Conservatives do not believe in climate change, but Canadians do; they demand that we stand up, lower our emissions and take a leading role on fighting climate change around the world.

If one does not believe in climate change, then one must believe in the amount of money these wildfires are costing Canadians. There was over \$1.5 billion in economic losses last year just from wildfires and an incremental \$700 million of insured losses. That does not include drought, floods, hurricanes, extreme weather or hyperfocused precipitation, as we have seen across this country.

Climate change is an existential threat to our economy, our livelihoods and our very lives, and the Conservatives want to ignore it. Who do they want to rely on for insight, for expertise and research? Our universities provide us with that insight. Last week, when 200 leading economists from across this country wrote an open letter in support of carbon pricing, a spokesperson for the Conservative leader, the petro-puppet from Carleton, called them “so-called ‘experts’”. I am sorry, but these are people who earned their degrees. They went to university, did the research and got a Ph.D. They are experts, not so-called experts. They are leading researchers in the field. This is coming from a guy who has never earned an honest red cent in his life. He has never contributed a dollar to our economy. This is the only job he has ever had, here in the House of Commons. It is pathetic coming from somebody with no expertise.

I would like to spend the rest of my time today reading into the record the open letter from the economists on the Canadian carbon pricing. This is not political rhetoric, a bumper sticker or a slogan that looks good on a hoodie. We are getting facts and evidence, irrefutable mathematics, from our experts.

Mr. Speaker, I am sharing my time today with the member for Winnipeg North.

• (1055)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hope that everyone in this place will forgive me for the interruption, but as a member of Parliament, I believe that my work here does earn an honest red cent.

I agree with the parliamentary secretary that it is important for those of us here to have actually had jobs outside of politics, but he might want to rethink that, Mr. Speaker, and it is up to you to recommend on this.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member's intervention in this. I will remind hon. members to be judicious in the words they choose, especially when speaking on the floor of the House and talking about other members.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly take that under advisement.

I will continue now to read the open letter from economists on Canadian carbon pricing.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, it would be great if I did not have to raise my voice and yell, but the Conservative members want to heckle, so I will continue to speak at a volume that will allow them to hear it. This open letter from economists on Canadian carbon pricing was signed by over 200 leading experts. These are people who are doing research on a regular basis to determine what facts and evidence should be included in the political discourse.

The letter starts:

As economists from across Canada, we are concerned about the significant threats from climate change. We encourage governments to use economically sensible policies to reduce emissions at a low cost, address Canadians' affordability con-

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cerns, maintain business competitiveness, and support Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy. Canada's carbon-pricing policies do all those things.

The member for Carleton, the Conservative leader, might call them so-called experts, or he might even call them Liberals. That is not true, and that is not a fact. These are people who work in our universities, teach our students and conduct world-class research, and their facts and evidence ought to be read into the record. I am proud to do that today.

These economists refute five claims. The first Conservative claim is, “Carbon pricing won't reduce GHG emissions.” The open letter states: “What the evidence shows: Not only does carbon pricing reduce emissions, but it does so at a lower cost than other approaches.” This was reiterated by Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe just the other day, which is that they looked at other things, but they were all more expensive, so they are relying on the federal backstop program. Not only does carbon pricing reduce emissions, but it does so at a lower cost than other approaches.

The open letter continues:

Since federal carbon pricing took effect in 2019, Canada's GHG emissions have fallen by almost 8 percent...the Canadian Climate Institute shows that federal and provincial carbon pricing, for industries and consumers, is expected to account for almost half of Canada's emissions reductions by 2030.

That is basic economics and common sense.

The letter further states, “Carbon pricing is the lowest cost approach because it gives each person and business [in our communities] the flexibility to choose the best way to reduce their carbon footprint. Other methods, such as direct regulations, tend to be more intrusive and inflexible, and cost more.”

One of the reasons that Conservatives around the world in other countries rely on carbon pricing is that it is a market-based instrument considered widely as a Conservative approach to lowering emissions.

Conservative claim number two is, “Carbon pricing drives up the cost of living and is a major cause of inflation.” This is totally false. The letter states, “What the evidence shows: Canadian carbon pricing has a negligible impact on overall inflation.”

The Conservatives can repeat their claims and their slogans all they want. That is not science. It is not evidence. It is not math. It is false. The letter continues, “The sharp increase in inflation between 2021 and 2023 was caused by several factors, mainly related to the COVID-19 pandemic...and the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on commodity prices.”

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Just a few minutes ago, the petro-puppet from Carleton was standing in the House suggesting that the war in Ukraine did not cause any inflation in Canada. This is absolutely false. These forces are global, which is why the most advanced countries, whether they have a carbon price or not, experienced very similar inflation. Carbon pricing has caused less than one-twentieth of Canada's inflation in the past two years.

As well, 90% of the revenues generated are rebated back to households, which means that families receive more money in rebates than they pay in carbon pricing, particularly those with low and modest incomes.

The letter states, "Climate change, on the other hands, poses a real threat to Canadians' economic well-being...climate change will cost our economy at least \$35 billion by 2030, and much more in future decades." Again, this reiterates that this is an existential threat for Canadians and for our species on planet earth.

Conservative claim number three is, "It makes little sense to have both a carbon price and rebates." The letter states, "The price-and-rebate approach provides an incentive to reduce carbon emissions...while maintaining most households' overall purchasing power (due to the rebate)." Giving most back to families, through the Canada carbon rebate, carbon pricing revenues and rebates do not undermine the goal of the price. As well, there is still the incentive to reduce emissions. This is another Conservative claim debunked by expert economists.

Conservative claim number four is "Carbon pricing harms Canadian business competitiveness." The letter states:

What the evidence shows: Canada's carbon-pricing scheme is designed to help businesses reduce emissions at low cost, while competing in the emerging low-carbon global economy.

For large emitting sectors in most provinces—like oil, steel and cement—there is an "output-based" carbon pricing system. In effect, it means most large industries pay the carbon price only on the last 10-20 percent of their emissions. The lower-emitting firms pay less while higher-emitting firms pay more—creating a strong incentive for all firms to reduce emissions.

It is also important to highlight here that the vast majority of the oil and gas used in the agriculture sector, or 97% of it, is exempt from carbon pricing.

Conservative claim number five is, "Carbon pricing isn't necessary." The letter states, "Here the critics are actually right. Canada could abandon carbon pricing and still hit our climate targets by using other types of regulations and subsidies—but it would be much more costly to do so" for businesses, our economy and for consumers.

● (1100)

The letter continues, "Unfortunately, the most vocal opponents of carbon pricing are not offering any alternative policies to reduce emissions and meet our climate goals."

There are more than 200 Canadian economists who wrote a letter to the Conservative Party asking it to adjust some of its demands because they are not based on fact or evidence. If there is even one Canadian economist who disagrees with these 200 economists, I would ask Conservative members to bring their facts and evidence to the House and read them into the record because Canadians de-

mand policies that are based on facts, evidence, science and research, not bumper stickers, slogans and overly repeated political rhetoric.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to questions and comments, I would remind members to use riding names when referring to others in the chamber. I know this has been brought up a number of times.

We should say the right hon. Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa. We want to make sure that we at least give people the correct title while speaking on the floor of this chamber.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Milton stated, "Building highways doesn't fight climate change." Does the member still stand by his anti-road building statement?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, the member just brought up a tweet that I put out a couple of years ago.

An hon. member: Yes or no?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, he is yelling, "Yes or no?" right now at the top of his lungs.

I believe that building highways is not a way to fight climate change. It is true. We should find ways to rely more on active transportation, public transit and trains. In my community, we require both-direction, all-day GO train service, so a lot of people use their cars when they do not have to.

It is true that we need highways. It is true that we need roads, and we need more of them in Canada with our growing population, but that does not mean that highways should be used as a wedge or recommendation to fight climate change. Conservatives want to say when we build more highways, we get less gridlock and less carbon emissions, and that is proven to be false.

Yes, I stand by my statement.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the motion, it calls this a "carbon tax emergency". We know the PBO and the Governor of the Bank of Canada have said that the carbon tax has about a 0.15% impact on inflation. It is about 15¢ on a \$100 bag of groceries. The real emergency is the corporate greed emergency that is happening, the runaway corporate greed, but that is not being dealt with.

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We keep hearing the word “emergency”. We saw the Liberals host a summit on auto theft. That is not an emergency; it is a serious issue. An emergency is the 42,000 people who have died from a toxic overdose. The government still has not convened a meeting with first ministers to deal with that. It is the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 19 and 59 in my home province of British Columbia. It is spreading across the country. There are skyrocketing deaths in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario. However, the government has not even convened a summit on this crisis.

When will the government convene first ministers to deal with the health emergency? We have lost as many people as we did to COVID-19. The government spent less than 1% in response to the toxic drug overdose crisis than it did to COVID-19. When will it do that?

• (1105)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I am always proud to serve with the member for Courtenay—Alberni in the House. We have had many meetings together on harm reduction, on the toxic drug overdose crisis in Canada and on ways to support people who are suffering from addictions.

This morning, we announced that our government will be investing a further \$500 million into youth mental health, which will include addictions supports. This is another occasion where we are faced with a war on evidence. The Conservative Party wants to suggest that safe supply and providing people with the tools necessary to fight their addictions and live another day are causing the overdose crisis and the toxic drug supply, which is false.

I want to commend the member for Courtenay—Alberni for his leadership on this and many other issues. I am always proud to work with him. I would be grateful for an opportunity to sit down to discuss how we can take further action on ending the opioid crisis in Canada.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech from the member for Milton. He said he would give us facts. He did not give us facts. He gave us people's opinions, void of any facts.

I am wondering if the member for Milton knows what the largest contributor to carbon is. Does he know it is the oceans? I am wondering whether the member for Milton knows what the levels of carbon in the air that we breathe are, what their targets are and what they need to be reduced to.

Could the member for Milton provide us with some real facts?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, that member is one of the most vociferous climate change deniers in the House of Commons. He stands up to deny Canadians', humans', impact on climate change.

I read into the record the recommendations and the policy guidelines of people who do this work for a living. They are not their opinions. These are facts that have been uncovered by research and mathematics.

The amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere is approximately 350 parts per million. When it goes a lot higher than that, we have problems. Just like inside a greenhouse, plants consume car-

bon dioxide. That is something that a lot of Conservatives and climate change deniers will say is plant food. No, carbon dioxide is not plant food. It is part of the photosynthetic process.

The rhetoric that the oceans are responsible for more climate change than humans are is absolutely astonishing. It is that type of climate change denial, that type of fact-free rhetoric, that Canadians do not need in this debate.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to an issue that I am sure most Canadians will find the Conservative Party is in want of, which is an actual idea to deal with the price on pollution or the environment. The Conservatives, in fact, are like a fish out of water at times, flopping all over the place. It is hard to actually pin them down. I do not say that lightly.

I would like to convey this for my Conservative friends across the way. Let us look back to 2015, when countries around the world went to Paris. One consensus from the Paris conference was that the climate mattered, that there were initiatives that governments around the world should take to deal with the climate crisis.

Canada was one of those countries to make that decision to bring in a carbon tax, carbon rebate process to support what had come out of the Paris conference. It was meant to be used as a national backstop.

For example, the province of British Columbia and the province of Quebec do not have the carbon tax, carbon rebate policy. We have seen some provinces back away from the program they had in favour of the national price on pollution or the carbon rebate and carbon tax. They did that, at least in good part, because they recognized the value of the national program. However, nothing prevents a province from going on its own and developing what the world is demanding, recognizing that we should be concerned about our environment. The price on pollution is a way to deal with that.

The Conservatives have agreed with that. Let us look at Stephen Harper's policy platform in 2008. Nineteen members of Parliament in the Conservative caucus today supported that. The iconic leader who they have pictures of supported a price on pollution.

Let us fast forward. The last leader the Conservatives, the one the current leader replaced, Erin O'Toole, had a price on pollution as a part of his election platform, and 338 Conservative candidates in the last federal election went around the country with that election platform, making it very clear there should be a price on pollution.

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There was nothing unique about that. Every political party inside this chamber, the Greens, the NDP, the Bloc, the Liberals and, at the time, the Conservatives, campaigned on a price on pollution.

The Conservative Party, with its new shiny leader, talks about axing the tax. The reality is that Conservatives are axing the facts. That is what they are really doing. That is why I challenge the Conservatives, and it is not the first time.

Is there a Conservative member of Parliament who is brave enough or has the courage to have that debate? I would love to have a debate with any Conservative member of Parliament, whether it is at a public school in Ottawa or in Winnipeg. I look forward to one Conservative member of Parliament standing up today and saying that he or she will have that debate. Those members are going to have a tough time getting their leader to agree to have that public debate. They do not want the facts. They do not want people to understand what the Conservative agenda really is on the issue, and that should be of great concern.

When the leader of the Conservative Party says that they want to axe the tax, it is so misleading. The Conservative members of Parliament know that.

• (1110)

The net disposable income of 80% of the residents in Winnipeg North will go down as a direct result of this bumper-sticker policy that the Conservatives are trying to sell Canadians through deception and misinformation, and they do that consistently. We have to wonder where they get this stuff.

An interesting article came out, and I would like to bring the attention of members to it because it is really important for us to recognize, saying that the past week they got an extremely revealing look behind the curtains of the leader of the Conservative Party's baloney factory; that first of all, he was accepting major donations from oil sands executives, which is interesting to hear, who they knew were fighting hard against the rules and regulations to clean up their operations; but second, he was outsourcing his communications strategy to Mash consulting.

Let us understand who Mash consulting is. Often I talk about the leader of the Conservative Party and his links to MAGA conservatism, the far right. Brian Mulroney said how they had amputated the progressive side of the Conservative Party. Kim Campbell is even harsher in her comments compared to Joe Clark, who says that the Conservative Party has left the progressive nature of its political heritage.

Let me read right from it. It states that he is outsourcing his communications strategy to Mash consulting. That is where the Conservatives are going. It is a firm that has close ties to the Premier of Alberta and the Premier of Saskatchewan, but also to companies like Shell and I understand, Canada Proud.

Canadians should be concerned about what they see from today's Conservative Party, which has abandoned any sort of progressive heritage. It is not just me saying this; former Progressive Conservative prime ministers are saying what I am conveying here today.

The Conservative Party reality is far, far right. It is on the extreme. The Conservatives are more concerned about catering to the

People's Party's vote than they are to good, sound public policy. Without any hesitation whatsoever, that is why I have no problem in challenging members of the Conservative Party to go to a public school in Ottawa or Winnipeg. I would love the opportunity to see a person from the media and a classroom full of students, and see how the Conservatives justify their irresponsible policy stand on the issue of a price on pollution. If they were to take me up on it, and I suspect they will not, it would be somewhat of an eye opener.

When the Conservatives say that the polls tell them they are right, they have been very successful in deceiving Canadians when it comes to the whole "axe the tax" campaign. They drop completely the rebate portion that increases the disposable incomes of 80% or more of Canadians and at the same time provides an incentive to decrease the use of fossil fuels. However, the Conservatives have no problem doing that. We saw that today when the leader of the Conservative Party stood and gave all sorts of false information.

I follow immigration very closely. I was the immigration critic and I can say that the Harper years were not good years for immigration, yet he thinks that those were the best years in Canadian history. He was talking about the jobs. In comparison with Stephen Harper's record, we have well over two million new jobs created in eight years compared to just a million jobs in 10 years. It is misinformation. The Conservatives are misleading constantly in social media and in statements in the House.

• (1115)

That is the Conservative Party today, that is the sort of behaviour. I would suggest that the Conservatives are not going to fool Canadians. When the time is here, Canadians will know, and the Conservatives will never be put into a government situation.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to listen to my friend from Manitoba, but if we look at what the business of supply is today, it is the opportunity to let the provinces make their cases about the strategies they have in place to counter excess carbon emissions. An NDP member earlier talked about toxic drug supply and getting the premiers together to speak about that and how significant and how important it was.

I wonder if the member could come back to the actual topic of the day and talk about the significance of having the premiers get together to talk about issues of national importance.

• (1120)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the topic of the day is the price on pollution, the carbon rebate and the carbon tax. I can tell the member opposite that our Prime Minister has had more meetings with the premiers than Stephen Harper ever had. I can guarantee that fact.

Business of Supply

That member is from the province of Alberta. On April 1, Danielle Smith, the Premier of Alberta, increased the gas tax by four cents a litre, which is more than the price on pollution, which was three cents a litre. I am wondering if the Alberta Conservative caucus has told the Premier of Alberta about the damage she is causing to Albertans. I suspect not, because the Conservative Party today is so partisan that it turns a blind eye to anything that comes from the Conservative right to the detriment of Canadians.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to have some clarity on this. The member said that he would challenge any of the 118 Conservatives on the opposite side to a public debate in any forum in front of any audience, either back home or in Ottawa. Does that include the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, to be perfectly clear, if any Conservative member, including the leader of the Conservative Party has the courage to debate and talk about this issue of the carbon tax and the carbon rebate, I would welcome the opportunity in any public school in Ottawa or in Winnipeg. If it were the leader of the Conservative Party and he had the courage to take me up on it, I would extend it to any public school in the country. However, I am sorry to tell members not to hold their breath, because the last thing the Conservatives want is to have an intelligent discussion on an issue that is so vitally important, and that is our environment and the carbon rebate.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a terrible reality when so many Albertans and Canadians across the country are facing the affordability crisis. They cannot afford homes, or gas or food. What we have is as a solution from the Conservative Party to axe the carbon tax. That may sound really good for a lot of Canadians, but the reality is that it is hypocrisy. We have a premier in Alberta who raises the gas tax by four cents and has no rebate. On top of that, we have the Liberals and their carbon tax, which is three cents. The reality of all of this is that gas went up 20¢. The remainder of that, over 11¢, is pure profit for those like “Richie” Rich Kruger, who continue to go off and “burn, baby, burn”, while we talk and debate about the three cents from the Liberals.

We have to get serious in the House. We are in a climate crisis and we are in an affordability crisis, and the solutions of the Conservatives are hypocritical ones.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that I cannot make this stuff up. We actually have Conservative members of Parliament going around the province of Alberta saying that they want to axe the tax. It was going to be a three-cents-a-litre increase on gas on April 1. They were going around the province saying they had to get rid of it. Their own Conservative premier increased it by four cents.

I suspect that we will not find very many news stories or social media hits coming from Conservative members of Parliament criticizing Danielle Smith and the Conservative Government of Alberta for increasing the price of gas by four cents a litre for Albertans. If I am wrong, members can please send me the link to their social media that says, as a member of Parliament, they are upset with the Premier of Alberta.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the interest of equity, diversity and inclusion, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Jonquière.

The Conservatives have evolved. I am pleased to see that when I read their motion. It takes them time, because they do not evolve at the same rate as everyone else. There has, however, been some progress, because nowhere in the motion does it say that there is a first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth or seventh carbon tax. I asked the member for Lévis—Lotbinière how many carbon taxes there were now.

There is nothing in there that says that the carbon tax applies explicitly to Quebec. What they are asking, after a preamble I will address because it is full of insinuations, not necessarily explicit inaccuracies, but insinuations, is that the federal, provincial and territorial governments sit down together. This is progress, because, for the first time, the Conservatives’ discourse includes an attempt at dialogue, and the level of demagoguery has been toned down a notch, although it is still there.

Obviously, the preamble is problematic because they talk about the increase in the carbon tax, suggesting that it might apply to Quebec. It does not apply to Quebec. In the preamble, they talk about the carbon tax crisis and tell us that Canada now ranks 62nd out of 67 countries in terms of reducing greenhouse gases. “Canada” ranks 62nd out of 67 countries; Quebec is doing better.

It is another way of telling Quebecers and Canadians that this is a tax plan and not an environmental plan. It is another way of denying the fact that there is a connection between taxation and the environment. What the Conservatives forgot to say was that we ranked 62nd out of 67 countries, but that the 61 countries ahead of us have a higher carbon tax. I would have liked to see that in the motion’s preamble, because there are a lot of carbon pricing systems. That is pertinent to the other provinces and the territories. It has nothing to do with Quebec. I am just saying that the preamble is mediocre.

Then we get to the body of the motion, where they say that we need to get to the bottom of things, where they say there needs to be a dialogue. Quebec, the nine other provinces, the territories and the Prime Minister should meet, the meeting should be transparent, public and fact-based, and everyone should be there.

If they admit that there could be an amendment to correct the inaccuracies and remove the insinuations from the preamble, and say that there should be a meeting, we cannot really oppose the motion if things are done properly. We did it for immigration targets. We asked that the federal government meet with Quebec and the other provinces. However, there were no lies in our preamble. We asked for a meeting on targets, policies and health transfers, but the facts in the preamble to the motion were true.

Business of Supply

The Conservatives seem to have moved on now, especially those from Quebec. They sounded like fools with all their questions about whether the carbon tax did or did not apply to Quebec. It took a while, but they learned. Education works. We are proud of ourselves and of our message.

The meeting would make it possible to counteract the last lie that the Conservatives are spreading across English Canada. Now that they know that the carbon tax does not apply to Quebec, they are spreading the lie that Quebec is taking advantage of other Canadians. The carbon tax would rise to \$80 per metric tonne of carbon, while we in Quebec would only be paying \$47. As a result, in addition to being a bunch of lazy freeloaders receiving equalization payments, Quebecers would enjoy a free ride in the Canadian federation.

The meeting would enable the Premier of Quebec, if he were to come here to Ottawa, to meet with the other premiers and explain that that is not true. Why? Because in Quebec, we have a cap-and-trade system. We do not regulate the price of pollution, but the amount of pollution. The number of pollution allowances issued was established in advance until 2023, before the Liberal government came to power. It is a bit like the situation with child care centres: Ottawa copies what Quebec does, but perhaps not as well, or with less consensus in society and the other provinces.

In Quebec's system, the price fluctuates. If at some point energy-consuming or polluting industries want to set up shop in Quebec, the price will go up. If we invest in transition technologies, the price will go down. However, we know we are going to meet our targets, because they are integrated into the system.

It has nothing to do with the federal government. Quebec's carbon market is tied to that of California, whose economy is larger than Canada's. If there is someone the California government is not interested in listening to over coffee in the morning, it is the Prime Minister of Canada. They are not interested. California is doing what it is doing because Californians are innovative and forward looking. This system will enable us, by 2030, to reduce our emissions over 1990 levels by 37.5%. It is a system that works.

• (1125)

What is called the Western Climate Initiative is in effect. I did in fact say "Western". We see that this could include Alberta, which already fits in with the system name. Oregon and Washington have decided to join. The doors are open. We could talk about this. Why are the other provinces not joining this system so that they too can benefit? The doors are wide open.

The system was founded in 2007. The board of directors was made up of people from Quebec, California, Washington State and Nova Scotia. I think we know where that is. Nova Scotia could explain to us why it decided to leave this system, through which it could have paid maybe \$47 per metric tonne and focused on innovation and greener growth. That would be a good idea. It was also founded by the governors of Arizona and New Mexico. Arizona and New Mexico are not exactly known for their far-left thinking. Any idea who took part in this system originally? It was Ontario. Ontario decided to voluntarily leave this system, under which it could have participated in a cap-and-trade system with California,

Quebec, Oregon, Washington and other players who will be joining.

Naturally, the Conservatives keep telling us that we in Canada are going it alone and that we alone are introducing carbon pricing, making regulations or imposing a structured policy that centres on innovation. In 2023, the World Bank counted 73 pricing systems in the world, which is five more than in 2022. If the Conservatives had their way, it would be zero, but then again they are also in favour of abolishing the UN. There are 69 more systems than there were 20 years ago. There is a global trend. Some people are progressive and want things to move forward, while other people want us to go backwards.

Why am I pointing out how many systems there are? The Conservatives are entitled to be against this. They can have a group dialogue about this. Some do not believe in climate change and others think that taxes are higher. That can be a discussion. However, the reality is very simple.

Take Europe, for example. The European Union has an emissions trading system. Obviously, Europe has major polluters, just like everywhere else. The current system gives these major polluters free allowances. They can pollute. That includes steel mills, aluminum plants and so on. That is the case in these systems, too. They accommodate major polluters as they transition. The system is not anti-industry. They are given allowances, but those allowances are capped. That leaves fewer allowances for other industries, and countries meet their targets. However, the European system is going to wind down.

Europe is not a small place; it is a huge economy. Europe announced that, in 2035, I believe, there will be compensation at the border. Countries and jurisdictions that decide not to do their part in the fight against climate change will pay at the border. Canadian industries will pay. Industries in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia will pay. Quebec industries will be dinged twice when these compensation systems are implemented—and they will be implemented. If Canada does not do its part, we will pay for those who do. What that means for Quebec is unjust treatment at the hands of provinces that have blinders on when it comes to Quebec.

Guess what? The Conservatives will once again claim that this is far-left nonsense, but I think we can all agree that the WTO is not made up of Marxist-Leninists from the Plateau Mont-Royal. The WTO has confirmed that these border adjustments comply with global trade rules. In 10 to 15 years' time, countries that do not contribute to the fight against climate change will be treated the way countries that profit from child labour are treated today. Canada will not be ready.

For all these reasons, I think the preamble could be removed through an amendment. We should always support dialogue. I think all these people need to have a meeting based on premises that are explicitly and implicitly honest.

• (1130)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate many of the comments that the member from across the way has made.

One of the things we should be highlighting is the fact that countries around the world make reference to the province of Ontario and how Ontario had the cap-and-trade system but ultimately opted out. From a personal perspective I think that was a backwards step, because there are many American states that have taken it upon themselves to actually put a price on pollution. The United States as a whole does not have a price on pollution; I guess that is fair to say. However, many American states do, and I think that is something worth noting. In Canada, provinces also have the option; Quebec and B.C. are good examples.

Could the hon. member just expand upon the importance of other jurisdictions?

• (1135)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, we should not judge too harshly because the process is not linear. There are some provinces that joined the system and others that left it. There are some political vagaries. Now there may be a willingness to discuss these things to reintegrate them into the system. I think we need to be constructive.

However, we have to be careful. The Conservative motion says that the first ministers must convene to discuss alternatives and better policies for fighting climate change. The Liberal government sent the western provinces the message that they should take taxpayer dollars to put it into pipelines and to invest in carbon capture technologies, which will have absolutely no impact in the short term according to scientists. That is part of their solutions. Now that the Liberals have let the genie out of the bottle, they are having a hard time being seen as credible when it comes to alternatives.

I think that if people in this government want to be part of the solution, they also need to refocus their speeches and stop putting taxpayer money into the pockets of the oil companies.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I took the time to listen carefully to my colleague. I see a glimmer of common sense in him because it looks like he will be voting with the Conservatives on this motion.

I want to come back to the carbon exchange. As he pointed out, it costs about \$47 a tonne in Quebec. Unfortunately, the carbon tax in the other provinces is currently over \$80.

In that meeting, what would my colleague's reaction be if the federal Liberal government forced Quebec to increase the price of the carbon exchange so that all Canadians are on the same level, which would put Quebec at a disadvantage with all its experience in the carbon exchange?

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Where to begin, Mr. Speaker? It is as if he asked me what I would think if the federal government wanted to raise the price of IBM shares, if it wanted to lower the price of

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Nvidia shares, or if it wanted to go to the Chicago Board of Trade and dictate the price of nickel. The system does not work that way. There are a number of permits, and people exchange them.

If the member for Lévis-Lotbinière is able to do that, I will have him manage my portfolio, and I will have a darn good retirement.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I appreciate that the member suggests there need to be alternatives for addressing climate change. I know that there is a thing called the output-based pricing system, which is used to protect major emitters from paying full carbon pricing. Depending on the industry and activity, 80% to 90% are actually exempt from carbon pricing.

I wonder whether the member agrees that what we need to discuss in terms of alternatives is to remove such exemptions so the major emitters are actually paying the full price of carbon pricing.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, the nice thing about the permit exchange system is that we are able to meet our targets while still acknowledging the facts. I do. It is a reality. Some big companies produce and pollute, and it is hard for them to find alternative technology in the very short term. Those companies may end up polluting elsewhere. They are given certain exemptions for a period of time, while they find these technologies.

Meanwhile, we will continue to put a cap on overall emissions levels. However, these exemptions need to be removed. That is what the European Union is going to do, and I agree with that. Most permit exchange regimes will replace exemptions with border offsets that will cost Canadian industries dearly.

Yes, exemptions must be phased out at a time when emissions are being reduced.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have been wondering for some time what is behind the Conservatives' fixation on the carbon tax. I am a well-meaning person. I am known for it in my caucus. In fact, the MP for Mirabel constantly says that I am the Mother Teresa of the Bloc Québécois caucus.

I have tried to understand what the Leader of the Opposition is attempting to tell us. I often find him hard to follow. He sometimes makes statements we are not sure we understand. He says he wants to fix the budget. I wonder if he wants to do that with a screwdriver and a hammer. I have trouble following him sometimes. He says the Prime Minister is not worth the cost or the corruption. Is there any corruption that is worth experiencing? I often wonder.

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I have heard the leader of the official opposition remark on numerous occasions that electricians can capture lightning and run it through a wire to light this very room. When I put that end to end, I ask myself whether there is something missing here that would prompt the leader of the official opposition to talk to us about a carbon tax without having a solid grasp of the ins and outs. Back to what I was saying in my introduction: I am a well-intentioned person and I am going to try to unpack this for those listening to us.

I have the key. I have figured out how to decipher the Conservative leader's thinking and to determine his true intentions. To figure this out, it may be best to do what one does with a teenager. When I wanted to understand my son when he was a teen, I looked at what kind of clothes he was wearing. I used clothing psychology. I could see whether he liked such or such a rock band or such or such a trend. He once wore, to my great dismay, a Québec Solidaire shirt. I could figure things out by how my son dressed. Does anyone remember that "I love oil & gas" shirt? For the person wearing it, that was a cry from the heart. When someone uses a shirt to express their love for an economic sector, I mean, that is really something. That is an all-consuming passion. The Conservatives went from "I love oil & gas" to "Axe the Tax". How come? It is because if someone says today that they adore oil and gas at a time of climate change, they may look, well, crazy. That is just my opinion, though, and I am not judging anyone. If, on the other hand, someone says it is not oil and gas that they love, but that they want to defend low-income earners by eliminating a tax, well, that may end up resonating with certain people who do not take the time to unpack what is being said.

What I am hoping to do here in the House is deconstruct the Conservatives' rhetoric. I get the impression that the Leader of the Opposition is not actually defending the purchasing power of families and low-income earners, but rather an ideology that denies climate change and supports the oil and gas sector without reservation. A look at the facts will be the real test.

So let us look at the facts. The direct and indirect impact of the carbon tax on inflation is minimal, if not virtually nil. I have some numbers from the Bank of Canada. Say there is a \$15 increase. The Bank of Canada is telling us that the direct impact on inflation will be 0.15%. This 0.15%, when transposed to \$1,000, means that for every \$1,000 a family spends, \$1.50 is spent on the carbon tax. That \$1.50 applies only to provinces that have a carbon tax. It does not apply to Quebec. I am not the one saying that; it is the Bank of Canada.

Saying that made the Conservatives sound a bit silly. Why would anyone have a nervous breakdown or start printing T-shirts over \$1.50 on every \$1,000? That is a bit ridiculous. There is no justification for what the leader of the official opposition was saying. According to him, people are lining up in front of food banks to ask for medical assistance in dying because the carbon tax increased by \$1.50 on every \$1,000. It seems a little crazy. The Conservatives wanted to talk about indirect impacts. They were clever. The Bank of Canada was unwilling to calculate indirect impacts because it said that they are insignificant, that they amount to almost nothing. Trevor Tombe, an economics professor, did the math. It is funny.

• (1140)

Let us take a closer look at that. He calculated it for Alberta and Ontario, and he came up with some rather surprising figures. That means the indirect impact of the carbon tax would cost about 0.18% in Alberta and 0.20% in Ontario. If we follow that logic, the Conservatives have been shouting for 18 months about 30¢ to 50¢ per \$1,000. Is it worth focusing all opposition days on 30¢ to 50¢ per \$1,000? Is that why low-income earners are having a hard time finding housing, clothing and food? Is that causing out-of-control inflation? I do not know, but unless they can prove that the opposite is true, I will have a hard time believing the Conservatives.

We must always remember that the carbon tax does not apply directly to Quebec. Professor Tombe found the impact so insignificant that he did not want to calculate it for Quebec. He thought 30¢ to 50¢ was too insignificant.

Let us extrapolate by saying that it affects Quebec by about 0.02% or 0.03%. That would mean that, for every \$1,000, the impact of the carbon tax that the Conservatives keep harping on about would cost a family an extra 25¢. This calculation was made by an economics professor who has the support of many of his colleagues. It is not like some members of Parliament who were brandishing a bill with the words "carbon tax" on it and a calculation scribbled on the back by a gas producer.

That inspired me to do something. It occurred to me that it would be very interesting to calculate the economic support given to the oil and gas sector. In the last budget alone, over the next 10 years, nearly \$83 billion will be redirected to the oil and gas sector in tax credits. That is huge. It is appalling. That is not counting the pipeline, which we paid \$34 billion for. I would like to do the math and tell low-income earners how much tax money they have given to the oil and gas sector. I think that, for every \$1,000, we will be a long way from 25¢. It will be much higher.

I said at the outset that I am always well-intentioned. That is true. I am a bit like the Mother Teresa of the Bloc Québécois. I wanted to deconstruct what the Conservatives are saying. Now I want to help them. If they want to work with the premiers, good for them. That is a good idea. We in the Bloc Québécois would be prepared to get on board.

That is why I would be prepared to move an amendment to this motion to have other provinces join the carbon exchange. We can get rid of the carbon tax, and the best way to get rid of it is to propose carbon pricing ourselves. Why not join Quebec? Our arms are open. Like Mother Teresa, we are here to welcome provinces that want to free themselves from the carbon tax while putting a price on the carbon exchange.

I therefore move the following amendment: that the motion be amended by: (a) replacing the words "tax emergency" with the word "pricing"; (b) replacing the words "that this meeting address" with the word "and,"; and (c) deleting paragraphs (a), (b) and (c).

I cannot be more well-intentioned than that.

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• (1145)

The Deputy Speaker: I must inform the hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion can only be proposed with the consent of the mover. In the event that he is not present, the House leader, deputy House leader, whip or deputy whip of the mover's party may give or refuse consent in the mover's place.

[English]

Since the sponsor is not present in the chamber, I am asking the acting whip if he consents to the amendment being moved.

Mr. Len Webber: Mr. Speaker, as Conservatives, we reject the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: There is no consent.

[Translation]

Therefore, in accordance with Standing Order 85, the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing I reflected on as I was listening to the member and his colleague who spoke before him was that the one constituency where the Leader of the Opposition has not been able to gain a lot of traction in terms of his position on a price on pollution is Quebec. I think that is because Quebec has had a price on pollution for many years, understands the importance of it and understands how the mechanics of it work. However, what I cannot understand is how Conservatives, in particular, Conservatives from Quebec, keep talking about this price on pollution and trying to demonize the policy. They must know that Quebecers believe in pricing pollution, whether it be through a carbon tax or through cap and trade.

What does the member think about this? Can he wrap his head around why Quebec Conservative MPs keep going on about this, even though they know that Quebecers, by and large, do not support what they are saying?

• (1150)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I think what is funniest in the question raised by my colleague is the reaction by the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, who brandished a sheet of paper to criticize the Quebec carbon exchange when she herself was in government when this exchange was implemented. Basically, one could say that she acts one way in Quebec City, and another way in Ottawa. That is precisely why the Conservative Party is not doing better in Quebec, because they often talk out of both sides of their mouth.

I would cite the example Quebec's state secularism act. We never heard the leader of the official opposition say he would respect Quebec's choice. That is not good for him. The same applies to Bill 96, which places French above all other languages in Quebec. We heard the leader of the official opposition say he would challenge that. I have never heard the leader of the official opposition say he agreed with special status for Quebec. Maybe that explains why the Conservative Party is so slow to catch on in Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the principal reasons we oppose this is that the cost of this has a ripple-down impact. For the Town of Shaunavon back home, for example, with the carbon tax increase, it is going to cost the town \$78,000. In order for the municipality to cover that off, it would have to raise taxes on ratepayers by at least 8% or 9%. There it is, another example of how the carbon tax continues to pile onto ratepayers more than just at the pumps, which is where the Bloc seems to think it only applies.

I want to know what the member thinks about that.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, economists tell us these indirect costs are minimal.

Nevertheless, on the subject of indirect costs, we could talk about Alberta's oil royalties. These costs far outstrip those associated with the carbon tax. Why do I never hear my colleagues talk to us about that?

We could also talk about the indecent amount of public money funnelled to oil companies, money that could help us provide support for our cities and programming that would be far more beneficial for the population than having us simply give money to an economic sector that is making record profits. We could talk about the major oil companies' refining margins going up—these gluttonous companies that are making record profits.

We could talk about all that, but unfortunately the Conservatives' all-consuming passion for the oil industry prevents them from thinking in these terms.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member for Jonquière.

I think that the Conservative motion gives us a good opportunity to explain to Canadians what is really happening with the climate crisis. The reality is that, when a provincial Conservative premier testified in committee, he gave the government good arguments in favour of the carbon tax. In fact, the testimony the Conservative premiers gave as to why they are against carbon pricing did not make any sense.

Perhaps it would be a good idea to invite those who are opposed to policies that work to come and explain why they are in favour of doing nothing.

• (1155)

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, the reasons why the Conservatives do not want to take action on climate change are very simple. The only reason is the oil industry.

Privilege

Unfortunately, what will that accomplish in the long term? Since everyone is putting a price on carbon, Quebec's competitiveness in its trade with Europe and the United States will be affected because the Conservatives and the Liberals have decided that the economic sector they are going to focus on is the Canadian oil and gas industry.

The only solution for us is independence.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ADVANCE DISCLOSURE OF BUDGET MEASURES

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for the past few weeks, the federal government has been parading all over Canada, announcing programs of all kinds and budgetary envelopes in advance, disclosing bits and pieces of the budgetary measures that will be part of the budget to be tabled on April 16.

On a number of occasions, nearly four weeks before the tabling of the budget, the media reported figures shared by cabinet members and the Prime Minister, meaning that some of the financial initiatives that will be included in the finance minister's budget were known in advance. It is disconcerting that the government would violate the principle of secrecy as it relates to fiscal matters, a principle that should be upheld by any responsible and trustworthy government.

Despite this parliamentary tradition and what, in our opinion, the principles of good governance call for, the federal government is prematurely disclosing budget items that are part of a budget plan, a projection for the coming years. These announcements, taken out of context, are preventing the opposition from doing its job properly. Members are learning in dribs and drabs, in isolation, what the next Liberal budget will consist of.

Starting on March 25, ministers began announcing budgetary measures for housing, for the national child care network, for the national pharmacare program regarding oral contraceptives and certain diabetes medications, for the new national school meals program, for the development of artificial intelligence, for strengthening national defence and for mental health.

In short, over the two-week parliamentary recess, a whole bunch of pre-budget announcements were made, a pre-election striptease of sorts, according to an April 3 article in *La Presse*.

According to Bosc and Gagnon's *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, budget secrecy is a long-standing parliamentary tradition, and straying from this principle can have a negative impact on business or on the stock market, potentially causing irrevocable harm to some individuals or institutions and unduly benefiting others.

Members will recall that, before the content of the budget that the Minister of Finance intends to table is made public, finance officials usually hold an in camera information session for members and journalists, to preserve the necessary secrecy and to allow members to read the government's budget measures so that they can then debate them with full knowledge of the facts.

The principle of secrecy in relation to fiscal matters is a fundamental principle commonly recognized in a parliamentary democracy and one that should undoubtedly be a matter of consensus in the government and among cabinet members. It is disconcerting that the government itself prematurely disclosed significant budget items without assessing the potential impact of that decision.

There was actually a time in 1989 when, to protect this parliamentary principle, then Prime Minister Mulroney had a journalist criminally charged with stealing confidential information and disclosing it before the budget was tabled. The finance minister at the time, Michael Wilson, decided to present his budget early in order to safeguard the principle of budget secrecy.

What is most worrying is that the Liberal government went ahead with this, ignoring the tradition of a parliamentary practice designed to prevent insider trading and allow parliamentarians to read the budget ahead of time, the better to comment on it.

By announcing its budget to the media in bits and pieces, the federal government is being irresponsible toward all members and particularly toward the opposition parties, which are responsible for keeping an eye on the government's policies.

To disclose certain measures that the government believes will be popular, without allowing parliamentarians and Canadians an opportunity to see the government's entire budget policy, is a ploy that significantly affects the opposition parties' ability to take an informed position and hold the government to account with full knowledge of the facts.

Consequently, we believe that the members of the opposition parties have been obstructed in fulfilling their parliamentary duties, given that they were unable to take an informed position based on all the necessary budget information or to properly inform voters about the budget measures that were announced and their impact or repercussions.

● (1200)

These budget announcements could give financial advantages to certain experts in the field, which could be considered insider trading. That is a fundamental issue for the Speaker's office to address. In addition, it is important to ensure that the premature disclosure of budget measures does not violate the privilege of members of Parliament, who have been impeded in the performance of their duties, leaving them unable to represent and defend the interests of their constituents with full knowledge of the facts.

It will also be important to check whether the premature disclosure had the effect of misleading the public about the budget and, by the same token, members of Parliament. According to Bosc and Gagnon, at page 116, misleading a member or members can be considered a form of obstruction that could hinder the business of the House.

That is why, if the Chair finds that there is a prima facie breach of parliamentary privilege, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for raising this matter. We will take a close look.

The hon. whip for the New Democratic Party.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest that the New Democratic Party may come back with some comments on this in the future.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my comment is similar to the one made by my NDP colleague; if you would allow us the opportunity to do the same, it would be appreciated.

[Translation]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague from the Bloc Québécois for this motion and this explanation. The Green Party will also want to submit its point of view at a later time.

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[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX EMERGENCY MEETING

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Victoria.

It is always an honour to rise in the House to speak, but I am deeply ashamed at the ignorance and failure of the Parliament of Canada and Canada's politicians from the provincial level up to deal with the greatest crisis we, as a civilization and people, have ever faced. I say that because wildfire season is officially under way in British Columbia. It began in Alberta in February, when northern Alberta was bringing back its firefighting crews. In northern Ontario, our firefighting crews are getting ready.

I am 61 years old. Some people might say I never grew up, and that is fair, but one thing in all my 61 years is that I always felt so much excitement every single spring because I thought of summer. This year when I talk with people about summer, they talk about fire season. This is the planet we are giving to our children. As a 61-year-old white guy with grey hair, I expect young people to look at us and ask what we did when the crisis came.

We know that the Conservatives ridiculed, laughed and snorted every time we talked about the climate crisis. However, climate crisis deniers are not just the ones who troll about it and ridicule and try to deny the science. We see other forms of climate denial, such as thinking that if one puts out enough press releases, somehow the planet will get better, or that big oil will continue to be allowed to destroy the planet but that somehow if we just keep giving it money it will somehow find a way to make increasing fossil fuel production net-zero, and we will all be better off.

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We note that the Liberal government underspent by \$15 billion on climate commitments. In the face of a climate catastrophe, the press releases went out. The money was promised but it was not spent. I mention this because, in order to bring a bit of reality to the conversation today, I want to bring a few facts about what is happening in the outside world.

This past month, Antarctica posted the single-biggest increase that has ever been recorded on the planet, a 38.5°C jump. A glaciologist, Professor Martin Siegert, stated that no one ever thought anything like this could ever happen: "It is extraordinary and a real concern. We are now having to wrestle with something that is completely unprecedented." Another scientist has called it "simply mind-boggling". Furthermore, what we are seeing in the Atlantic over just the last 14 months are the highest temperatures ever recorded.

Of course people in the climate denial world will say that it is going to be life as normal; it will just be a little hotter and it will just be a little different. It is the problem of Lucretius, which is that nobody can anticipate a problem bigger than what they have seen in their lifetime, so we have no capacity to recognize the damage and the ongoing planetary breakdown that is happening. In 2023, there was the loss of global tree cover in the areas outside of the tropics like Brazil, where the trees are being hacked down. The fact is that Canada was responsible for the largest tree cover loss recorded, with a 24% loss in a single year. That is from our burning forests.

I would think that the Conservatives would have thought it would be great to bring all our parliamentarians and provincial leaders together to talk about solutions to the crisis, but that is not what they care about. This is about a "gotcha" moment. There are a couple of things in the Conservative motion I am kind of interested in, but some of it I just find ridiculous. If this were going to be about "the ongoing carbon tax crisis and the financial burden it places on Canadians", that would show leadership. It would show vision. It would show we are being adults and we care about our kids, but no, Conservatives do not want to talk about that. They are going to let our kids burn.

Then it is being said that we are going to bring our premiers in to talk about options of opting out of the carbon tax. Are we going to do that with the Doug Ford grifter government? Ontario was not paying the carbon tax until Doug Ford said, "Hey, you know what? We're going to get rid of cap and trade and then make every ordinary Ontarian pay a carbon tax." Then he then turned around and asked, "Whoa, how come we have this carbon tax?" He said it was because of the bad Liberal government.

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• (1205)

Do we seriously think that we are going to let a grifter such as Doug Ford come in and talk about how to deal with the climate crisis? This is a guy who, as soon as he was elected, went and ripped up all the EV charging stations and then realized, “Oh my God, Ontario wants to be an automotive superpower with EV. Someone is going to have to build those EV charging stations.”

Are we going to invite Danielle Smith, the conspiracy queen-in-chief? Alberta had a carbon tax. It was a made-in-Alberta solution. The NDP Alberta solution made a lot more sense than the Liberal solution ever did, because it was about taking money from pollution and reinvesting in business and in alternatives. The Notley government said that they needed to reduce emissions in Alberta. They wanted to get it down by, I think, 30 million tonnes by 2030, and the money from pollution was going to be reinvested. Even some of those big oil companies got backhanders on that if they were willing to commit to clean energy and alternatives. However, Danielle Smith came and ripped all that up, and then she kicked out \$66 billion in clean energy projects strictly for ideology. There is no place on the planet where we can get more clean energy projects off the ground at the drop of a hat than in Alberta, but she did not want any of that. What do we have in Alberta now? Alberta has rolling blackouts in April. This is Canada's energy superpower, and she cannot even keep the power on. This is a failed-state approach.

The other thing is that Alberta is suffering a severe drought from the climate catastrophe, but we have not seen a single Conservative from Saskatchewan or Alberta get up and talk about how they are actually burning the province. Now they are saying that maybe they will get themselves this Athabasca pipeline to take water out of the already suffering, damaged Athabasca water system; however, that is not going to be shipped down to southern Alberta, because it is needed by big oil.

The issue here, and this is my problem with the Liberal carbon levy, is that the carbon tax was always a market solution. Therefore, we did not actually penalize the people who were burning our planet and knew they were doing it. I cannot go back and explain to working-class Joe back home that “Hey, you pay the money, then you get more back.” He will ask, “So, what does it do?” That is a good question. I will agree with the Conservatives on their motion that Canada is now 62nd out of 67 countries on the climate change performance index, but what they do not say is that the reason Canada is at the back of the pack is that we have never targeted those who are causing the emission increases.

The oil and gas sector never had any intention of lowering emissions; it never even tried. The intensity of creating oil in Canada today is higher than it was in 1990. When those in the sector talk about carbon capture and want us to give them billions for that, it is not to take it out of the atmosphere but so they can pump out more oil; it is about more fossil fuels. Alberta is responsible for close to 40% of Canada's emissions. Where does that come from? Is the average Albertan any more wasteful than the average Canadian anywhere else? No, it is coming out of one sector; that sector has not been doing its job, and now our planet is on fire. However, we do not see any willingness from the Liberals to actually take this on,

and the Conservatives will take on anything except the fact that our planet is on fire and that we are at peak carbon.

The fact is that the emissions that are now being registered coming out of the oil sands are 6,000 times higher than registered. I come from mining country; if a mine was pumping emissions into the local river that were 6,000 times higher than allowed, there would be charges and arrests. If we were sold a product that had 6,000 times more risk to human health, something would be done. However, in Alberta, they have the Alberta Energy Regulator, which is basically an extension of Richie Rich Kruger and probably has an office down the hall.

Why am I going at them so hard? It is because they knew all along. They knew in the late 1950s of the simple science that increased carbon will create a situation where we will get greenhouse gas emissions.

• (1210)

The American Petroleum Institute did a study in 1982 that plotted out the timelines of what was going to be a slow-moving disaster. The study said that significant temperature changes were certain to occur by the year 2000, and this would lead to the eventual collapse of the Antarctic ice shelf—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sure the hon. member will be able to add to his remarks during questions and comments.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member's comments just exemplify how out of touch both the NDP and the Liberals are with Canadians. People are struggling in our communities. I went door to door on the weekend in an area that I did not do that well in during the last election. The comment I was hearing from people is that they are ready to axe the tax. The tax is not having any impact except for taking money to pay for Canadians' needs out of their pocketbooks.

Does the hon. member recognize that what the NDP, Liberals and Bloc are supporting is a tax plan and not a climate plan?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, can I just get a clarification? The member knocked on people's doors in British Columbia? The member was part of a government that brought in a provincial carbon tax. The member will not tell the truth when he is talking to people. He is going to axe the facts.

People in B.C. are not paying a federal carbon tax. How dumb does he think his constituents are? How dumb does he think people are if he goes door to door with such blatant misinformation? This is a guy who brought in a carbon tax, who is blaming a government for a carbon tax that British Columbians are not paying.

By the way, while B.C. burns, this is what we have to deal with in the climate-denying world of the Conservatives.

• (1215)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a new champion of carbon pricing just recently emerged. It is none other than Danielle Smith, the Premier of Alberta, in a video from 2021 that recently resurfaced.

She said, “I do my family's taxes, so I know we got \$808.50.... When I go back and look at what I spent...in carbon taxes, because I was working from home, I wasn't commuting, my gas bills were way down, and even the amount...that I paid on my home heating, because we're principally natural gas where I live, I would say that I probably ended up better off with that transfer. I think a lot of people would be of the view that, if you're going to implement some kind of carbon or revenue-neutral carbon pricing, that is probably not a bad way of doing it.”

Those are not my words. Those are Danielle Smith's words from 2021.

Can the member for Timmins—James Bay explain to the House why he thinks Danielle Smith has done a complete about-face on this issue?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I just want to say I would be careful in believing anything Danielle Smith said. They want to bring her to have a premiers' conference. This is the woman who said cigarette smoking was good for people. No wonder she thinks burning the planet is good for us too, while Alberta dies in drought and she cannot keep the power on.

Would we have Danielle Smith, the conspiracy queen of North America, come and talk about carbon and the carbon crisis? My God, it is bad enough for my poor friends in Alberta. They cannot even keep the lights on in the energy superpower province, because she has chased out all the clean energy. She believes in smoking. I cannot even keep track of where Danielle Smith goes on a given day with the conspiracy claims she makes.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands with a brief question.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is hard to be brief when the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is a voice of conscience in this place. He is the only person in days, weeks, maybe months, besides perhaps myself and the hon. member for Victoria, who speaks to the fact that the climate crisis threatens the future of our children, our grandchildren and civilization itself. It is in our hands to make a difference early.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is right. The government underspent by \$15 billion on climate action and overspent by an obscene \$34 billion to build the Trans Mountain pipeline that we do not want.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, we gave \$31 billion to big oil, so companies could take unrefined bitumen; they would not even bother to process it in Canada. It is the dirtiest product on the planet, and we are going to have the taxpayers pay to ship it. Meanwhile, the Conservatives cheer it on and the Liberals say it is going to be good because they will somehow lower our emissions. We

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cannot continue to burn fossil fuels without killing the future of our children. Those are the facts.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, the leader of the Conservatives just said that Canada does not have an industrial carbon price. He is either ignorant about carbon tax policy or intentionally misleading the public. He should know that Canada's industrial carbon pricing system exists. The federal carbon pricing benchmark exists, and it is critically important because it sets expectations for how provincial and territorial governments are covering fuels and large emitters, as well as how these programs must be designed to meet federal minimum standards. Therefore, the leader of the Conservatives is intentionally misleading Canadians or does not understand the policy that he wants to run an election on.

If he did even the quickest Google search, he would see the recent report entitled “Industrial carbon pricing the top driver of emissions reductions”; the Globe and Mail article, “Industrial carbon price more effective to reduce greenhouse gases than consumer policy”; or the CBC report, “Industrial carbon pricing has three times the impact on emissions as consumer carbon tax”.

If the Leader of the Opposition had done his research, he would know that the federal minimum standard for industrial carbon pricing policy is one of the most critical climate policies in Canada. It has been one of the policies that has reduced emissions the most in Canada, and it actually needs to be strengthened. We could close the loopholes and make an even more robust policy. The Leader of the Opposition not only refused to answer whether he would scrap it; he said that it does not exist. The industrial carbon price exists. Climate change exists.

Fighting the climate crisis is not optional. Canadians are still reeling from the impacts of last year's record-breaking wildfire season; the record-breaking heat dome; and the atmospheric rivers that washed away whole communities, roads, homes and farms. British Columbians are still experiencing a multi-year drought with extreme flooding at the same time. We are bracing for another record-breaking wildfire season. If they care about people, families, communities, workers, farmers, the land, the air, the water, our food and our homes, and if they care about what Canadians hold most dear, fighting the climate crisis is not optional. We will only get it done if we bring people together and if we unite people instead of dividing them.

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Unfortunately, the leader of the Conservatives seems to think it is optional. He has no climate plan. He wants to ignore the climate crisis. I should note that, unlike many of his Conservative MPs, who voted against a resolution acknowledging that climate change is real in 2021, the Leader of the Opposition has acknowledged the existence of climate change; he just opposes any solutions that would address it. He collects huge donations from oil and gas CEOs and then becomes their puppet, their cheerleader and their champion. Conservatives have absolutely no climate plan, and they cannot even agree that the climate crisis is real.

However, while the Leader of the Opposition wants to ignore the climate crisis, the Prime Minister wants to use it to divide Canadians. He does not see fighting the climate crisis as an opportunity to unite people to take on this existential crisis. Instead, he uses it as a political wedge. He tried to buy votes with exemptions for Atlantic Canadians. He treated carbon pricing as the be-all and end-all of climate policy, so that when the Liberals bought a pipeline, missed targets and broke climate policies, they could present it as proof of their climate credibility. However, at the same time, the Liberals undermine their own policy, giving exemptions to the biggest polluters.

Suncor gets to pay 14 times less for its pollution. The Liberals designed a carbon pricing system where the carbon price for every-day Canadians is 14 times higher compared with the carbon price for Suncor. It is not surprising when we remember that the Liberals continue to hand out billions of dollars in fossil fuel subsidies to oil and gas CEOs, who are making record profits. These are the same companies whose corporate greed has driven up costs and that are gouging Canadians as they struggle to make ends meet.

• (1220)

While Canadians are struggling, corporate profits are at an all-time high, and rich CEOs are making more money than ever. The Liberals keep giving these CEOs more and more public money, sometimes under the guise of helping them clean up the environmental mess they have made.

The Conservatives are even cozier with CEOs. Last year, dozens of oil and gas CEOs flocked to the Leader of the Opposition's fundraisers. At one of these events in Banff, the co-founder of Pathways Alliance, along with current and former oil sands CEOs, who have a long documented history of climate policy obstruction, donated thousands of dollars to the leader of the Conservative Party. These CEOs did this while they were raking in record profits, while they campaigning across the country with misleading advertising to greenwash the oil sands and while continuing to increase their emissions.

It seems like the corporate-controlled Conservatives are once again listening to their CEO masters, I mean donors, and intend to scrap the industrial carbon tax to let big polluters pollute for free. The Conservatives are letting the CEOs, the donors, off the hook and leaving Canadians to deal with the devastating impacts of the climate crisis, with the excruciating impacts of corporate greed are gouging Canadians, who are struggling, and burning the planet.

This motion talks about the idea of the Prime Minister bringing together premiers and provinces in the spirit of collaboration to discuss carbon pricing, and doing this to talk about critical issues, like

climate policy and the cost of living crisis. This would be worthy of support.

The language of the motion is misleading. I have a good faith amendment that will hopefully be considered by the official opposition. I heard the Bloc amendment, which I thought was similarly a good faith amendment. I was disappointed to see the Conservatives unable to accept a good faith effort to bring the provinces into a discussion about the climate crisis, about the cost of living crisis. If the Conservatives want to actually have this conversation, if they are genuine in their desire for the provinces and the federal government to come together to talk about the issues facing Canadians, then I hope they will consider our motion.

I move that the motion be amended by replacing paragraph (a) with the following: (a) the industrial and consumer carbon tax and the ongoing cost of living crisis felt by all Canadians; and replacing paragraph (b) with the following: (b) the April 1 carbon tax increase.

• (1225)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. If the sponsor is not present, the House leader, the deputy House leader, the whip or the deputy whip of the sponsor's party may give or refuse consent on the sponsor's behalf.

[English]

Since the sponsor is not present in the chamber, I ask the deputy whip if he consents to this amendment being moved.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, the answer is no.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no consent. Pursuant to Standing Order 85, the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, the best way to encourage consumers to reduce carbon emissions is to give them alternatives, such as the SkyTrain in metro Vancouver, which I do not have to tell my colleague from British Columbia runs on clean, British Columbia-produced hydro-electricity.

The best way is not to have an ever-increasing tax regime that makes life so much more difficult for people, for example people who drive in rural British Columbia, who do not have an alternative to driving.

Would the member agree that the best way to reduce carbon emissions is simply to give Canadians good alternatives?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, Canadians absolutely deserve affordable, low-carbon alternatives. It is unfortunate that the Conservative Party refuses to actually propose credible climate policy that would provide Canadians with those affordable, low-carbon alternatives. It is mind-boggling that the Leader of the Opposition continues to go out campaigning to scrap a policy without presenting how he would fill the emissions reduction gap, make life more affordable for Canadians and make a more climate-safe future for people now and future generations.

• (1230)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, obviously, the Bloc Québécois is not against federal-provincial discussions to establish policies that meet everyone's needs. However, the motion before us today calls for the meeting to establish "plans for provinces to opt-out of the federal carbon tax to pursue other responsible ideas to lower emissions". Such plans already exist. The federal carbon pricing system contains an opt-out provision that is available to all provinces.

Since all provinces may opt out from carbon pricing as long as they work to protect the environment, does my esteemed colleague not think that it would be far more useful to hold a federal-provincial meeting to discuss issues that the provinces would like to be able to opt out of, such as housing and health?

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, it is lovely to hear people combatting the misinformation that comes out of the Conservative Party.

We know that provinces have the option to present an alternative system, and provinces have done that. We see that in Quebec. We see that in British Columbia. We see these provinces also reducing their emissions and having incredible plans when it comes to electric vehicles, hydroelectricity and renewable energy. Unfortunately, the Conservatives continue to mislead Canadians with this rhetoric that we hear from them not only every day in the House but also when they go to rallies across the country.

I would love to see emergency debates on the critical issues that are facing Canadians, including not only the climate crisis, but also housing, the toxic drug supply and the cost of living crisis. We need to bring provinces and the federal government together to talk about these issues. It is unfortunate that the Conservatives have done this in such a way.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I found the member's exchange with my Conservative colleague to be very interesting because he was basically saying to just give more options. It reminds me of the Premier of Saskatchewan, when he came before committee on March 27. The Canadian Press summed it up perfectly when it wrote, "Big polluters shouldn't be punished financially—they should just emit less."

It is as though there are no incentives required. We just need tell them to do it, and I am sure they will do it. Does that sound like a

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plan to this member, when Conservatives get up to say that they just need more options, that companies should just emit less?

Does that sound like something, to this member, that is going to resonate and actually impact our marketplace?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, we absolutely need a strong industrial carbon price, and we need strong regulations to make sure that these big polluters cannot pollute for free. The Conservatives are clearly unwilling to stand up to their corporate donors.

That said, the Liberals also have been giving out billions of dollars to the same companies. They have watered down key climate policies, such as the industrial carbon price, the emissions cap, clean fuel regulations and clean electricity regulations. We need strong climate policy to hold these corporations to account.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake.

It is a pleasure to stand here on behalf of the constituents of Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

That was an interesting exchange we just heard when the NDP member took issue with many of the things the Liberals are doing that are destroying the economy of our country right now. However, at the same time, when she and her colleagues have a chance to vote against the Liberal government and go into an election to change the government, they side with it every single time.

I just had the opportunity to come back from my constituency, where, like many colleagues, I was meeting with constituents. I had 6 two-hour constituent round tables last week. I had a chance to interact with dozens of constituents at these round tables, and a lot of issues were raised. Interestingly, the number one issue was not the carbon tax at those round tables. Time and again, in Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, what was articulated at those round tables by constituents was how we can get rid of the Liberal Prime Minister before he destroys the economy of Canada.

I will just mention a few of the other issues that were raised. The carbon tax was definitely the main policy issue raised, as well as housing, runaway deficits, safety in our streets, immigration and the recent challenges with the immigration system. Of course, health care is always raised, especially at a time when it is clear that we are going to spend more on interest on the debt the Liberal government has rang up than we will spend on health care in this country over the next few years, so there are a lot of issues to talk about.

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I think it is helpful, in the context of what we are talking about today, to revisit the legacy of economic chaos that is in the DNA of the Liberal Party, and that is the Trudeau legacy. It is very important to revisit the Trudeau legacy of the 1970s and 1980s. It was a Liberal government that ran up 14 deficits in 15 years, and there were results of that time. Of course, that was a time of drastic economic experimentation by, at the time, the most left-leaning prime minister we had ever had. Obviously, that has definitely been beaten by the current government, but at that time, it was the most left-leaning government we had ever had. It undertook an economic experiment, and we saw crises, including an energy crisis, an inflation crisis, a housing crisis and a national unity crisis, that stretched right to the end of that government in 1984 and, interestingly, way beyond the time it was in power.

Of course, the nine years following that government was the Mulroney government. I remember when some of the Liberal members were new and would come into the House in 2015 and 2016 to talk about the biggest deficits in Canadian history being under the Mulroney government, but what they did not mention at that time was that those deficits were made up entirely of interest on Trudeau's debt. The deficits it ran were largely in balance, in fact, probably a bit in surplus, but the interest payments on the Trudeau debt caused us to run deficits for many years after that. That bill came due in about the mid-nineties, from 1995 to 1997, when we were under the Liberal Chrétien-Martin government. Some of these members served under that government. When the bill came due, we saw absolutely dramatic cuts, some of the most significant cuts we have ever seen, to health care and social services spending in this country.

That is interesting because Liberal members often stand up to ask what Conservatives are going to cut when we talk about bringing some sanity to our fiscal situation in this country, but what really made significant cuts to spending on things that are important to Canadians was that Liberal government, which in two years, from 1995 to 1997, cut 32% from health care and social services transfers in this country. Can members imagine a government in 2024 having to cut 32% from health care and social services funding? That is what happened from 1995 to 1997 because of the absolutely tragic economic legacy of a Trudeau government.

• (1235)

Here we are again. We are now eight years into this government. It has been eight deficits in eight years for the current government. I assume we will have a ninth coming up soon, so it will be nine deficits in nine years. That is 23 deficits in 24 years under the economic policies of the current Prime Minister and the Prime Minister Trudeau of the seventies and eighties.

Under the current Liberal government, backed up by the NDP, we have doubled our country's debt. Taking a look at the things that could help that, and thinking about the conversation we are having today, what might help us in terms of our economic situation right now and the chaos we are seeing economically and otherwise is, perhaps, revenues from oil and gas. That might actually help.

I took a look at the oil and gas import numbers for 2022, the most recent numbers we have to date, and they would be astonishing to Canadians who assume we have a lot of oil and gas produc-

tion in Canada. Obviously, we are one of the world leaders in terms of our vast resources and the potential that comes with our oil and gas resources, but what a lot of people do not realize is that Canada, every year, imports oil and gas, because the policies of the current Liberal government have made it impossible to build a pipeline in this country. Instead, mostly to eastern Canada, we are importing oil and gas.

In 2022 we imported \$21.5 billion in crude oil alone. That was up 46% from 2021. Of course, the Americans are the number one supplier of oil and gas products like crude oil to Canada. The number two and three countries are Saudi Arabia and Nigeria, totalling over \$5 billion in crude oil alone coming into Canada. On refined petroleum products, we are talking about even more: \$26.1 billion in 2022 alone, which was up 55% from 2021. We were importing about \$47 billion between the two of those in 2022, and that is product that could absolutely have been sourced here in Canada.

The reason that situation exists is that we hold Canadian producers, hard-working producers and workers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador and across the country, to a higher standard than we hold producers in Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. We do not ask producers in Nigeria and Saudi Arabia to account for upstream emissions, for the impact on the environment or for the impact on the social fabric of their countries.

It was interesting that about a year ago we had the minister before committee and I had a chance to ask him about this. His response was that, of course, Canada has no ability to hold those countries to account. Their own domestic governments control those types of things, and Canada cannot walk in and hold them to account, but we definitely hold Canadian producers to account for that. The one thing we can do is refuse to take oil and gas from countries that do not meet the Canadian standard, the same standard we apply to Canadian producers.

This is the world the Prime Minister has created in eight years. If we go back eight years and take a look at the situation that existed eight years ago, and our leader summed it up very well this morning when he spoke, it was a world where we had a balanced budget. In 2015, we had worked hard, coming out of the economic slowdown, and The New York Times spoke of Canada having the richest middle class in the world, having just overtaken the Americans after decades. It was a situation where we did not have the housing crisis we have right now.

I look forward to speaking some more about these things when we take questions from the other parties.

• (1240)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member made reference to Pierre Elliott Trudeau, whom many Canadians have respected as one of Canada's greatest prime ministers for a lot of his efforts and the things he brought in, like Canada's Charter of Rights and the repatriation of the Constitution, at the very least. I think the member undervalues that. It is interesting that he wanted to highlight the past, although he has often criticized me for bringing back some of the disasters of the Stephen Harper era.

Maybe he can justify how it is that Stephen Harper had a mega, multi-billion dollar surplus handed to him, which he converted into a multi-billion dollar deficit. That was before the recession took place. How does he justify that Stephen Harper's government did not balance the budget? Even during the last year of Stephen Harper's government, he had to sell off shares of GM at a huge discount to try to give the impression that he balanced the books.

• (1245)

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, that question is quite laughable. First of all, there was a lot of disinformation in that question. However, I think the point to be made is that we faced an economic crisis. His party's reaction, by the way, at the time, was to form a coalition with the Bloc and NDP to try and take down the government right after an election. That was the response of the Liberals.

Of course, anyone who was in the House would remember that our government could not spend enough to satisfy the Liberals. Every single question at the time was about why we were not spending more. The biggest difference from then until now is that we immediately laid out a plan to get back to balance by 2015. We followed that plan absolutely, to a T.

The member's government inherited the incredible fiscal situation we had in Canada at that time.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague from Alberta deeply shares the love of our province, like many do at home. The reality is that they are stuck between the question of whether the carbon tax is truly hurting their bottom dollar, while also trying to find ways to feed their families.

We can see a kind of hypocrisy in place, particularly with respect to the Conservatives' policy on the carbon tax, which increased on April 1 by three cents at the same time that Danielle Smith, the Conservative Premier of Alberta, increased the gas tax by four cents. That kind of hypocrisy is, I think, something that Canadians are reeling from. It is something they cannot get a path forward on.

I also want to comment on the fact that we have even seen in Alberta the reason Harper had such surpluses in his budget. It was that he weakened oil, for example. The purchase or takeover of Nexen by China was given the green light by the Conservatives at that time in order to balance their budget. They, of course, wanted to tell the Canadian public that they were balancing it, but today we are paying the penalty for that.

It is hard to believe the Conservatives are genuinely addressing the problem of affordability because, I think, it is in a way that

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Canadians cannot understand. The carbon tax is three cents. That is the Prime Minister's fault, but the leader of the Conservative Party in Alberta increased it by four cents. How does he justify that?

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I do not know what is going on today. It might be an effect of the eclipse yesterday or whatever, but I wonder if the hon. member knows that we are in the Canadian House of Commons here, talking about what the federal government is doing. We are both members of opposition parties, but only one of us is actually taking our role seriously to oppose the government. The member votes for the government every single time he has an opportunity.

I will hearken back to the days of Stephen Harper and take a look at this New York Times article, which states that “middle-class incomes in Canada—substantially behind in 2000—now appear to be higher than in the United States.” That is from 2014. The article talks about an income survey. It reads, “But other income surveys conducted by government agencies suggest that since 2010”, which was the time of the global economic meltdown, “pay in Canada has risen faster than pay in the United States and is now most likely higher.” That was in 2014. We are in a completely different circumstance now because of the member's party supporting the government.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, today Conservatives are asking the House to declare that the Prime Minister convene a carbon tax emergency meeting with all first ministers. This meeting must address the ongoing carbon tax crisis and the financial burden it places on Canadians, the Prime Minister's recent 23% carbon tax increase, and plans for provinces to opt out of the federal carbon tax to pursue other responsible ideas to lower emissions, given that under the government's current environmental plan, Canada now ranks 62 out of 67 countries on the climate change performance index. The motion also asks that this meeting be publicly televised and held within five weeks of the motion being adopted.

The Prime Minister just does not understand that if we tax the farmer who grows the food and the trucker who then ships it, we end up taxing the family that purchases it. Then we put the burden on Canadian citizens, and that is exactly what the government continues to do. That is why 70% of Canadians and 70% of provincial premiers oppose the carbon tax increase. Three premiers even warned Liberals in Ottawa personally that the latest carbon tax increase will push Canadians over the edge. I will let my good friend from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame highlight what it means for the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, who was the Prime Minister's campaign chair when he ran for leader, to call for this emergency meeting with all premiers.

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Premier Andrew Furey must be worried. I am told things are so bad for the Liberals in Newfoundland and Labrador that in a recent by-election, with another under way as we speak, the Liberal provincial candidates are not even calling themselves Liberals anymore on their own lawn signs. That is a rarity in the country, especially for Newfoundland, and they are not even using the colour red, which the Liberals have owned since the Lester Pearson era in the 1960s, after the red maple leaf flag was adopted.

Over the past two weeks, when I was back in Miramichi—Grand Lake, everyone I ran into wanted to talk about three things: obviously, the eclipse and where best to watch it, but, more importantly, the affordability crisis hammering people and the negative impact of the inflationary carbon tax. Many may have seen the sad story out of Gagetown, New Brunswick, home to Canada's largest army base but now a place where 40 to 50 military families a week visit the local food bank just to feed their kids. Gagetown food bank usage has doubled, with more and more seniors not able to feed themselves either.

A Canadian food charity recently reported this year that it expects a million additional visits to food banks just in 2024, after record-breaking visits in 2023, including two million in just a single month last year. New Brunswickers are being forced to choose between filling up their cars, heating their homes and feeding their families.

Last week, on April 1, New Brunswickers woke up to the world's worst April Fool's Day joke, as the NDP-Liberal coalition hiked the carbon tax by 23%. This is just the next step in its disastrous plan to quadruple the carbon tax over the next six years, making everything more expensive for everyone in our country. Even worse, the New Brunswick Energy and Utilities Board invoked its interrupter clause the very next day, spiking gas prices another eight cents a litre overnight. We can imagine the hurt in New Brunswick.

After the NDP-Liberal coalition's carbon tax increase, the maximum price for a litre of regular self-serve gas in New Brunswick was \$1.75. The next morning, it was \$1.83 per litre. It is painful every time New Brunswickers fill up their tanks.

Last week's April Fool's Day tax hike makes it clear, though, that Canadians will experience no relief so long as the NDP-Liberal coalition is in power. During the Easter break, I also went to Prince Edward Island in search of the famous subway in Charlottetown. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance told islanders they should use their bicycles instead of driving their carbureted cars to work. Lo and behold, I could not find a subway in Prince Edward Island. I drove around and looked for it, as I thought I might have missed something over the years, but I sure found a lot of upset farmers and truckers.

● (1250)

Someone with a trucking company, a company that has over 100 trucks on the road, told me something, and I want people in the House to really listen to this example. For those listening at home, this will give a little insight into the long-term plan. These trucking companies have been told that by 2035, they are all supposed to be changed to electric transports. An electric transport costs a quarter of a million dollars more right now than the transports that compa-

nies are currently using. Imagine, in another nine years in this country, how much that price is going to go up.

For potato growers, processors and shippers, it really is a tax on a tax. The average farmer is now paying \$150,000 a year on what they call the "weather tax" on the island. I remember being an energy critic in New Brunswick, probably back in 2014-16; I had been like the understudy for the previous energy minister. It was said at the time that it would take 80 to 90 years to even make an honest effort to get off fossil fuels in this country. That statistic, which was from 2014, was researched. In 2014, we thought it was going to take 100 years to get off fossil fuels, and that was pushing it.

Here we are, 10 years later, and people can now understand why this radical ideology is costing them, and they cannot afford to live any more. This ideology does not make sense. Canada is fuelled by oil and gas. The world knows it. We are inventors in that category. We develop it better than anybody else. We refine it better than anybody else. We have the best labour laws. We have the best environmental standards. We are literally number one around the globe for that, so it is a very shameful attempt by the Liberal government to try to rewrite history.

The notion that the NDP-Liberal coalition can tax the weather to bring down greenhouse gas emissions is a falsehood. Trying to encourage residents in Miramichi—Grand Lake to transition away from gas-powered cars and trucks is foolhardy. I represent a large, mostly rural district, but it does include the city of Miramichi. According to the ChargeFinder website, there are three charging stations in Miramichi: one at the community college, one at Northumberland Square mall and one near the city hall. Those are facts. There are three charging stations for more than 57,000 people who live around that basin, including the outskirts of the city. That math does not add up. That does not make sense for anybody.

The response from the Prime Minister that there is no need for an emergency meeting, since he already convened one with premiers in 2016, is simply ridiculous. Do members find it a bit odd not only that the meeting was eight years ago, but also that none of the people now serving as premiers were in office at that time? This is an entirely new slate of first ministers the Prime Minister is ignoring while 70% of them plus, and growing, disagree with him. The NDP-Liberal coalition must listen to Canada's premiers who are calling for an emergency meeting on the carbon tax.

On this side of the House, Conservatives will work with Canada's premiers to bring home lower prices for all Canadians. In Miramichi—Grand Lake, everywhere I go, I hear the hurt that it is causing people. We used to have a median household income of \$34,000, and that stat would be a few years old now, but we can imagine, in a rural area like mine, how hard this is hitting people. Our leader has been clear since day one that only common-sense Conservatives would bring home lower prices and would axe the tax on everything for everyone for good. I think Canadians are finally realizing, despite all the hurt, that there is actually hope in this country. The hope in this country is that our leader, the hon. member for the riding of Carleton, has shown time and time again that he sees the hurt that Liberal policies are causing Canadians, and he wants to put policies in place to put money in their paycheques.

We should not be paying this. When I was on the island, the media, CBC of course, asked me, "If you axe the tax, would you axe the rebate?" I looked at the reporter and said that there would be no need for a rebate if we were not taxing the citizens. Then, I had to remind him that the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that people on the island were losing at least \$400 or more per month after achieving a rebate.

It was a pleasure to speak to this. To conclude, the Prime Minister needs to listen, and he needs to convene this meeting and needs to stop hurting Canadians.

• (1255)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I look around the world North America, and I see that countries like Germany, Italy, France, or the European Union as a whole, the U.K., or England, Mexico, and a growing number of states in the United States, are bringing in a price on pollution. The Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Green Party all recognize that a price on pollution is the best way to deal with it.

Contrary to what the member just finished saying, 80% of Canadians do get more money back in the form of the rebate than they pay for the tax. Having said that, there is an incredible incentive there. Why has the Conservative Party of Canada chosen to intentionally mislead Canadians with false information, in an attempt to have a bumper sticker so that they can get votes by saying "axe the tax"?

• (1300)

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, first of all, I would say that the member opposite has clearly misread the memo where the Parliamentary Budget Officer for the House said that Canadians are paying more than \$700 per household after getting the rebate, and each province has a different number. Some are at thresholds well over \$1,000 and some are a little below. Everybody is losing money; that has been proven in the House.

The parliamentary secretary opposite mentioned Germany and a few countries in Europe, and he talked about a cost on pollution. He should have mentioned where Germany, England and France get their energy supply. They get it from Russia. That is where they get it because of what the Prime Minister of this country said. We have one of the largest deposits of natural gas in Canada, in my province, and we have a really short boat ride over to England. If we were to

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develop our natural gas, which the Prime Minister historically said is uneconomical, they would not have to buy their energy from Putin so that the Liberals could continue to fuel the war machine over there.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the way the motion reads, it calls it a "carbon tax emergency". Right now, we are seeing global ocean temperatures higher than ever in history. We had 100 dormant fires in northern Alberta for the first time in our history. On Vancouver Island, where I live, we are 54% below the average snowpack, like most of British Columbia. There are drought-like conditions right across the Prairies. That is an emergency. That is called a climate emergency.

I am going to read a quote from Sandy Garossino. She was at the energy talks in Parksville. She stated on X, "Please stop talking like a teenager trying to get out of family chores." That comment was directed at Conservatives.

Is my colleague going to offer any solutions today to tackle the climate emergency, or is he going to continue to try to get out of doing his chores, like everybody else?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that it is coming from a party where obviously the members are running to retire because they have sold their souls, and now, they do not want to face that on the door step. I get that because they sold their soul and now they are going to have to deal with it at somebody's doorstep.

The member talked about forest fires. In New Brunswick, we had a lot of forest fires as well, and then some statistics came out, stating that 97.6% or 97.8% of all forest fires in New Brunswick were started by human beings, by human error and by arsonists. Therefore, in my province, we can attribute none of our forest fires to this climate agenda that the Liberals have.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: That's science.

Mr. Ted Falk: That's fact.

Mr. Jake Stewart: No, Madam Speaker, it is not false; it is actually true. I know it goes against everything they spread. Every time somebody is murdered with a knife, the Liberals call for gun control. No one can even understand any of them anymore.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to remind members that if they want to contribute, they should be waiting for the appropriate time. This has been going on a bit today, with back and forth. When individuals are speaking, others are trying to be part of that conversation. I just want to remind members to please avoid doing so.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I want to clarify this. Is my colleague saying that people boiled hot water and put it in the ocean, and that is the reason the oceans are—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is debate.

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Resuming debate, the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the esteemed House.

We are discussing something very important to Canadians—

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I just want to stand up on this point of order, because what the member behind me said that I said, I did not say. I said nothing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): These are not points of order. They are points of debate.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay has a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I would like to support my colleague. It is really unfair for the NDP members to talk about science when there are Conservatives in the room. I think it puts us all at a great disadvantage.

• (1305)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is the time to be debating the subject matter that is before the House, the opposition motion. I would ask members to please wait until the appropriate time.

I would also ask members to not be speaking and having conversations while the hon. member is speaking.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, respect and decorum in the House should be the first thing that all members come to an agreement on and behave accordingly.

I will be splitting my time with the hon. member from the beautiful province of Nova Scotia, the hon. member for Kings—Hants, a good friend and a dear colleague.

Before beginning the discussion on the heart of the debate, let us just put a simple fact out there. Today, we found out that the world has experienced its hottest March on record, marking the 10th straight month of breaking global temperatures, according to the EU Copernicus Climate Change Service.

The month of March 2024 is the hottest March on record due to climate change, and we have an opposition party with half or three-quarters of its members do not even realize or believe that climate change is real and that we need to act. They have absolutely no plan.

I understand I have a heckler—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member has made an accusation that 50% of the Conservatives do not believe in climate change. I think he needs to prove it. Maybe it is 100%.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a point of debate.

I do want to ask other members who have been making comments while the hon. member is speaking to please refrain from doing so until the appropriate time.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, the world has experienced its hottest March on record, marking the 10th straight month of global temperature records being broken, according to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service. That is a fact.

To my residents in Vaughan—Woodbridge, next week, on April 15, the Canada carbon rebate lands in their back accounts, lands in their mail and returns fuel charge proceeds to Canadians. Dollar for dollar, what we collected is remitted to the provinces, to those individuals. The average family of four in Ontario receives \$1,120. We know that eight out of 10 families, where the backstop has been put in place due to lack of action on the provincial front, are better off. Specifically, middle- and lower-income families are much better off.

We owe it to our future generations, to my kids, to all the parents sitting in the House and to all the Canadians who have kids. We need to leave a strong economy and a healthy, clean environment. We have a plan. The opposition does not have a plan. They are full of hot air. We saw it this morning. I say that respectfully; they are full of hot air.

When it comes to fighting climate change, if we look around the world and look at the policies being adopted, whether it is in Australia, China or Europe, they are all moving to decarbonization. We know the world is going that way. We either get on the bus or stay off the bus and be left behind.

[Translation]

I thank my colleagues for giving me their attention today as we discuss an issue that is vital for the future of our country and our planet. Forest fires and other natural disasters are being exacerbated by climate change.

Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in the number and intensity of these phenomena, with disastrous repercussions on our ecosystems, our communities and our economy. The figures are alarming. In 2023, we set a new record, and not in a good way.

Last year, 8.8 million hectares burned, breaking the 1989 record of 7.6 million hectares. Our projections show that the situation is going to get worse if we do not take meaningful action immediately. Global warming is also causing prolonged droughts and heatwaves, creating favourable conditions for fires to spread.

In addition, the number of forest fires is increasing as melting glaciers and shrinking snow cover free up land that was previously covered in ice. These events are having a direct impact on our infrastructure, our agricultural systems, our water resources and the health of our communities.

The total cost of climate-related natural disasters in Canada is already significant, and it is steadily climbing. There were nearly \$3.1 billion in claims related to natural disasters in 2023. In addition, more than 1.5 million high-risk households are unable to get affordable flood insurance.

Climate change cannot be denied, and its effects are indisputably being felt across the country. This is an urgent problem.

• (1310)

[English]

When I speak with my constituents, I tell them that we have to deal with climate change and we have to deal with the climate crisis. We know that we have a plan in place. The other party does not. It does not and it does not want to. It does not want to deal with problems. It does not want to deal with the crisis. It has these clichéd slogans that do not work and that spread misinformation. We know that we need to deal with this issue. We know that the economy is going that way. The global economy is going that way. We know that there is only one planet. We also know that there is a transition.

Yes, I absolutely support all of the energy workers out there working in Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C. and Newfoundland and Labrador. We need that energy, absolutely. At the same time, we need a plan in place that takes us to a net-zero world, whether that is through electric vehicles or electrifying our energy system here in Canada. We see, all over the world, that this is happening. We need to do it smartly.

When the other side pontificates about “axe the tax”, that is nonsense. Conservatives do not have a plan. They just want to rage farm. They want to scare people. They want to provide misinformation. As an economist, I know that the price on carbon is not causing inflation. It is a statistical fact, yet they still want to propagate that.

[Translation]

Unfortunately, some people continue to deny the reality of climate change and minimize its impact on wildfires. However, the science could not be clearer: Global warming is an indisputable reality. We must act decisively to mitigate its impact and protect our communities.

That is why the Government of Canada has put in place a suite of measures to fight climate change and mitigate the risk of wildfires. A big part of that is putting a price on carbon.

[English]

A price on carbon is central to reducing emissions, whether it is on the industrial side or on the consumer side. Yes, we need folks to have alternatives, electric vehicles and thermal pumps or heat pumps. We need to make sure that our electricity system is moving toward being fully renewable and that our small businesses have the opportunity to lower their energy bills through smart programs.

We need all that stuff in place, but we need a plan in place. That is what is called responsible leadership. That is what a government is elected to do, to provide responsible leadership. It is not clichés. It is not misleading folks that climate change is not real, for God's sake, and not even believing in climate change and saying that there is no issue out there, when we just had the month of March as the hottest month on record for that month.

We need to be smart. We need to go where the puck is going or, as my daughters would say, where the soccer ball is. We need to

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make sure that we put those goals in the other opponent's net, i.e., have a competitive economy. That is what we need to do while we support those hard-working energy workers who are out there doing what they need to do, and I support them.

• (1315)

[Translation]

At the same time, we need to foster economic growth and job creation in clean technology sectors like renewable energy and energy efficiency. In provinces where the federal fuel charge applies, eight out of 10 families will get more money back through the Canada carbon rebate than they pay for carbon pricing.

[English]

Eight out of 10 Canadian families are made better off under the pricing pollution system. Folks may not want to believe that. That is fine, but it is the truth. In Ontario, on April 15, families in Vaughan—Woodbridge and across this beautiful province that I live in, and Canada is beautiful of course but Ontario more so, will receive their carbon rebates. I want to make sure that they know that.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, let us just put some facts on the record here.

Catherine McKenna, when she was the climate minister, deleted 100 years of climate data in this country. We can leave it up to debate as to why she did that.

Let us go to an organization that has actually been collecting data for a very long period of time. Let us use their data and see what it says. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the United States has some weather data that says that this past March was only the 17th warmest in the last 130 years. In fact, March was 2°F colder than it was in 1905.

There is data out there that tells everybody that what he said was, in fact, a mistruth. I am just wondering what the member would have to say about that and the fact that there is actual real data out there. He did not use any data in his arguments, but there are organizations that actually have it.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I work with my hon. colleague on the natural resources committee. I have much respect for him. I know he does a great job representing his constituents, much like we all do.

There is obviously a difference of opinion here in terms of looking at the data. As I cited in my speech, the Copernicus Science Centre in Europe just stated that we had the hottest March in recorded temperature history.

Climate change is real. It is serious. It is a risk. We owe it to our kids to leave a healthier and cleaner environment and a strong economy. That is exactly what we are doing.

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Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, when we had energy workers come talk to Parliament about being part of a new energy economy and the need to have their voices at the table, the Conservatives shut them down. They shut down the IBEW. They shut down the construction workers. They shut down the building trades. They shut down the Canadian Labour Congress and the Alberta Federation of Labour. They would not let them speak.

When it came to coal workers who had been hurt in the transition, it was New Democrats who brought in the coal workers, because the Conservatives were not interested in letting working people speak.

Given the evidence that we heard from energy workers in Alberta, who understood that there is a new future out there, why did the Conservatives shut them down time and time again and not let workers from the energy community speak?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, we will be supporting hard-working, middle-class Canadians, those union members, whether they are working to build our cities or working in the oil and natural gas sector across this country, not only today but tomorrow and the day after, to make sure they have the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow, including for many years to come in the energy sector. We know we are going to need them and we are going to support them. They are always welcome to come to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, one of the committees I sit on, because we need to hear their voices. They build this country. God bless them. They are always welcome.

• (1320)

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for bringing clarity to the House in regard to the various positions of different parties. Not too long ago, the Conservatives actually denied at a convention that climate change was taking place. In the last election, they flip-flopped and had it as part of their pillar within their campaign platform.

Can the member reflect on the Conservatives' various positions and maybe shed some light on where the Conservatives are today when it comes to climate change?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, almost every single Conservative on the other side of the House ran on a platform in the last election to put a price on carbon. Shame on them for flip-flopping on such an important issue for Canadians and for the world, which is to make sure we leave a strong economy and a healthy and clean environment for our kids. Shame.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are times that I think we should do away with the video and the actual televised elements of not only the House of Commons but of committees as well, because it has become performative in nature. However, after listening to the comments from the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake, I am quite glad that this is televised so that Canadians can see the way in which members of Parliament engage in what is a really important topic around how we put forward credible plans to fight climate change, to reduce emissions and to follow the science that has been very clear around the world.

I have heard comments, particularly from the opposition benches today, that start to call into question whether they believe there is

an imperative to fight climate change and reduce emissions. I look forward to the opportunity for them to ask me questions on that piece.

This is a really important national conversation about the mechanisms we are going to use to fight climate change, but let us get back to basics about why we are doing this.

As I mentioned, the science is very clear that there is a global imperative to try to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the global warming that is coming as a result. That goal, which is internationally recognized by countries around the world, is to try to keep global warming to 1.5°C or less, but certainly below 2°C. This is recognized as being an existential threat to the way in which we have been able to enjoy this planet, our communities and our country up until this point.

Some of the comments from my colleagues in the House raise the question about whether we are all on board on that initiative to reduce emissions, but let us just assume for a minute that the majority of Canadians are. We know the majority of Canadians know that science is real, that climate change is real and that we need to do something.

How do we go about incentivizing that change? I would submit that there are three ways to reduce emissions in the country. We can subsidize activities, whether they be new innovation or technology, to try to bring down emissions. We can regulate the activity. We can put in a pricing mechanism and allow the ingenuity of the private sector and the markets to reduce emissions.

By the way, each one of those comes with a particular cost. If we subsidize the activity in question, there is a cost to taxpayers. We can regulate, and I will give an example. In my home province of Nova Scotia, we have a goal of being off coal-fired electricity by 2030. The compliance cost associated with that objective comes with cost downstream to consumers. On carbon pricing mechanisms, the Conservatives love to talk about the price signal, the cost. They never talk about the way in which the money under the federal backstop is returned back to households and businesses. This is missing from the actual entirety of the debate, if we want to have reasonable and informed conversation about this.

Of course, we could do nothing, which I know some members in the House may agree with, that there is nothing to be done here. However, I have a statement from the Insurance Bureau of Canada that says that in 2023 alone, there were over 3 billion dollars' worth of insurable losses in the country as a direct result of extreme weather. That is a reality. The science is clear on the cost of doing nothing. I do not think any moral imperative would allow us to do that. Nor would the fact that this has a true cost to Canadians today.

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Last year alone, my riding had massive flooding. We rebuilt a bridge, let alone the human cost, as we lost four people in my riding. I do not want to exaggerate that or make that a political point, but let us just look at the actual cost of rebuilding in our communities. Each one of us paid out of our pocket to be there on that. Each one of us is paying out of our insurance premium to clean up after the frequency of the storms that are happening more and more often as a result of this imperative. Therefore, we have to do something.

This government, as part of its emissions reduction plan, has said that we want to have a strategy to reduce emissions by 40% by 2030 versus 2005 levels. A carbon price forms a third of that goal. A carbon price is inherently a small-c conservative policy. I chastise some of my Conservative colleagues on why they do not believe in the power of using the private sector and using markets to reduce emissions, as opposed to government programs or regulations. Why do they not want the power of that to happen?

• (1325)

Economists are telling us it is the cheapest way to reduce emissions, but opposition members have made it their mission to denigrate the idea of carbon pricing without providing any alternatives on how they would actually go about this mission.

The motion before us today talks about calling an emergency meeting with the Prime Minister. I have the letter that the Prime Minister sent out about 10 days ago to the premiers, who had been writing to him about the federal backstop as a pricing mechanism. The end of the letter says, “We...remain open to proposals for credible systems that price pollution that reflect the unique realities of your regions and meet the national benchmark.”

The Conservative motion today should be encouraging the seven premiers in the provinces where they oppose the federal backstop to get together and have a conversation to come up with a different pricing mechanism. I guess it comes back to why carbon pricing matters. What is being lost in the national conversation is that there are billions of dollars of clean energy investment in our country that rely upon the fact that the price signal exists. If we sit down with any CEO who is exploring projects around decarbonization, he or she will say that the price signal forms an important basis of their investment decision.

Premiers across the country, including in my home province of Nova Scotia, have a price on carbon at the industrial level. Danielle Smith has talked glowingly about the fact that industrial pricing is a key mechanism to fight climate change and reduce emissions.

I find it ironic that the premiers will support that type of pricing, but they are unwilling to explore what else can be done. We know that the reason a federal backstop is imposed is because provinces had the opportunity to introduce their own pricing plans and either failed to do so or put forward a plan that did not meet the national stringency.

There is a unique opportunity for the seven provinces that have signalled discontent with the federal backstop to work together to establish, perhaps, a national cap and trade. It is something equivalent to what Quebec has with California, where there is an ability for larger emitters and the price signal to be higher up stream to al-

low us to focus on larger emitters without having that same price impact at the pump.

The premiers hold the pen on what is possible. They do not need to write to the Prime Minister. They need to write to each other. They need to get in a room and see if they are serious about putting forward a credible, carbon-pricing plan. The reason it has to be in each province is going back to the point I made around the economy, and that is the jobs that are associated with economic investment in the country.

When I look at this opposition day motion, I do, for the record, support the idea of a first ministers meeting. It is really important to get down to the facts of what is and what is not around this conversation. I do not think it has to happen tomorrow. Let us let the premiers come up with a pricing plan and let us get back to what this was about. The Prime Minister has said that if they do not like the federal backstop, there are options. They can either do it alone or they can work together to come up with what that might represent. I support that.

As a member of Parliament in this place, I did a lot of work on this side of the House to amend the federal backstop, not because I do not believe carbon pricing is an effective mechanism to reduce emissions and not because I do not believe that the rebate system back to households is inherently a bad idea, but I wanted that national policy to reflect rural and regional Canada in a way that I did not think it was doing in its original form.

I would invite my Conservative colleagues, if they do not believe in the federal backstop, to present a climate agenda themselves. They use the term “technology not taxes” without any conversation about how we pay for the technology, which the Leader of the Opposition talks about, and they negate the fact that, under the federal backstop, the money actually goes back to households.

The Conservatives will often go to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report and look at the economic cost, so to speak, heading out to 2030. The PBO has made it very clear that he was comparing that plan versus doing nothing. He has made it very clear that both the cost to households directly and indirectly, the energy-embedded costs, still leave a majority of households better off.

• (1330)

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the B.C. Liberals introduced the first carbon tax in North America in 2009. I was a member with the party at the time. I categorically oppose this tax. Why? Because it does not work.

Even former premier Christy Clark, under whose leadership I served, said on CTV last month, “it hasn't done any of the things that [the Prime Minister] said it was going to do. It's made life less affordable” and “we haven't met any of our climate goals.”

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Why will the tone-deaf, Liberal-NDP government, as well as the provincial NDP government, not listen to Canadians and axe the tax?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned and rightfully recognized that he was part of the first introduction of a carbon price in North America, in British Columbia. It has worked in British Columbia. It has helped reduce emissions and has not impacted the economy. B.C. is doing well within the federation.

Perhaps what the hon. member missed during my remarks is that the federal backstop is a tool if provinces choose to not come forward with any type of credible pricing plan. I would ask him to engage with corporate leaders across the country, who will tell him that a carbon price, particularly at the industrial level, matters for economic investment in the country around decarbonization.

The member wants to go about it, I guess, in a big-government way, which is not the most cost-effective. It is actually quite anti-Conservative. He wants to use a more expensive way to reduce emissions. Economists are clear that carbon pricing is the most effective way to do so. I guess he also wants government to decide as opposed to letting the private sector decide.

Where have the Conservatives gone? Where are the folks on that side who believe in the private market? They are not really stepping forward at this point.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am so conflicted between two questions. One is to have the member respond to the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake, basically blaming his own constituents for the wildfires and what constituents should do in the next election so they are not blamed for the wildfires. However, I am more curious about what his response is to the Parliamentary Budget Officer saying that Canada would have generated \$4 billion in revenue with a windfall tax on the oil and gas companies, but the Liberals voted with the Conservatives against it when the NDP put forward that motion.

I wonder if the member can respond to that and how the Liberal government will do better to protect families rather than protecting for-profit corporations that are benefiting from climate change.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake made the assertion in the House, as I understand it, because I heard the back end of his comments, that fires were not as a result of climate change, that the extreme weather we were seeing was not tied to climate change, that people would go out and set fires themselves. I take notice that some fires are started accidentally, but the idea that all forest fires we are seeing or the extremity of the weather that we are seeing has no connection to climate change is the most tone-deaf thing I think I have heard this entire week in the House and maybe in last couple of months.

To address the other portion of the member's question around having larger corporate entities and businesses contribute toward programs that matter to Canadians and toward the programs that could help reduce emissions, I agree with the concept of how to ensure our larger emitters can be responsible for driving those investments and reducing emissions. I do think we are at a time right now where corporate leadership needs to be cognizant and read the room.

• (1335)

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week, I went atop the CN Tower to see if I could see my riding of York—Simcoe, and I could not. We know rural Canadians are disproportionately impacted by the carbon tax, but my riding does not receive the rural top-up, the soup and salad bowl of Canada. It is unbelievable.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on the carbon tax disproportionately affecting rural Canadians and why we are not getting the rural top-up.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my remarks, I fought very hard for his constituents and mine and all rural Canadians to get a higher rural top-up of 20%, which his party is standing in the way of right now in relation to rural Canadians. On the definition, the member is absolutely right. There has to be a revisiting of what defines a rural community versus what is not.

I know the hon. member is a good man. I encourage him to push the Conservative Party to put forward a serious climate plan, because it is important in the days ahead.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

Unlike Sleeping Beauty, who was awakened by a kiss of love, Canadians are waking up after eight years of the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister to find out that he is just not worth the cost. They are waking up with a Judas kiss. They have been betrayed with the Judas kiss from the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister. After eight years of the Prime Minister, who promised sunny ways and sunny days, life has become dark and dreary for Canadians, and especially for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador have woken up to rent that has doubled, mortgages that have doubled, prices of food that have doubled and gasoline that they cannot afford. The costly coalition is going to make the carbon tax on fuel that they need for the necessities of life go to 61¢ a litre. When one taxes the fish and the food that fishermen and farmers catch and grow, the truckers who transport food and the grocery stores that sell the food, they tax the consumers who buy the food.

The out-of-control spending, which has also led to a housing crisis, is forcing more and more Canadians to food banks, Canadians like those in Gander where the food bank is run by Winston Howse, whom I spoke to last week. He is very concerned about how the demand at his food bank has risen by 44% in just six months. He does not know where to turn. His volunteers are getting burnt out.

Business of Supply

Not only do the folks who volunteer at the food bank not know where to turn, but the premiers also do not know where to turn. They begged the Prime Minister to not raise the carbon tax by 23% on April 1; however, their pleas fell on deaf ears. Even provincial Liberals in Newfoundland and Labrador, led by Premier Furey, have now turned against the carbon tax after eight years.

With all of their pleas falling on deaf ears, begging the Prime Minister not to raise the carbon tax by 23%, the premiers are now asking for an emergency meeting between the 14 first ministers and the costly coalition Prime Minister. They want to discuss the ongoing carbon tax crisis, the recent 23% increase in carbon tax and the plans for provinces to opt out of federal carbon tax and to implement reasonable measures to reduce emissions. The premiers know that the carbon tax is just not working. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians know that the carbon tax is not working.

There are just no options for rural Canadians to reduce their emissions by changing the things they do from day to day. Folks in Fogo who need to drive to St. John's for a doctor's appointment do not have a choice but to drive. They cannot take a SkyTrain. Fishermen on the sea who need to get their life rafts serviced in Donovans Business Park in Mount Pearl and also need to pick up some fishing gear in St. John's cannot stop burning gas, so there is no option for those fishermen either.

As all the premiers, including Premier Furey, who has lost his clout with the Prime Minister, beg for a first ministers meeting to discuss the carbon tax, what has the Prime Minister been up to along with his costly coalition ministers? They have been jet-setting around Canada trying to sell their upcoming budget. Instead of Canadians' being able to wait until April 16 to listen to what is in the budget, the Prime Minister was in Vancouver on March 28 and Ottawa on March 29. On April 1 he was in Toronto and on April 4 in Winnipeg. On April 5 he was in Calgary, and on April 6 in Ottawa. On April 7 he was back to Montreal, and on April 8 he was in Trenton spewing CO₂ while he spewed his costly coalition budget and told us how he is going to keep his ATM machine going. Canadians could have waited until April 16 to hear what is in the budget.

Common-sense Conservatives have a plan. We will axe the tax. We will use technology, not taxes. I know my hon. colleague for Avalon is all about it.

• (1340)

With respect to Canadian provinces, Nova Scotia has 11 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. New Brunswick has 120 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and Newfoundland and Labrador has 13 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. There are huge opportunities for LNG. Our allies, the leaders of Japan and Germany, and lately Greece, are coming to Canada begging for LNG.

Natural gas produces half the emissions of coal, so I have some not so fun facts here. The world usage of coal has risen, since 2015, from 7.7 billion tonnes to 8.5 billion tonnes in 2023. That is a more than 10% increase in eight years. Coal emissions in 2023 were 15 billion tonnes. If we convert that to natural gas, it drops to 7.5 billion tonnes. Canada's total emissions are 670 million tonnes. By converting all that coal to natural gas, we would drop the world's emissions by more than 11 times what Canada actually produces,

yet we have the useless carbon tax that the government is telling Canadians is going to save the world.

Canada could be a real part of the solution. The Prime Minister has said there is no business case for Canadian LNG, yet the United States has built seven new LNG facilities since 2016. Right now it has one in Corpus Christi, which is 8,500 kilometres from Germany. Newfoundland and Labrador is 4,300 kilometres from Germany. It is half the distance, yet there is supposedly no business case for LNG. Corpus Christi is 10,264 kilometres from Greece, yet we have told the Greek prime minister that there is no business case to send Canadian gas to Greece although we are only 5,900 kilometres from there. Again, we are half the distance in Newfoundland and Labrador, where we can produce LNG, compared to the distance to the LNG terminals in the Gulf of Mexico.

We can be part of the solution. Canada can play a role. Canadian premiers know that there are solutions. Canadian provinces can play a role, especially the Atlantic provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador. The Prime Minister needs to be the servant, not the master. He needs to listen to the premiers and grant their wish for a first ministers meeting to deal with the carbon tax crisis.

The premiers who wrote the letters have heard what their citizens are going through in the various provinces and are begging for a first ministers meeting. My hon. colleague from Avalon hears it every day when he is talking to the folks who elected him and sent him to Ottawa to represent them. I hope he can convince his colleagues on that side of the House to vote for our motion for the Prime Minister to convene a first ministers meeting and follow the wishes of the premiers, because Canadians are waking up from a nightmare.

If the premiers cannot put enough heat on to take the tax off, Canadians are going to have to wait. However, they will wake up to a better day when they elect the common-sense Conservatives, led by our common-sense leader. We will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget, stop the crime, and bring it home.

• (1345)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to invite the hon. member to take out a pen. I have two quick questions. I know he can handle them, and I will let him take some notes.

Business of Supply

First, he talked about the Atlantic provinces' being part of the clean energy solution to reduce emissions, yet he stands in the way of Bill C-49, a bill that is supported by his home government in Newfoundland and Labrador, without reason. It is a bill that would actually drive really important results for energy jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador. He talked about technology, not taxes, but then voted against the bill. Can he explain his position there?

Second, can he give an indication to his constituents and the House as to whether or not he believes climate change is real and that we ought to do something to reduce emissions? How would he incentivize the technology he is talking about? Would he spend taxpayer dollars in an inefficient way to do it? How would he go about that?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I will start with the member's last question. We do not need to incentivize natural gas. Free enterprise can invest in LNG, build pipelines and send LNG to countries in the world that are burning coal, in order to get their emissions down really fast, to half of what they produce right now.

The fishing industry has grave concerns with Bill C-49, including six fish harvester groups I have been consulting with that the costly coalition did not consult with in forming the bill. They are counting on us. The FFAW in Newfoundland and Labrador worked with us to build the amendments to Bill C-49 that the member's side voted down in committee three weeks ago.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member spoke about natural gas going to Germany. I was actually in Germany last year. I met with the chancellor at that time and spoke to him. He made it very clear that in the short term, Germany is interested in natural gas, but in the long term, it is not. It is actually interested in renewable energies.

I know it is on the other side of the country from the member, but in my province of Alberta, Premier Danielle Smith has shut down 66 billion dollars' worth of investment in renewable energy. I wonder whether the member agrees with Danielle Smith's Conservative stance on renewable energy, knowing that countries around the world want to see Canada move towards a greener energy grid.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I am not here to talk about the Premier of Alberta; I am here to represent the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador know that we have 13 trillion cubic feet of natural gas lying under the Grand Banks and under the Labrador Sea. That natural gas could go to Germany, which is building steam plants right now that in the interim could be fuelled by natural gas. Down the road, when we can have green hydrogen, hydrogen could replace natural gas; however for now, the quickest way to get emissions down is to use natural gas.

In terms of the green revolution, it takes over 18 years to greenlight a mine to produce the rare elements needed in the green transition. The government, with Bill C-69, is destroying our mining industry and our opportunity to take part in the green economy.

• (1350)

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, all day we have been hearing from the other side of the House that Conservatives do not want to have a serious conversation about the environment. However, when I hear a Conservative

like the Premier of New Brunswick suggest that there is a lot of constructive dialogue around liquid natural gas and combatting global change in that way, I am more optimistic. I wonder what my colleague thinks about the opportunity for good, constructive conversations.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, we need to have good, constructive conversation. The premiers want to have that conversation. They know that the opportunity lies there for all of them to take part in an initiative to lower global emissions. Premier Higgs just gave great testimony, talking about his province's vast amounts of natural gas and how he wants to get rid of the crazy regulations and reduce the red tape so Newfoundland and New Brunswick could liquify their natural gas and get it to Europe, Greece, India and China and bring down their emissions fast.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, for once the Prime Minister has achieved unity among Canadians. He has united Canadians in opposition to his failed carbon tax. I cannot recall the last time 70% of Canadians, and eight out of 10 provinces, opposed a federal government policy, but the NDP-Liberal coalition has defied the odds and united Canadians against the costly carbon tax.

The Prime Minister increased the carbon tax by 23% on April 1. At a time when Canadians are facing a cost-of-living crisis, the Prime Minister ploughed ahead with his plan to quadruple the carbon tax anyway. It was a cruel April fool's joke to play on Canadians, but it was one that Canadians will remember.

I have personally received home heating bills from hundreds of Canadians who cannot believe the true cost of the carbon tax. I received a heating bill from a local landscaping business. The actual monthly cost of the natural gas was \$272. The cost of the carbon tax on the natural gas was \$330. Canadians are now paying more in carbon tax on their heating bills than they are for natural gas itself. Punishing Canadians for heating their homes is not an environmental plan. It is a tax plan that is creating energy poverty across the nation.

Business of Supply

The Liberals pretend that their carbon tax is needed to reduce emissions. They tell Canadians that, if they quit complaining and pay their costly carbon tax, emissions will go down. Let us talk about the environmental result of the carbon tax. After eight years of the Prime Minister, emissions have gone up, not down. In fact, the government's very own environment commissioner has stated that the Liberals are not on track to meet their own 2030 emissions targets. After eight years of the Prime Minister, Canada now ranks 62nd out of 67 countries, according to the global climate change performance index. That is four rankings lower since the last carbon tax hike. After eight years of the Prime Minister, we would think he could tell Canadians the amount his carbon tax has reduced emissions, but he cannot because his environment minister revealed the truth when he admitted, "The government does not measure the annual amount of emissions that are directly reduced by federal carbon pricing."

After eight years of the Prime Minister, this is his carbon tax record: emissions are up; climate change performance is down; and no one knows if the carbon tax reduces emissions because the Liberals do not measure the results.

Canadians will not be fooled by the government. They know that the carbon tax is not an environmental plan. It is a tax plan. That is why common-sense Conservatives have been exposing the carbon tax scam at the environment committee. For months, we have been demanding that the environment minister release his carbon tax emissions analysis, but he has refused. In fact, the environment minister failed to hand over the government's carbon tax emissions model, despite the environment committee ordering him to. If the Liberals are so proud of the carbon tax, what are they hiding?

If the Prime Minister and his NDP-Liberal coalition will not listen to Conservatives, they should listen to the premiers across Canada. For months, Canada's premiers have been begging the Prime Minister to cancel his carbon tax, but he increased the carbon tax anyway. Even Liberal premiers oppose the Prime Minister's plan to quadruple the carbon tax on Canadians. The Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador stated that the carbon tax "is causing understandable worry as people consider how they will manage the mounting financial strain."

The Premier of New Brunswick tweeted, "Since imposing his Carbon tax six years ago, New Brunswickers have been subject to brutal increases every single year. These make the cost of everyday items such as food, fuel and groceries more expensive, driving up the cost of living for everyone."

The Premier of Prince Edward Island stated, "Further driving up costs for Island households by increasing the price of carbon in April...will create an untenable situation for many P.E.I. residents, especially our most vulnerable who will feel the economy-wide price increases".

The Premier of Nova Scotia wrote to the Prime Minister:

Your carbon tax is not the way to accomplish the goals of reducing emissions and increasing renewable energy. And it is not in the best interest of Nova Scotians. The only thing it means is more money out of their pockets to pay an unnecessary carbon tax.

• (1355)

The Premier of Ontario has stated, "The carbon tax is the worst tax ever put on a bunch of people", and the Premier of Manitoba said, "I think that there's an argument that Manitoba is maybe one of the strongest cases you could make, that the price on carbon should be revisited in our jurisdiction".

The Premier of Saskatchewan said, "Saskatchewan has been steadfast in our opposition to the consumer Carbon Tax and its adverse impacts on Canadian families and businesses. Addressing climate change is a priority for Saskatchewan, but an ideological one-size-fits-all...approach is ineffective", and the Premier of Alberta stated, "The carbon tax has contributed to increasing stress and financial pain for millions of Canadians".

At what point does the NDP-Liberal coalition put ideology aside and listen to Canadians? If the Prime Minister truly believed in representing all Canadians, he would call an emergency meeting of Canada's premiers to hear the concerns with respect to the carbon tax. That is what Conservatives are calling for today. That is why we put forward this common-sense motion. It is disturbing that Parliament must vote for a meeting between the Prime Minister and the premiers, but we had no choice because the Prime Minister refuses to listen. What happened to the sunny ways and the openness the Prime Minister once preached?

It is very easy to see why Canadian premiers have lost trust in the Prime Minister over his failed carbon tax, and it is because he has continued to mislead them for eight years. Before 2019, the Prime Minister's former environment minister promised Canadians not to raise the carbon tax over \$50 a tonne. After the election, the Prime Minister announced his plan to quadruple the carbon tax. In fact, the current environment minister is now refusing to rule out any further carbon tax hikes. I asked the environment minister if he could promise Canadians not to raise the carbon tax over \$170 a tonne. He refused to answer. I wonder why.

Statements by Members

The Prime Minister also told Canadians that they would get back more than they paid in carbon tax, but the government's own Parliamentary Budget Officer proved that wrong. In fact, the majority of Canadians will pay more in carbon tax than they will get back. It is no wonder the premiers across Canada have lost trust in the government's carbon tax scam, and no wonder they are demanding a meeting with the Prime Minister. It sure does not help when the environment minister punishes Canadians for driving their cars and heating their homes as he jets around the globe lecturing others. The hypocrisy is truly astounding, and Canadian premiers are right to call the government out.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

KENSINGTON MONAGHAN FARMS WILD

Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to the Kensington Monaghan Farms Wild, which captured the Atlantic major under 18 men's hockey championship this past weekend in Nova Scotia. This weekend's victory by the Wild followed an impressive performance in the Island provincial championships last month and marks the latest accomplishment in their highly successful season.

For the first time in 20 years, an Island team will represent Atlantic Canada in the under 18 men's national championship, and it is the first time in the Kensington Wild's history that they will represent Atlantic Canada at the national championship.

I would like to congratulate everyone involved for their accomplishments and hard work this season, from coaches to players, parents and volunteers, and everyone who has played a part in this exciting season. The Wild has made the entire Island proud. We look forward to watching all of them represent Atlantic Canada at the Telus Cup later this month.

* * *

PHILANTHROPY IN RED DEER—MOUNTAIN VIEW

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, recently, Red Deer Polytechnic hosted a transformational celebration of a major gift from one of Canada's leading philanthropic families, that of the late Jack Donald, his wife, Joan, and their children, John and Kathy.

The Donald family institute for healthtech innovation will stand tall in the creation of an ecosystem where teams of experts, practitioners, researchers, faculty and students will collaborate on a solutions-based approach to health care training, applied research and economic diversification across Alberta. As matriarch Joan Donald said at the unveiling, "As a family we believe in supporting our community, and one of the best ways to enrich your community is to support education and health care." Jack and Joan Donald will continue to have an indelible, positive impact on RDP learners, our community and the province of Alberta and beyond for years to come.

A celebration of Jack's life will be held at the Westerner on April 20. We thank the Donald family for its commitment to and love of our community, our province and our nation.

* * *

CANCER RESEARCH

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, every three minutes in Canada, someone is diagnosed with cancer, a diagnosis that will change their life and the lives of all their family members forever because, if one is diagnosed with cancer, pretty well everything else in life, including much of what we do here, seems pretty insignificant in comparison.

The COVID pandemic showed us what the global scientific community can do when it puts its collective mind toward something. Experts were predicting it was going to take us years to come up with vaccines, and we came up with several within a year. Why can we not do the same thing to try to beat cancer?

In the United States, the Biden administration has pledged to prevent four million deaths by the year 2047. We in Canada can and ought to make a similar commitment. Nothing in life is ever accomplished unless one tries.

* * *

[Translation]

PRO GAZ/STUDIO RHYTHM AND DANCE HOCKEY TEAM IN ROUYN-NORANDA

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the coach in me is very proud to announce that my team, Rouyn-Noranda's Pro Gaz/Studio Rythme et Danse team, is the Quebec champion. Thanks to some spectacular saves by goalie Alexy Lajeunesse against the mighty Sherbrooke Phoenix 2, we won the interregional championship in the M13 B category in Drummondville on Sunday.

Hard work was an integral part of the Pro Gaz team's identity, with a devastating offence made up of Landen, Félix, Alex, the courageous Océane, Raphaël and Jules, and an impenetrable defence made up of Natan, Samuel, Emrik and Éloick. I want to congratulate my coaching team, including Éric, the brains behind it all, Steven, Sandy and Marc-Antoine. I also want to thank all the parents.

In closing, I need to talk about a unique player, our own "Captain Clutch", Jules Lemire, who scored the final goal in the shootout. He notched seven goals in five games, including the overtime winner in the quarter-final. His total was just shy of a hundred goals this year. He took on all the pressure, but at the end of the year, he was the one who got to hold the big banner.

Jules Lemire, you are my hero. I love you, son.

● (1405)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that, yesterday, the Minister of National Defence released our defence policy update entitled “Our North, Strong and Free: A Renewed Vision for the Defence of Canada”.

This update includes a \$73-billion investment over 20 years and a clear plan to build forces that will protect our country and our interests around the world. We know that our Canadian Armed Forces and their families are central to everything we do. Now more than ever, it is important to invest in them. That is exactly why our plan commits \$295 million over 20 years to establish a housing strategy for Canadian Armed Forces personnel and \$100 million over five years to improve their access to child care.

This is an important update for giving our troops the tools they need to defend Canada.

* * *

[English]

MEMBER FOR DURHAM

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the communities of Clarington, North Oshawa and Scugog for electing me to fight for them and their families. We are a diverse riding that brings together working- and middle-class families from all cultural backgrounds.

This is why I must oppose the NDP-Liberal government's elitist ESG policies and divisive diversity, equity and inclusion agenda. ESG and DEI are smokescreens that allow big businesses and Liberal politicians to create a false sense of progress while life gets harder in this country.

Conservatives stand for all Canadians, no matter what one looks like or where one's parents are from.

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INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, I was part of an all-party delegation led by the member for Ottawa South to the 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the global organization of national parliaments founded in 1889. Our Canadian delegation played an important role on a number of fronts, including AI, climate change and the situation in Gaza.

While I was in Geneva, I was privileged to represent Canada at the debate on the resolution entitled, “Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity”. Canada introduced amendments that were accepted during drafting, particularly dealing with more inclusive language to include women, girls, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples.

I would like to extend special thanks to Matthew Pringle from the Library of Parliament. He supported me in successfully having the final resolution reflect Canada's perspective on the importance

Statements by Members

of parliaments around the world taking decisive action on climate change.

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BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we commemorate the Battle of Vimy Ridge, which took place in France in 1917 during the First World War. We honour those who bravely served our country in the war and paid the ultimate price to secure the peace and freedom we enjoy today.

The ridge had fallen into German hands during the initial advances of 1914. Beginning on April 9, 1917, the soldiers of the Canadian corps fought their way up the ridge. By April 12, the Canadians were victorious, capturing Vimy Ridge.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge proved to be a great success, but it came at a heavy cost. Almost 3,600 Canadians lost their lives and 7,000 were wounded during the four-day battle.

More than a century has passed since the Battle of Vimy Ridge, but the legacy of the Canadians who served live in our memories.

* * *

[Translation]

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 107 years ago today, on April 9, 1917, a fierce battle began on the slopes of a hill in Vimy, France, between the Canadian Expeditionary Force and the defending German forces.

At 5:30 a.m., a single cannon sounded in the distance. On that signal, all hell broke loose on the battlefield. At the same time, all of the available artillery, supported by underground mines packed with explosives, destroyed the German positions. The infantry, protected by the artillery barrage, rose up and charged toward the enemy trenches.

For some, this battle represents the birth of Canada as a sovereign nation because, for the first time, all divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force came together to storm the heavily defended enemy ridge.

Following the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the Canadian army erected a wooden cross on the battlefield in memory of the soldiers who fell in that battle.

When the Vimy Memorial was built, that cross was entrusted to the Royal 22e Régiment and taken to the Quebec Citadel. The cross is still used in ceremonies commemorating the Battle of Vimy Ridge, as it is today.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

BENOÎT PELLETIER

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Benoît Pelletier.

A published author and distinguished minister in the Government of Quebec, Benoît played an important role in strengthening ties between Quebec and francophone communities across Canada. His bold vision and his commitment to the francophonie marked a major turning point in our country's history. As minister, Benoît worked to promote Quebec's place within Canada's francophonie, leaving a lasting legacy for future generations. Standing up for our language was a cause close to his heart.

The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne awarded him the Boréal Prize. France honoured him with its Ordre des Palmes académiques for his commitment to education.

He was a caring man who loved the Outaouais region, his adopted home. As a legal expert and politician, he left an invaluable political legacy, and his dedication as a lawyer and professor at the University of Ottawa inspired countless students.

My thoughts are with his family. May Benoît rest in peace.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Canadians are struggling to feed, heat and house themselves, the NDP-Liberal government went ahead with a 23% carbon tax hike on April 1. We already know that it is not worth the cost. After eight years, rent and mortgage payments have doubled, deficits are driving up inflation and food banks received two million visitors in a single month last year.

With budget day just around the corner, Conservatives are calling for a cap on government spending through a dollar-for-dollar approach and a plan to build homes, not bureaucracy. In addition, we are calling on the government to axe the tax on food and farmers by immediately passing Bill C-234 in its original form. That would support farm families and ensure that all Canadians can afford to put food on the table.

It is clear that only common-sense Conservatives have a plan to make life more affordable and bring home lower prices for all Canadians.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians cannot afford to live. Rent and the cost of owning a house have doubled. The Liberal government is out of touch and not worth the cost.

This week, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation said that the problem is only getting worse. Despite all the photo ops and billions of dollars of promised spending, Canada is building fewer homes today than it was in the 1970s. This crisis is causing

the Liberal government to keep hard-working Canadians from owning a home.

By axing the tax, Conservatives will make all aspects of home ownership more affordable. We will balance the budget and bring down interest rates. We will cut the red tape that keeps communities from building homes Canadians can afford. Only common-sense Conservatives have a real plan that will build homes for Canadians so they can afford to live.

* * *

CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past week, my family and I celebrated my 12th year in remission from cancer. I am immensely grateful for the continued time we have together.

Today, I am privileged to rise in this House to extend a heartfelt thanks to the team at the Canadian Cancer Society for the role it played in seeing me through my own experience and the support it has provided to countless more each and every day since 1938.

[Translation]

For people like me, that support came in the form of the invaluable information that it provides on its website, the first place I turned to after my diagnosis. For others, the support comes from the work it does on the ground by providing emotional support or petitioning to get more resources to find a cure for this disease, which will affect one in three Canadians during their lifetime.

[English]

To its incredible leadership team, led by Andrea Seale; dedicated team members, such as Kelly Masotti and Rose D'Souza; and army of dedicated volunteers, such as Kirsten Watson and Shailly Prajapati, I say a heartfelt thanks. Canadians are healthier, better and stronger because of the unwavering advocacy, dedication and support they give.

* * *

● (1415)

HIV AND AIDS

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand with the community-based prevention services and the other dedicated organizations that serve those living with HIV/AIDS. For the upcoming budget, they are calling on the government to deliver the funding necessary to eliminate HIV.

The government committed to having 95% of those vulnerable being tested, 95% of those tested receiving treatment and 95% achieving viral suppression by 2025, but it has failed to meet its interim targets. Instead, rates of new infections are rising, not falling. New infections in Saskatchewan have increased by over 30% since 2020. Among indigenous people in Saskatchewan, the rates of testing, treatment and suppression are only 67%, 67% and 68%. Rates of new infections are falling dramatically in other similar countries.

All we need is an investment of \$100 million annually over five years, yet federal funding for self-testing kits ran out on March 31. Funding for outreach in indigenous communities on the Prairies also came to an end. Without investments in self-testing kits and community outreach, Canada will continue to fail at limiting the spread of new HIV infections.

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Mouvement Action-Chômage de Montréal, or MAC, is currently running a campaign about EI reform for workers on maternity leave. With this campaign, MAC is demanding that anyone who is on maternity leave and loses their job not be unfairly penalized by an archaic and outdated system.

This is the perfect illustration of the need for EI reform. We must put an end to the discrimination women face in accessing this program and address the injustices faced by working women.

This is also why the Bloc Québécois has been pushing for reform for a long time. We have been pushing for equality, we have been pushing for accessibility. It is time for this government to act. There is a budget in the works and it must put an end to this sexist rule and modernize the EI system.

I want to salute the MAC members who are leading this fight. We stand with them.

[English]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians know all too well, the Prime Minister has abandoned any pretense of fiscal stewardship, with his government racking up more national debt than all previous prime ministers combined. His record-shattering tax and spend agenda has driven up inflation and interest rates, increasing the cost of food, fuel and housing. It has gotten so bad that leading economists are warning that the record-high spending may delay interest rate cuts.

The common-sense Conservatives have a simple solution that could be implemented in next week's NDP-Liberal government budget: The government ought to find a dollar in savings for every dollar spent. This is a reasonable and simple lever they could use to get their inflation under control.

Oral Questions

After eight years, Canadians are in debt, exhausted and looking for relief. Let us axe the tax, build the homes, cap the spending and fix the budget. Let us bring it home.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one unlikely person has recently emerged as a new champion of carbon pricing. This is someone who has done the math personally and knows first-hand that the vast majority of Canadians get back more than they pay. I am, of course, referring to the Premier of Alberta, Danielle Smith, who recently said, "I do my family's taxes, so I know we got \$808.50.... When I go back and look at what I spent last year in carbon taxes...I would say that I probably ended up better off with that transfer." Premier Smith went on to say that carbon pricing is "the optimal way of going about and getting the outcomes you are looking for" and that this almost seems like the perfect policy.

I agree with Danielle Smith. Our plan does leave more families better off while, at the same time, addressing climate change. I want to thank her for her clarity and rational understanding of this policy.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the common-sense Conservatives are going to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

However, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost. After eight years, he has doubled the national debt, causing generational inflation and forcing two million Canadians to turn to food banks thanks to programs that did not work. His own figures show that the Prime Minister will be spending more on servicing interest on the debt than on health care.

Why is he giving more money to bankers than to doctors and nurses?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the Conservatives are the ones who keep advocating for austerity and cuts while we invest in nurses and doctors.

Oral Questions

We are here to invest \$200 billion over the next 10 years in improving our health care. We are here to offer a national school food program to help children learn on a full stomach. We are also going to be here to expand early childhood centres and child care spaces to ensure that families can care for their children and do their jobs.

We are here to invest—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is yet more proof that he is not worth the cost.

His continued out-of-control spending has caused the worst inflation in 40 years. Two million people now have to go to food banks every month. He has doubled the cost of housing, even with \$80 billion in housing programs. These programs inflate government spending and encroach on provincial jurisdiction.

Will he meet with our premiers to defend his inflationary, expansionist, centralizing approach?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will continue to meet with the provincial premiers to work on affordability for families and investments in housing.

In Quebec, for example, we have put up \$900 million for the housing accelerator fund. Quebec is in the process of matching that amount and investing to build housing across the province.

We are here to work hand in hand with the provinces to fight climate change, fight the housing crisis, invest in young people, invest in seniors and build a stronger future. Meanwhile, the Conservatives continue to preach austerity.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, common-sense Conservatives will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Indeed, his carbon tax, which the Parliamentary Budget Officer has proven costs 60% of Canadians more than they get back in rebates, is now opposed by 70% of Canadians. Everybody understands that the tax is driving people to food banks. That is why six premiers, including the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, have asked for a meeting.

Will the Prime Minister agree to a televised carbon tax conference if he is so sure of himself on this issue?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that eight out of 10 families across the country get more money back with the Canada carbon rebate attached to the price on pollution than it costs them. That is \$1,800 for a family of four in Alberta. It is thousands of dollars right across the country. These are things that are helping people with the high cost of living and groceries, at the same time as we fight climate change.

What would also be helpful is if we were able to deliver the doubling of the rural top-up to put hundreds of dollars in the pockets of Canadians, but the Conservative Party is blocking the legislation to double the rural top-up.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is mathematically impossible given that the NDP-Liberal government has a combined majority and can pass anything it wants, which is exactly why we are in such a mess today as a country. After eight years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the cost. That is why the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirms that 60% of Canadians are paying more in carbon taxes than they are getting back in rebates.

If the Prime Minister believes the contrary, why does he not have the courage to sit down in a televised and open forum and have a carbon tax conference with the premiers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did sit down with the premiers, eight years ago, and established the pan-Canadian framework on climate change that both puts a price on pollution and puts more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadian families in the jurisdictions where the federal backstop applies. That is a way of both fighting climate change and helping with affordability.

The Conservative Party is counting on taking away those Canada carbon rebate cheques, but they are arriving this coming Monday, April 15. People will see, in their bank accounts, the Canada carbon rebate that puts more money in their pockets ahead of the costs associated with fighting climate change.

● (1425)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he met the premiers in 2016. Since that time, he has broken the promise he made them. He said the tax would only go up to 11¢ a litre. Now, he admits it will go up to 61¢ a litre. He said the tax would make people better off. Now, we have the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report, which confirms that 60% of Canadians pay more than they get back.

The Prime Minister said, in 2015, "Canadians need a Prime Minister who will meet with the Premiers". What happened?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative leader continues with his misinformation and disinformation, the reality is that the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that eight out of 10 Canadians do better with our price on pollution and the Canada carbon rebate.

Speaking of misinformation and disinformation, any responsible leader that receives an endorsement and support from proven conspiracy theorist and liar Alex Jones would have immediately denounced that, but that is not what the Leader of the Opposition did. He did absolutely nothing, because those kinds of endorsements fit within his political strategy.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister interferes with Quebec's jurisdictions like a ship's captain collects life rafts.

Ottawa has no department or expertise in health, education, child care or municipal affairs. People here in Ottawa seem to forget that. However, the Prime Minister has our money because of the fiscal imbalance. Does he recognize that the National Assembly of Quebec has jurisdiction over education, health, child care and municipal affairs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always recognized and respected provincial jurisdictions, and we respect Quebec's specificity.

However, even with all the expertise of provincial governments, many Canadians are still looking for housing. Many Canadians are still looking for child care spaces. Families are still struggling. As the federal government, we are here to work in partnership with Quebec and the provinces, to invest in the supports that people need. Yes, the federal government has money, but we are here to invest with the provinces. That is what it takes to help people.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when my car breaks down, I do not give my money to the dentist.

The people in Ottawa do not understand that. They have to create all sorts of expertise in areas of jurisdiction that are not theirs. Does the Prime Minister realize that if he interferes in Quebec's jurisdictions, it is going to take longer, be more expensive and it will not improve anything?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always work hand in hand with the provinces to provide the services that Canadians need.

However, speaking of dentists, 1.7 million seniors across the country have registered for our dental care program that will be offered across the country, including in Quebec. We are here to ensure that seniors in Quebec and the rest of the country have the necessary services and the health care that they could not afford before this year. We are here to contribute to the well-being of Quebecers and all Canadians. We will always work respectfully in partnership with the provinces to do so.

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[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Climate Deny and Mr. Climate Delay strike again. The Corporate Knights' report shows that the Prime Minister is delaying \$15 billion that he promised to hard-working Canadians to lower their

Oral Questions

costs and emissions, yet he has no problem finding \$18.6 billion in free subsidies for big oil and gas.

Why is it that the Prime Minister wants to shoulder the burden of the climate crisis on hard-working people and not give them a hand, but wants to give billions of dollars, like the Conservatives, to big oil and gas corporations?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we committed to phasing out inefficient oil and gas subsidies two years ahead of all our partners around the world, and we are going to continue to do that, but it is unfortunate to see that the NDP seems to be falling into the Conservative misinformation trap.

Our price on pollution actually puts more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadian families right across the country, particularly middle-income and low-income families, while we continue to fight climate change. Yes, we developed a way to fight climate change and to reduce emissions while putting more money in the pockets of people, and we are going to keep doing that.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is delaying the \$15 billion for hard-working people, and that is wrong.

[Translation]

Last summer, kids could not play in the park because of smoke from forest fires. The Liberals' brilliant plan is to delay climate action. They have earmarked \$18 billion for subsidies to big oil, but they are delaying \$15 billion in investments that would address the climate crisis and help people.

Why is the Prime Minister choosing to put money in CEO's pockets instead of helping people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true that, every year, we see the worsening impact of climate change, and the costs of extreme weather events are increasingly affecting Canadians, our economy and our country. That is why we are going to continue to fight climate change while putting more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians. That is a responsible plan to fight climate change and help with the cost of living.

Unfortunately, the Conservative Party still refuses to put out any sort of plan to fight climate change and wants to take away investments that would help Canadians.

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

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the incoming leader of the Liberal Party has just given a speech and given advice to his soon-to-be predecessor. Mark Carney said that he agrees there should be a carbon tax conference, where the premiers can come together and share their concerns about the Prime Minister raising the cost of living and breaking the backs of Canadians. If the Prime Minister will not listen to me and will not listen to the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, will he at least listen to his successor and meet with the premiers on the carbon tax?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for folks and for Canadians who are watching this debate to be careful about the misinformation being spewed by the Leader of the Opposition.

It is important for a responsible government in this country to have a plan to address climate change and to do so in a manner that enhances and addresses affordability concerns. That is exactly what the price on pollution does. Eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back. Two hundred economists across the country agree with us.

It is such a shame that we have a bunch of climate deniers over there who have no plan for the environment and no plan for the economy.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mark Carney, who is the next Liberal leader, is a fierce supporter of the carbon tax. He has been called Mark “carbon tax” Carney in the past. He is willing at least to defend his carbon tax views in front of the premiers, but the Prime Minister is not. He is running for cover and hiding from Canadians, refusing to defend his own policy decisions.

If the Prime Minister is really so proud of his plan to hike the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre, why will he not listen to Mark Carney and have a big, open, televised carbon tax conference?

• (1435)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that the Leader of the Opposition seems so fond of Mark Carney these days, who actually, as the member says, does believe in a price on pollution. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should listen to him.

However, with respect to the premiers, it is important to know that the premiers have every right to submit a plan that actually meets the federal benchmark and to put in place their own price on pollution. That is something that British Columbia has done. That is something that Quebec has done.

Premier Moe was actually here recently and testified before the committee. Premier Moe said that he looked at alternatives to the price on pollution and found every one of them to be too expensive. This is from the guy who had no climate plan, no—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Thornhill.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Prime Minister increased the carbon tax by 23% on

Canadians, on gas, on groceries and on home heating. He is doubling down and defying 70% of Canadians and eight premiers who want him to axe the tax. Six of those premiers wrote to the Prime Minister asking for a meeting to talk about his punishing carbon tax. Instead, the Prime Minister just shot down the idea because they already had a meeting, eight years ago.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how many premiers he met in 2016 who are still in power today?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, actions speak more than words. Our actions on this side of the House—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am going to ask the hon. minister to start again because the Chair sincerely could not hear what the minister was saying.

The hon. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Hon. Jenna Sudds: Mr. Speaker, as I said, actions speak louder than words. On this side of the House, our actions include over 750,000 families who benefit from affordable child care spaces with over 100,000 new spaces across the country, seven million children whose parents benefit from the Canada child benefit and a national school food policy.

Their actions are to vote against funding to increase the number of spaces and to vote against a national school food policy. They have made it clear: They are not there for Canadian families.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the minister missed the question, but Canadians certainly missed the answer. It is zero. The year 2016 is the last time he had a meeting. Pokémon GO, dabbing and Harambe were popular in 2016, and people could get an apartment for half the price. Since the last time the Prime Minister had a meeting with the premiers, gas and groceries have skyrocketed, and interest rates have increased 10 times over.

Will he put aside his desperation and defiance, do some work around here and meet the premiers?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians will see today is one thing they will not hear from the Conservatives: the cost of inaction, the cost of forest fires, the cost of flooding in our country, the cost of drought. When each of the Conservatives is standing up, they are telling Canadians they have no plan to fight climate change. On this side of the House, we recognize, like all Canadians, that we need to act to save the planet, and we need to act on climate change. That is why we are going to invest in Canadians. That is why we are going to continue to invest to make sure we have a planet to leave for our children.

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[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, housing in Canada is in very bad shape. Rents have doubled and mortgages have doubled.

What is this government doing? It has a policy of photo ops. Every announcement comes with a photo op. Yesterday, they really outdid themselves. Yesterday, the Prime Minister did a photo op while perched on the roof. Unfortunately, a photo op on a roof does not put a roof over Canadians' heads.

What is the government's plan for helping Canadians who are currently grappling with a housing crisis the likes of which has never been seen in our country's history?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we said yesterday, there are two clear figures: six and 8,000. During his time as housing minister, the Conservative leader created six new affordable housing units across the entire country. In contrast, just a few weeks ago, in the riding of my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, we announced a project called Le Central, which alone has created 42 new affordable housing units. That means that in his riding alone, which he does not seem to know about, we have created seven times as many affordable housing units as his Conservative leader did during his entire tenure as housing minister.

● (1440)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member and minister from Quebec City that I am well aware of what is happening in my riding and that, yes, people are struggling right now. Yes, inflation directly affects them. Yes, this government keeps spending recklessly without any control. That is fuelling inflation. When the government does not control its spending, it fuels inflation.

The member and minister is also a seasoned academic. When he goes back to his university, how will explain to his future students that a budget can balance itself, as the Prime Minister claims?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two things that I would like to say to my colleague, whom I greatly respect. First, austerity is not a solution to Canada's economic problems in 2024. Second, in academia, as well as in human and political relations, relationships are based on respect.

Oral Questions

I would invite the member to meet with the City of Quebec's administration and personally apologize for the insulting remarks his leader made about Quebec's municipalities by saying they were incompetent.

Is there anyone more incompetent than the person who created only six affordable housing units during his entire term in office as housing minister in 2014?

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, another day, another example of interference. Today, it is the mental health of students that the Liberals want to manage.

The same government that, let me remind the House, cannot even pay its own public servants with Phoenix, the same government that could not print passports, the same government that lost control of the border and exacerbated the housing crisis now wants to manage the care provided to young people in distress. Is that reassuring? I do not feel reassured.

Since the federal government has no expertise in mental health care, since it does not have any clinics or psychologists, let us be serious. Will the government transfer the money to Quebec?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we invest in housing, the Bloc Québécois and the Conservatives complain. When we invest in a program to ensure that our kids do not go to school hungry, the Bloc Québécois and the Conservatives complain. When we invest in our seniors, the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois complain.

These two parties are like two peas in a blue pod. At the end of the day, we are dealing with a grumpy smurf and a grouchy smurf.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this jokey smurf simply wants to remind the minister that the federal government has managed to collaborate sensibly in the past.

Let us not forget that it copied our child care system to offer something similar to Canadians. Since this falls under Quebec's jurisdiction, the feds simply gave us our funding with no strings attached. Everyone was happy.

Why would it be any different with mental health, with the pharmacare we have been managing for 27 years, with the housing tribunal we have been managing for 44 years or with the dental coverage we have been managing for 50 years?

Why not just transfer the money to Quebec?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is never happy.

We invest in housing; they are unhappy, they complain. We invest in children; they are unhappy, they complain. We invest in food programs; they are unhappy, they complain.

The Bloc Québécois is completely losing its identity. In fact, the Bloc members are being eclipsed by the Conservatives.

*Oral Questions***CLIMATE CHANGE**

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals try to govern Quebec, there is no one governing at the federal level. There is no one coming up with a real transition plan for the fisheries. There is no one tabling an overhaul of employment insurance.

We found out this morning that the federal government is \$14 billion behind on the climate investments it promised.

The government is so busy interfering in everyone else's business that it is forgetting to take care of major issues that fall directly under its responsibility. Since there is no shortage of work to be done at the federal level, why are the Liberals not taking care of it?

• (1445)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, I was involved for a long time in environmental organizations fighting climate change. At the time, we all dreamed of a federal government that would invest billions of dollars in the fight against climate change. It never happened until we came along.

Back then, the investments amounted to a few hundred million dollars. Now our government has committed more than \$100 billion to the fight against climate change. That is an absolute record in our country. We are transforming the economy and jobs for decades to come and fighting climate change.

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[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. The Prime Minister raised his carbon tax 23% last week, driving up the cost of gas and groceries. Fortunately, Conservative Bill C-234 would exempt farmers' grain drying and barn heating from the carbon tax so food remains affordable.

Will the Prime Minister lower costs on farmers and make food cheaper by passing Bill C-234 in its original form?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, it is important to ensure we are dealing with the facts. Ninety-seven per cent of on-farm fuels are exempt from the price on pollution, and there is a rebate to address farmers' and farm incomes on a go-forward basis.

In Canada, eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back. In fact, Professor Dolter at the University of Regina, whom the hon. member might want to go talk to, called out the Conservatives last week for misinformation. When the Conservative leader's ally, Scott Moe, appeared before committee on the carbon price, journalists called his appearance a "parade of nonsense" and "completely dishonest".

Conservative slogans and misinformation do not help Canadians with—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Regina—Wascana.

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Prime Minister is not going to back down from his carbon tax obsession. It is clear that he is going to continue to raise the carbon tax on gas, groceries and home heating and make life even more expensive for Canadians.

Since the Prime Minister refuses to call a carbon tax election, will he at least meet with the premiers and listen to their plans to make life more affordable?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows full well, provinces and territories can put in place their own price on pollution. That is what British Columbia has done. That is what Quebec has done. Those provinces are actually committed to fighting climate change, but the hon. member comes from a province that has no climate plan and no climate targets. The premier admits the price on pollution is the most cost-effective way to reduce emissions, yet he does nothing. That is a shame.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are tapped out. April 1 saw Canadians hit with a 23% carbon tax increase by these Liberals. As a farmer, I know the first-hand true impact of a carbon tax bill on farm operations. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. It is time to axe the tax on farmers and food and pass Bill C-234.

Will the Prime Minister lower costs on farmers and make food cheaper by passing Bill C-234 in its original form?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to remind my colleague that, as a farmer, I am fully aware that farmers are on the front line of climate change. It is important to realize that farmers are devastated by massive storms. In the Prairies, straw is worth \$300 a bale. That is crazy.

We have a plan to address climate change and we have a Canada carbon rebate that puts more money in eight out of 10 Canadians' pockets. We are addressing climate change and making sure polluters pay.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister tweets out sunny ways from his rooftop, food banks in Simcoe County are reporting a 100% increase in use. Last week at the Angus Food Bank, director Heather Morgan told me that active soldiers from Base Borden are regular visitors. Let that sink in.

Meanwhile, Liberals hike the carbon tax by 23% and continue to delay the common-sense bill, Bill C-234.

Will the Prime Minister pass Bill C-234 in its original form, axe the tax on farmers and make food more affordable for all Canadians?

• (1450)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the whole structure of the price on pollution, as the hon. member knows, is done in a manner that creates an incentive to reduce carbon emissions but does so in a manner that is affordable for Canadians. Eight out of 10 Canadians get more money back. It works in direct proportion to income so that those who live on modest incomes are the best off with respect to carbon pricing.

Climate change is real, whether the Conservatives like to understand that or not. Their premiers, Scott Moe and Danielle Smith, have both admitted that carbon pricing is the most effective and efficient way to reduce emissions. Get with the program.

The Speaker: All members should make sure that questions and comments are directed through the Chair.

[Translation]

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

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[English]

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thanks to the NDP, we now have dental care in Canada. This was opposed by the corporate Conservatives at every single step.

New Democrats fought for the nearly two million seniors who will benefit from the dental care program in a few weeks' time. Dentists are raising concerns about the rollout of the program. Seniors should not have to wait any longer to benefit from going to their dentists.

What will the minister do to ensure that every senior who is registered will benefit from the dental care program without delay?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is exactly right. When parties work together and focus on solutions, we get things done. That means making sure that millions of Canadians who do not have access to oral health care are going to get dental care. There are 1.7 million seniors who have signed up. We have seen hundreds of thousands of dental providers across the country sign up. We are creating a new portal to make sure that it is even easier for dentists to participate.

Oral Questions

By working together, both as parliamentarians and as Canadians, we can get through difficult times by making things better together.

* * *

SENIORS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the guaranteed income supplement is a lifeline for seniors across this country. Shamefully, at a time when grocery prices and rents are sky high, the Liberals are clawing back this support for more than 100,000 seniors receiving workers' compensation. This is wrong. The Liberals should not be punishing seniors who are injured on the job.

When will the government reverse the clawback so that seniors can afford groceries and rent?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand in the House next to the Minister of Health as we roll out one of the largest social programs that Canada has ever seen. We are now up to 1.8 million seniors who are registered for Canada's new dental program. This is something that will save lives. This is something that will restore dignity to the lives of so many seniors.

With so many seniors who have registered up until the month of May, I look forward to more seniors enjoying the dignity of quality health care regardless of injury and regardless of birthright.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the government released its defence policy "Strong, Secure, Engaged". Since then, the world has fundamentally changed. Russia has attacked Ukraine, the Arctic is more accessible to foreign actors and the international rules that have kept us safe for over 75 years are increasingly challenged. As a member of the Standing Committee on National Defence, I have personally advocated for a modernization of our defence policy to better meet the needs of today.

Can the Minister of National Defence update the House on the government's work to update our existing defence policy?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share with the House that, yesterday, we released our renewed vision for defence. "Our North, Strong and Free" is a clear plan to build Canadian Armed Forces that will defend our sovereignty and protect our interests globally.

Oral Questions

It is a responsible plan that will support the members of the Canadian Armed Forces and help us grow their numbers. It is a plan to acquire and maintain the equipment and capabilities that they require to fulfill their missions. It is a plan to assert our sovereignty to defend our country and our continent. Finally, it is a plan that makes us strong at home so that we can be strong around the world.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government and its carbon tax, Canadians are struggling to put food on their tables. When we tax the farmer who grows the food and tax the trucker who ships the food, we punish all Canadians who buy the food. Food banks, like the Cambridge Food Bank, are now seeing record-breaking demand. The Prime Minister's 23% carbon tax hike is not worth the cost.

Will the Prime Minister lower the cost on farmers and make food cheaper by passing Bill C-234 in its original form?

• (1455)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talks about putting food on the table. I am proud to be part of a government that believes that hungry kids should have food on the table. I am proud to be part of a government that is taking action to implement a school food program so those hungry kids are able to eat when they go to school. It is unbelievable to me to hear this rhetoric from Conservative opposition members when they had the gall to stand up and vote against putting food on the table for hungry kids.

They talk a big game, but when they have a chance to do anything to put food on the table for my constituents, they oppose it at every turn. We will do what it takes to help working-class and middle-class families and kids when it comes to putting food on the table.

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that minister is so out of touch, because here are the facts. After eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, we have a record-smashing two million Canadians using a food bank in a single month, with over a million more expected this year. Food banks, like the one in Cambridge, are now seeing dual-income families, full-time working Canadians and our seniors lining up at the food banks. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Will the Prime Minister finally show some compassion and make food cheaper for Canadians by passing Bill C-234 in its original form?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the moms and dads across this country whom we have been helping, I worry for them. The Leader of the Opposition has been very clear and his actions are all we need to know, all we need to point to. We point to the Conservatives' opposition of a motion and a vote to support a national school food program. We can point to their opposition of a vote to expand funding for more child care to help families out. Their actions are clear. They will cut, cut, cut.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberal government and the Prime Minister's 23% carbon tax is not worth the cost. The Prime Minister does not understand that if we tax the farmer who grows the food, we end up taxing the family who buys it.

People are struggling in New Brunswick; 40 to 50 military families need to visit the Gagetown food bank just to feed their kids. UNB had to create its own food bank to feed its students.

Will the Prime Minister lower costs on farmers and make food cheaper by passing Bill C-234 in its original form?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to take seriously the hon. member's criticism when he and his party voted against a pay raise for the men and women who serve this country in uniform.

When we come to this chamber every day, we have an opportunity to stand up for policies that help middle-class families put food on the table. When we cut taxes for the middle class and raised it on the wealthiest 1%, the Conservatives voted against it. When we stopped sending child care cheques to the wealthiest people in this country so that we could put more in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families, they voted against it. Now they want to justify their climate denialism by taking hundreds of dollars from families who live in our communities. It is not right, and we are going to do what it takes to help people.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we tax the farmer who grows the food and we tax the trucker who hauls the food, then we hurt the families who buy the food. Things have gotten so bad under the Liberal-NDP carbon tax coalition that military families stationed in Borden and Gagetown are having to use food banks, and troops trained right here in Ottawa are relying on food donations from college staff.

After eight long years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Will the Prime Minister lower the cost on Canadian farmers and make food more affordable for all Canadians by passing Bill C-234 in its original form immediately?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me respond, because I share the concern about the welfare of every member of the Canadian Armed Forces. We work very hard to make sure that our forces receive all the supports in housing and financial supports that they require to do the important missions they perform for all of us in this country. We recently negotiated, for example, a very substantial pay raise, because they have earned it and they deserve it, which is why it was such a huge disappointment when that member and all of his colleagues voted against the money for that pay raise.

We have a responsibility in the House to support the men and women who protect our country.

* * *

• (1500)

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, imposing visas on Mexicans was necessary, but the federal government promised that it would not affect workers. Eastern Quebec is reeling from delays in the arrival of temporary foreign workers for fisheries and processing.

Fortunately, after the leader of the Bloc Québécois wrote to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and the Prime Minister on March 25, the situation improved. This improvement is commendable, but we still have concerns.

We are simply seeking reassurance from the minister. Can he confirm today that all workers will arrive as quickly as possible and that this situation will not affect other sectors, such as agriculture?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his excellent question.

Obviously, we all want a successful fishing season, whether in Quebec or Canada, as these fisheries depend on Mexican visas that are now required to be stamped in Mexico.

We are working around the clock, seven days a week, to make sure that this stamping is done on time. We will get it done. We will keep at it. We are not out of the woods yet, but I am hopeful, knowing how hard the teams are working on this.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is a way to be responsible both at the borders and towards the entire fishing and processing economy in the Gaspé Peninsula and eastern Quebec. We simply have to work sensibly and without partisanship.

The collaboration of the Minister of Immigration is commendable, but he has the fate of an entire industry in his hands. One company has already shut down because workers did not arrive in time for the opening of the fishery. Others fear they may suffer the same fate when the lobster season opens.

Can the minister reassure them and confirm that their workers will arrive as soon as possible?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said very clearly to the mem-

ber's colleague, we are working around the clock to make sure that happens. Obviously, the imposition of the Mexican visa, a very important measure that was warmly welcomed by the Bloc Québécois, is something we must continue to emphasize.

There are workers who now have to have their passports stamped in Mexico, and this must continue. They must do so in collaboration with the third parties who help these factories.

At Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, we will work around the clock to ensure that the turnaround time is 24 hours.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after more than eight years of this Liberal government, we all know it is not worth the cost.

Housing prices continue to rise at a breakneck pace and the government is overlooking municipalities in plans to increase new housing construction.

Will the Prime Minister finally build housing and cut red tape in his next budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we really do not need any lessons from the Conservatives.

We are presenting a plan for Canadians, a plan to build more housing, a plan to create more jobs and a plan to increase prosperity in this country.

Canadians watching at home understand that slogans do not create jobs; slogans do not build homes; and slogans do not create economic prosperity.

We will let the Conservatives work on slogans and videos while we focus on what matters to Canadians.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation is warning that housing prices will continue to skyrocket. The average cost of an apartment could go up 27% over the next three years in the greater Montreal area.

A Conservative government will reward cities that build more housing.

Why will the Prime Minister not listen to common sense and work with provincial and municipal partners to build the housing we need for the well-being of all Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure people at home laugh when they hear a Conservative member talk about working with municipalities. The last time the Conservative leader spoke to the mayors of Quebec City and Montreal, he insulted them. Does anyone at home think working together means insulting others?

In 2024, working together is the way to go. That is why we came up with a plan that will build more homes, help more young people and create more prosperity. That is what working for Canadians looks like.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk about another scandal. After eight years of this Liberal government, the number of homeless people across Canada is skyrocketing.

Let us take Saint-Jérôme, for example. According to a Radio-Canada article that came out this morning, Isa, a woman who recently became homeless, said, “I could ask my daughter for help, but I don't want to burden her.”

Does this government have any heart?

My question is simple: Will the Prime Minister finally build real housing instead of adding to the bureaucracy in his budget next Tuesday?

• (1505)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is vital that we invest in building housing. In fact, we are making investments along with Quebec in building affordable housing.

After reaching a \$1.8-billion agreement with Quebec, we are going to build 8,000 affordable housing units in Quebec alone.

[English]

In comparison, across the entire country when the Conservative leader was the housing minister, the Conservatives constructed a total of six affordable housing units nationwide. There is no contest when it comes to supporting the most vulnerable. I question their authenticity, when they actually talk about the investments, when they vote against the money behind the programs.

* * *

[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people of Davenport are concerned about the fact that the Conservative Party wants to cut their Canada carbon rebate. For the majority of Canadians, every penny counts. The people in my riding rely on these cheques.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell the House how carbon pricing is lowering our emissions and how these cheques are helping Canadian families?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question and for her efforts to speak French.

I want to note that next Monday, April 15, the Canada carbon rebate will increase. A family in her province, Ontario, will receive \$280 four times a year.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer said two weeks ago that carbon pricing is the measure that least impacts the economy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. More than 200 economists concur and the Premier of Saskatchewan, with whom I hardly ever agree, also admitted that it was the best way to reduce climate change.

* * *

[English]

FINANCE

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister's record high debt and deficits, he is not worth the cost of his overpriced socks. Inflation and interest rates continue to make lives worse. Now an economist has said that interest rate cuts may be further delayed because of the NDP-Liberal government's out-of-control spending.

The Conservatives have offered a common-sense solution to fix the upcoming budget.

When will the Prime Minister stop his out-of-control deficits with a dollar-for-dollar rule, find a dollar in savings for every new dollar he spends?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. What we are presenting to Canadians is a plan to build more homes. What we are presenting to Canadians is a plan to create more jobs. What we are presenting to Canadians is a plan for prosperity.

On the other side of the House, it is slogans. Canadians at home understand that slogans do not create jobs, slogans do not build homes and slogans do not build prosperity. We will let them invent a new slogan while we focus on the matters of Canadians.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberal government's addiction to spending is out of control. It is getting high off an unsafe supply of drugs and borrowed money. Its spending habit is driving up inflation. Interest rate cuts might be stalled because of out-of-control spending. Its far-left allies in B.C. just had their credit rating cut.

The Prime Minister and his socialist coalition are not worth the cost. The government must find a dollar in savings for every dollar spent.

Will the Prime Minister cap spending with a dollar-for-dollar rule to bring down inflation—

The Speaker: The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite continues to ask questions but not really focus on what her party has continuously done, which is vote against measures to support Canadians time and time again: 120 votes prior to the holidays; all-night voting; voting against children; voting against supports for families; and voting against our military.

Therefore, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives in terms of supporting Canadians, because our government will always be there for them.

• (1510)

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, the Prime Minister continues to demonstrate that he is not worth the cost.

The government has added more to the national debt than all previous prime ministers combined. Now a leading economist has stated that interest rate cuts are being delayed because of massive government overspending.

Will the Prime Minister cap government spending with a dollar-for-dollar rule that finds one dollar of savings for every dollar of new spending so that interest rates come down and people can stay in their homes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us look at the facts. Inflation is at 2.8%, down for two months in a row below 3%. We have a AAA credit rating, and just in the last nine months, a food program for students in school. We are going to make sure that there are homes built across the country.

How did that member and his Ontario colleagues vote when it came to the plant in St. Thomas? How did they vote when it came to the Ford plant? They voted against. We are here for Canadians. That is what they expect. We are going to do that each and every day.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that folks need to be connected, especially in rural, remote and indigenous communities in Alberta. It allows access to education, jobs, health care services and innovation that otherwise would be unreachable.

Unfortunately, for 10 years, the Conservatives failed to prioritize investments in connectivity. Because of their lack of action, communities in my province have been left out of those opportunities. The good news is that our government is tackling this issue head-on.

Could the government tell us what progress has been made toward connecting Albertans to affordable quality—

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Hon. Gудie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, we have been

Oral Questions

making investments in Alberta so that Albertans can access the tools of the 21st century. Today, just under 90% of Albertans have access to high-speed Internet.

In March, I was there to announce 14 projects to connect over 22,000 homes, 3,400 indigenous homes, all in rural Alberta. This \$112-million investment is in partnership with the province as part of our commitment to connect all Canadians by 2030.

We will always stick up for Albertans. My colleague, the MP for Calgary Skyview, always sticks up for Albertans and his constituents too.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are experiencing the brunt of the climate crisis, with damage caused by flooding and the fear of wildfire evacuations, all while the Liberals are rewarding the very people who are getting rich off of it.

The Liberals gave over \$18 billion to rich oil and gas companies last year, and, today, we found out that they broke \$15 billion in climate promises. They announced \$15 billion just for the photo ops.

Why is it that the Liberals have no problem rewarding Canada's biggest polluters, but they will not invest in our children's futures?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, I was an environmental activist for many years. In those years, we could only dream of a federal government that would invest tens of billions of dollars in the transition to fight climate change, to create the jobs and the economy of the 21st century.

We have committed more than \$100 billion since 2015 in the fight against climate change. That is not double what had been done before. That is not four times more than what had been done before. That is not 10 times more. It is 20 times more. It has never been done before in Canada in terms of investment to fight climate change and create opportunities for the 21st century.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians were let down when the Liberals suddenly ended the greener homes program. Yesterday, we learned that over a billion dollars promised for the program went unspent.

Privilege

Meanwhile, across Canada, hundreds of people built their careers and businesses on providing service as a part of the greener homes program. They were urged to do that by the government. Now they feel like the rug has been pulled out from under them. Some of them are selling their equipment.

Why has the minister left these important clean energy workers in limbo?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the discussion that he and I had at the airport on this subject. I think we were intending to meet more about this going forward.

The greener homes program was, indeed, very successful. We actually utilized all the funding early. Thus, we have closed the portal. However, we have also announced that we will be moving forward with a new program that will be focused on folks who live on modest incomes, enabling them to make deep retrofits moving forward to reduce carbon emissions and to enhance their energy savings on an ongoing basis. We are very much committed to putting that in force.

* * *

• (1515)

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS

The Speaker: I would like to take a moment to make a statement concerning the question of privilege raised by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. Yesterday, on April 8, 2024, the member raised concerns on the government responses to Order Paper questions. As indicated by the member is his comments, I signed these responses when I was the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister. So that no conflict of interest may be perceived, I will recuse myself from this matter and I will not comment further on this. I have requested that the Deputy Speaker rule on the question of privilege. He will therefore return with a ruling in a timely manner.

[English]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the question of privilege raised by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

The question of privilege concerns a clear and potentially intentional omission of facts from a recently answered Order Paper question known as Question No. 1445. It would appear the government has acted irresponsibly and violated parliamentary procedure, therefore breaching trust.

In a question I sent to the government, I asked the Prime Minister's Office to outline when the government asked social media to take down content. This is commonly referred to as censorship. The government sent me an answer on the many times it had done this, but apparently this was only partially true, because there were omissions made.

On Friday, April 5, Allen Sutherland, an assistant secretary to the cabinet in the Privy Council Office, testified at the public inquiry

on foreign interference. During his testimony, Mr. Sutherland revealed that in 2019 the Privy Council Office had asked Facebook to take down a post about the Prime Minister from the Buffalo Chronicle. He also mentioned that Facebook had honoured the request, leading to the removal of the content from the platform.

This is why I add to the question of privilege. This request for a takedown was not reported in the answer to the question I sent to the government, which means that there was clearly an omission made. I asked the government to report on its content takedown requests from 2016 onward, and I listed Facebook as one of the platforms I wanted to know about.

There was a clear omission from my Order Paper question and the answer I received, which has failed to satisfy its purpose in providing the truth based on what I had asked. This is a major concern, and it undermines trust in the institution in which electors place their confidence. How can we operate as a parliamentary democracy if the government cannot be trusted to answer questions from the official opposition, especially on matters of censorship?

Mr. Speaker, it is awfully loud in here. I have put up with it for quite some time, but perhaps you could bring that down.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I would invite all members who wish to carry on conversations to do so outside the chamber.

I invite the hon. member for Lethbridge to continue her remarks.

[English]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I support this question of privilege in light of the violation of government's obligation to answer an Order Paper question, but I also add to it, considering how the government has taken steps to take control of the Internet in Canada.

It has done this through legislation like Bill C-11, which centralizes regulatory control of what Canadians can see, hear and post online based on what the government deems "Canadian".

In addition, I highlight Bill C-18, which has resulted in the government being one of the biggest gatekeepers of news in Canada. This is a major conflict of interest and a direct attack on journalistic integrity in this country.

Now, most recently, through Bill C-63, the government proposes to establish an entire commission, yet another arm of the government, that would regulate online harm.

How can Canadians trust the government to police various aspects of the Internet if it cannot even be honest and tell the truth about the content requested to be taken down? Trust is pinnacle and frankly the government has not earned any of it. The truth must prevail.

Mr. Speaker, you have the opportunity to look into this and to get to the bottom of it, or you can keep us in the dark and allow secrecy and injustice to reign. I understand that you are the one to make this decision, and we are putting our trust in you to make sure that this place is upheld and democracy is kept strong.

• (1520)

[Translation]

The Speaker: I thank the member for Lethbridge for her comments on this matter.

Her question of privilege is very similar to the question of privilege raised by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. As I said in my statement, since I was the parliamentary secretary who signed that answer to the Order Paper questions, I will let the Deputy Speaker make the ruling. I am recusing myself from the discussion on this subject.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX EMERGENCY MEETING

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is disturbing that Parliament must vote for a meeting between the Prime Minister and the premiers, but we have no choice, because the Prime Minister refuses to listen.

What happened to the sunny ways and openness that this Prime Minister once preached?

It is very easy to see why Canadian premiers have lost their trust in the Prime Minister over his failed carbon tax, because he has continued to mislead them for eight years. Before 2019, the Prime Minister's former environment minister promised Canadians not to raise the carbon tax over \$50 a tonne. After the election, the Prime Minister announced his plan to quadruple the carbon tax. In fact, the current environment minister is now refusing to rule out any further carbon tax hikes. I asked the environment minister if he could promise Canadians to not raise his carbon tax over \$170 a tonne. He refused to answer. I wonder why.

The Prime Minister also told Canadians they would get more back than they paid in carbon tax, but the government's own Parliamentary Budget Officer proved that wrong. In fact, the majority of Canadians will pay more in carbon tax than they get back. It is no wonder the premiers across Canada have lost trust in this government's carbon tax scam. It is no wonder they are demanding a meeting with the Prime Minister.

It sure does not help when his environment minister punishes Canadians for driving their cars and heating their homes as he jets around the globe lecturing others. The hypocrisy is truly astounding, and Canadian premiers are right to call this government out.

In conclusion, the great Winston Churchill once said, "For a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."

Business of Supply

He was right. Now the Prime Minister and his radical environment minister believe they can carbon tax Canada into environmental prosperity, a belief so foolish that in doing so they have united Canadians in opposition to their carbon tax.

This is not the unity that a Prime Minister is supposed to create. A Prime Minister is supposed to unite a country by lifting it up, not tearing it down.

However, a newfound unity does bring hope to Canadians, for the days of this NDP-Liberal government are coming to an end, and Canadians will soon get to elect a common-sense Conservative government that will axe the carbon tax for everyone, for good.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout the debate on opposition days, and we have had many opposition days on the very same issue, one of the things that remain constant is the fact that the Conservative Party of Canada continues to want to mislead Canadians on the important issue of a price on pollution.

I am wondering if the member could be very clear in his indications and indicate that when they say they are cutting the tax, they are also talking about cutting the rebate, by which 80% of Manitobans receive more money back than they actually pay in the tax, and which has given a very encouraging climate incentive for reducing fossil fuel use.

• (1525)

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, the truth is that this government is planning to quadruple the carbon tax. That is four times, quadruple.

Right now, I have lots of homeowners forwarding their natural gas bills, \$100 gas bills that have 100 dollars' worth of carbon tax on them right now. The Liberals want to quadruple that.

His natural gas bill, his energy bill, is going to go up to \$500 when it is all said and done, thanks to this government.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, there certainly is an affordability crisis in this country, in large part caused by oil and gas companies across the country that are gouging Canadians at the pumps. While the carbon tax went up just over three cents a litre last year, and rebates went up with it, the profits, pure profits, of the oil and gas industry went up 18¢ a litre, to just over 42¢ or so, yet there is no mention of that in this motion.

Does the member have any explanation for why that is the case?

Business of Supply

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, speaking of profits, we simply have to do the math. This government is promising to quadruple the carbon tax. If we take my example of \$100 in natural gas costs and \$100, right now, of carbon tax, and quadruple that, there is a massive amount of profit by this government right now, not by oil and gas companies.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this motion before us raises an interesting idea. I am certainly one for discussion and dialogue, especially at times when we differ across the country, so I appreciate it being brought forward.

My question is for my hon. friend down the way. In question period today, one of his colleagues got up and claimed that the carbon tax was 23%. That kind of statement, which is patently false, really clouds Canadians' understanding of the issue that is before us.

Could the member share whether he agrees that we should be accurate when we are citing numbers and percentages, so that we are not misinforming the people we represent?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, actually, the carbon tax went up by 23% on April 1.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a farmer himself, as I am, could the member talk about how this carbon tax increase is impacting the cost of production for farmers right across this country, how that leads to higher costs for people who have to buy food, and why we are seeing more and more people in lineups at food banks and soup kitchens across the country, as well as about the issue of unaffordability that has been created by the Liberal-NDP carbon tax coalition?

Could the member also reflect on the fact that the Prime Minister refuses to meet with the premiers to find a better solution that does not negatively impact Canadians from coast to coast to coast?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question.

The introduction of the carbon tax and the evolution of it over the last eight years have fundamentally changed rural Canada, how we do business and how we think about making money. Agriculture, being an energy-intensive industry, is being impacted the most, by far. Nowhere has the Liberal government even tried to address that.

That is why we are bringing forward this motion today.

● (1530)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I will start where the last question left off, which was the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman's asking why the premiers cannot get together to come up with a new solution.

I realize that is what part of the motion gets to, and my response would be that the whole point of the program that is set up is that we do not need to have one solution for the entire country. As a matter of fact, premiers are encouraged to come up with solutions that work just for their provinces; that is the whole point of the system. It is only when a premier refuses to do anything that the backstop comes in. For example, B.C. might decide to put a price on consumer use or put a consumer price on carbon. Quebec might decide that it might partner with other jurisdictions in North America

through the western initiative on cap and trade. Another province might come up with a different solution.

All that matters is that they reach a benchmark in terms of their commitment to reduce emissions. It is only when no plan is put forward by provinces that the backstop kicks in. Therefore I find the discussion we are having about premiers really interesting, when the Government of Canada is making it very easy for the premiers to develop and set up their own systems and their own plans to deal with carbon emissions.

My assessment is that the current position the premiers have been taking on the price on pollution, the carbon tax and the federal backstop, is that they are just using the narrative of the Leader of the Opposition, what he has been saying about the carbon tax while never mentioning the rebates, as an opportunity to ride his political coattails to keep hammering down on an issue they know is false.

No premier in this country knows that what the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Carleton, is saying is misinformation better than the Premier of Alberta, Danielle Smith, does, because in 2021 she had a lot to say about pricing pollution. One would have thought that she was promoting the policy on behalf of the federal government with her conviction and the manner in which she had so much to say about pricing pollution.

These are not my words, but the words of the Premier of Alberta, Danielle Smith. She said this in an interview for the Fraser Institute, in a discussion she was having with someone: "Let's begin with talking about when carbon pricing at the federal level was first introduced. We talked about it being \$50 [a] tonne, and then recently we heard it's actually going to go to \$170 [a] tonne over the next nine years." She goes on to say, "That [sounds] like somebody sat down and done some number crunching and they've come up with [the] optimal value, as well as the optimal period of time to phase it in, and from the work you've done on this, you've even said that they're suggesting that this is going to have no impact on gross domestic product either...this almost seems like the perfect policy."

That was from Danielle Smith, who is now the Premier of Alberta, but when she made those comments in 2021 she was not.

She went on to say, “I do my family's taxes, so I know we got \$808.50. We get an extra little bump for me and my husband because we live in a rural environment. When I go back and look [to see] what I spent last year in carbon taxes, because I was working from home, I wasn't commuting, my gas bills were way down, and even the amount of tax that I paid on my home heating because we're principally natural gas where I live, I would say that I probably ended up better off with that transfer. I think a lot of people would be of the view that, if you're going to implement some kind of carbon or revenue-neutral carbon pricing, that is probably not a bad way of doing it.”

• (1535)

These are Danielle Smith's own words from 2021, saying how much she believed in the carbon pricing system that we had developed and that is known throughout the world, and speaking in favour of it. Not only that, but doing the math herself and adding up her bills, she came to the conclusion that she gets more back than she pays. What happened to Danielle Smith since 2021? Oh, she became the leader of the United Conservative Party of Alberta, and now she has to suddenly start spinning the rhetoric of the Leader of the Opposition in the House because she looks at it as an opportunity for political gain.

That is what we are dealing with right now: premiers in this country who are looking for short-term political gain, and it is all at the expense of future generations. It is all at the expense of doing what is right. Danielle Smith knows what is right in terms of pricing pollution. She said it herself. She did the math herself. She came to the conclusion herself that she was better off, but it did not stop her from doing a complete about-face the moment she started to represent the far right ideology of the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Carleton.

Therefore, Canadians have to genuinely, legitimately ask themselves why the premier would make such glowing comments about pricing pollution and how she was better off, only to flip the switch. They can say a lot of things about the government when it comes to pricing pollution, but what they cannot say is that we have not been consistent, from day one, in terms of our commitment to putting a price on pollution, because we have.

That side of the House has been all over the map. Stephen Harper first floated the idea around 2007 or 2008. The Conservative members who sit in the House, and everybody who ran under the Conservatives' banner in 2021, ran on a platform of pricing pollution. Now they have flipped back because they see an opportunity for a bit of political gain by confusing Canadians and intentionally misleading them, which is what they are doing.

Inspired by Premier Smith, I did my own research on this because I wanted to see how carbon pricing is affecting me. I did the same thing as Danielle Smith did. In 2023, I took my Enbridge bills in Ontario; my natural gas is supplied by Enbridge. I added up the carbon levy on each bill, and in 2023 it came out to \$379.93. I drive an electric car and my wife drives a hybrid electric car. Let us just assume for a second that we both drove internal combustion fuel vehicles. The average vehicle in Canada uses 1,667 litres of gas every year. If my wife and I were both driving, each had our own cars

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and were both filling up with the average amount of gas, we would have paid \$238.55 each in carbon tax.

I added my home heating, a car for myself and a car for my wife, with both of us purchasing gas. The total amount came out to approximately \$830. Then I looked at my bank statement, at what got deposited into my account, not what the minister told me was going to be there or what were the talking points, but what actually got deposited. It worked out to \$884.50 in 2023.

I was over \$50 better off, living in a house where I am using natural gas, and assuming my wife and I were both driving gas-consuming vehicles, which we were not. For the sake of the experiment, I assumed that we were. We are better off, just like Danielle Smith. I am better off with the price on pollution.

Conservatives are going to say what I think I heard one member earlier today refer to it as the ripple-down effect. When a trucker has to move some groceries, and people buy them, those people are going to pay the extra amount; the carbon tax gets added onto it. I want to thank somebody on TikTok or Instagram who actually did the math on this. I was pretty impressed and told my staff that we should do similar math on this so we can confirm it.

• (1540)

This is the conclusion he came to: There is an average of 120 boxes of cereal on a skid. Each transport tractor can carry 26 skids of cereal. That is a total of 3,120 boxes of cereal on a truck. The extra fuel costs that he calculated for driving an eighteen-wheeler 1,000 kilometres was \$53.01. If he had driven 2,500 kilometres, it would have been \$132.52. I am sure everyone can see where I am going with this. Take the added amount and divide it by the 3,120 boxes of cereal, and the increase to a box of cereal on a 1,000-kilometre drive was 1.7¢. That is what Conservatives are getting all worked up about: 1.7¢ on a box of cereal.

Meanwhile, on the same day that the carbon price increased, April 1, I did not hear any outrage from my Conservative colleagues from Alberta about how Danielle Smith conveniently added another four cents to a litre. That would have done more damage to the math; it would have more than doubled it. That is what we are dealing with. With respect to other items, on milk for example, it works out to 1.4¢ for one package. This is what Conservatives are talking about. Then what they want to do, and I will hand it to them that they have done a decent job of doing it, is confuse Canadians.

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They want to tap into the anxiety created by inflation and the anxiety created by greedflation, and they use that anxiety against the very people who are experiencing it. They want to use it against those who are struggling right now, to make them think they are worse off with a price on pollution, although Danielle Smith herself said they are not but that they are better off. As a matter of fact, 94% of individuals who make less than \$50,000 a year get back more than they put in. When the Leader of the Opposition gets up and starts going on about the impacts that people are going to feel as a result of this, he is intentionally misleading people. He is intentionally trying to tap into anxieties. People should be aware of that.

The motion specifically asks to bring premiers together. As I said in the House earlier, they want to bring people together, but they do not even really have to because we do not need a collective idea for the whole country. Each province is at will to develop the system it wants. However, the Premier of Saskatchewan, Scott Moe, was at committee on March 27, and this is what he had to say when asked what he is going to do, what plan he might have to deal with this if he does not like the federal backstop:

The goal is not for our employers to pay more. The goal is for them to emit less and to displace higher-emitting...like competing industries around the world. That is how we [will] build a strong Canadian economy. That is how we [will] lower global emissions...that's how we [will] employ Canadians in your community and in mine.

That is a complete non-answer. The Canadian Press summed it up perfectly when it said, "Big polluters shouldn't be punished financially — they should just emit less." That is the position of the Premier of Saskatchewan: just pollute less.

Earlier today in an exchange, I heard a Conservative member say that what Canadians need are just more options, options where they could be purchasing products that are contributing less. We incentivize the marketplace for a reason. We did not just magically get off the incandescent light bulb and find out that the LED light bulb was so much better. Jurisdictions throughout the world were saying that incandescent light bulbs are very inefficient and that maybe we should start phasing them out. Incentivizing the marketplace to start coming up with new solutions is how we got to the compact fluorescent bulb. Then someone said we could do the same with LED light bulbs and make them even more efficient, and that is how we got to the LED light bulb.

• (1545)

We did not get there because those who were making the incandescent light bulbs, which only lasted six months, suddenly said, "I have a better way of doing this." They did not suddenly realize that they could give people a better product that would be more efficient, last longer and be virtually the same price, after it had been introduced in the market for a long time. Of course they did not do that. They were incentivized by the decision-making in the marketplace, and that is exactly what the price on pollution is.

It is about encouraging people to make different decisions. When somebody says that they are currently using natural gas to heat their home and could go to a heat pump, or somebody says that maybe it is time to look at an electric vehicle, those people are making new decisions about the products they want to use and the services they want. As a result, they can end up better off, especially when we look at the rebates that are available at federal and provincial levels to do things such as install heat pumps or buy electric cars.

This is where we are right now. We are making a transition.

Conservatives want to pretend the world is not changing. They want to pretend oil and gas will be here forever. All they care about is, "Burn, baby. Burn," and "Drill, baby. Drill." We could do whatever we wanted to in this country to try to halt the production of electric vehicles and prevent the sale of them, but the world is changing. Of cars sold in China last year, 40% were electric vehicles. The world is changing.

Conservatives need to figure out that it is time to get on board. It is time for Canada to be a leader. It is time for Canada to be at the forefront of these new technologies, so we can be developing them and exporting them around the world, not living in the past. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition is looking to do anything to assume power. Even if that means exploiting Canadians' fears and their anxieties to do it, he will do it. This is because, at the end of the day, he does not care. He does not care that 94% of those making less than \$50,000 get more back in the rebate than they pay on the price on pollution.

All he cares about are the big emitters and the big companies and allowing them to continue to pollute for free, but we do not pollute for free anymore. It is the exact same concept as paying property taxes back in our constituencies. We pay to get garbage picked up at the side of the road. We pay to recycle. We pay to compost. That is us paying for pollution, and there is no difference when we talk about paying to pollute into the atmosphere. It is the exact same concept, but for some reason, nobody on the other side bats an eye when someone says they have to charge money to take a bag of garbage to the dump. Nobody bats an eye at that, but as soon as we say we have to charge money to put those pollutants in the air that will be there for generations, then the Conservatives suddenly have a problem.

This is the right thing to do. It is what is happening around the world, and it is really time for the Conservatives to get on board.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, on this very important motion we have before us today, the Liberal member, while giving his speech, talked about how Conservatives are going on and on about how unaffordable things are, the carbon tax and, in his own words, "getting all worked up".

We know that families and small businesses are having a really tough time. I have here a couple of bills from small businesses in my riding. On one of them, the cost of gas is \$159.67, and the carbon tax is \$231.87. On the other one, the cost of gas is \$311.31, and the carbon tax is \$452.08. For this one in particular, the small business owner told me that that amount would have been his profit.

Of course, we also know that there is GST on top of the carbon tax as well, so how can that Liberal member justify this, when we have small businesses that are paying these types of bills? They are having such a tough time already, they are barely affording to pay the bills, and that is before they even get this tax bill.

• (1550)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I never said Canadians are not having a tough time. The world has gone through a lot in the last five years. The world has experienced inflation because of a whole bunch of events. The Conservatives think that the Prime Minister is incapable of doing just about anything, yet they credit him for bringing in inflation throughout the entire world. Every single day they get up to talk about how the Prime Minister is the cause of inflation. The inflationary impacts are happening throughout the world.

I am not saying Canadians are not having a hard time and have not had a hard time over the last few years. What I am saying is that the Leader of the Opposition is using that anxiety to try to turn Canadians on each other. That is what he has been doing with the carbon tax.

We have had a carbon tax since 2018. I will ask this of the people watching at home: Did this not just kind of pop up? Do they not feel as though this issue just came to light within the last six to eight months, even though we have had the carbon tax since 2018? Why do they think that is? There is nothing new. It has been around. It is because the Leader of the Opposition has suddenly started to use it as a weapon to motivate people's anxiety and to use it against them.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, over the course of 2024, I have been paying keen attention to gas prices in my region. What I noticed was, from February to March, the price jumped by 30¢ per litre. It went from \$1.59 per litre to \$1.89 per litre.

British Columbia has its own system. On the day of the carbon tax increase on April 1, it went from \$1.90 to \$1.93. One week after that, in many regions in my area, it then shot up again on its own to about \$2.04. There was a massive increase, all on its own, compared to the April 1 increase, yet there is complete deafening silence from Conservatives. I believe this is because they do not want to upset their oil masters in Alberta. There is deafening silence.

At the agriculture committee, we had some figures presented to us by Dr. Jim Stanford, who showed us that, from 2019 to 2023, oil and gas profits in this country went up by over 1,000%. What are my hon. colleague's remarks on the deafening silence we hear from Conservatives when it comes to oil and gas profits and how the oil and gas companies are gouging Canadian families, not only in my riding, but also in ridings right across the country, from coast to coast?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it is an excellent point, and he is absolutely right it is silence from the other side. To add even more on to that, Premier Smith in Alberta also timed her four-cent increase for April 1. We have the oil and gas companies piling on, and we have the Government of Alberta piling on, but everybody is pointing the finger at the federal government because of three cents. That is what I find so disheartening.

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He is absolutely right. Where is the outrage when it comes to the wicked profits being made by the oil and gas sector? Why do we not see outrage from the Conservatives on that? Why do we not hear outrage when Danielle Smith increases the per litre gas tax by more than the carbon tax on the exact same day? It is because that does not serve their political purpose.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, since the carbon tax does not affect Quebec, I will engage my Liberal colleague on another topic. In his speech, he acknowledged that times are tough. Housing is one of the major concerns for any household.

I have just spent two weeks in my riding. During those two weeks, I have been hearing about these attempts by the federal government, particularly through the Programme de la taxe sur l'essence et de la contribution du Québec, or TECQ, to impose conditions on housing.

Where I come from, people are not having it. Cities have land to protect. Cities have urban plans. What they want is for the federal government to do what it has to do, which is to transfer the money and not impose an additional tier, additional delays and duplication.

The cities back home really do not want these housing conditions for the TECQ.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member started off talking about Quebec not having a carbon tax. Ontario never used to have a carbon tax either. As a matter of fact, when the system was set up, Ontario was still under the western initiative of a cap-and-trade model that Quebec was under. They signed onto that at the same time. Doug Ford came along, saying he did not want anything to do with it, and got rid of it. Doug Ford is now criticizing the federal government, asking "Why are you doing this to my province?" Ontario would have been in the exact same position as Quebec had it not done that.

The member raises good questions about housing, but this is another example of Canadians needing support. This is another example of how we are trying to support Canadians in many different ways through various initiatives, whether it is helping people with rent geared to their income or helping to subsidize below-market rent construction of housing. We have rolled out a number of programs.

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I understand the member has an issue with respect to the exact way that it has rolled out in her municipality, or in Quebec, but the Minister of Housing has gone to each municipality, at least outside of Quebec, to strike a deal with the municipalities. He did that in Kingston, saying that the federal government will provide \$27 million as long as the municipality brings in measures to expedite the building of housing. The federal minister is going into communities throughout the country. That is commitment. That is looking for solutions.

• (1555)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just want to set some of the background narrative. The hon. member mentioned what Danielle Smith spoke about three years ago. Last week, she did talk about the difference between \$65 and \$80. She also talked about the comparison of the government's plan with that of the Alberta NDP, which only rebated a portion of revenue to low- and middle-income earners, when it was in government.

There is a little more to the story than what the member spoke about. The other aspect has to do with the price of oil. The fact that it has been down for the last three months is the reason those four cents were put back on it, but because the oil price is going back up, it could well go down even more than four cents. Could that happen with the carbon tax?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, this is what Danielle Smith said: "Let's begin with talking about when carbon pricing at the federal level was first introduced. We talked about it being \$50 per tonne, and then recently we heard it's actually going to go to \$170 per tonne over the next nine years. That seems like somebody's sat down and done some number crunching and they've come up with an optimal value, as well as the optimal period of time to phase it in, and from the work you've done on this, you've even said that they're suggesting that this is going to have no impact on gross domestic product...this almost seems like the perfect policy."

Danielle Smith had all the trust in the experts in 2021 to develop the pricing mechanism on their own, but now, suddenly, there is an issue with those experts. Members can judge this for themselves. What has happened between 2021 and now? She became the leader of the far right party in Alberta.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, the federal government is increasing the price on carbon to \$80 per tonne, and I thought it would be interesting to look at what the biggest emitters in Canada are paying per tonne for their pollution. The Canadian Climate Institute says that the average price they are paying is \$4.96 per tonne. That is \$80 versus \$4.96.

Now, before the member for Kingston and the Islands says that consumers get a rebate, etc., etc., the industry gets something much richer than a rebate. It gets \$18 billion in subsidies. I bet the industry will get more in subsidies than it pays in carbon pricing.

Why does the government keep letting the biggest polluters in our country—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give a few seconds to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands to answer.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am not going to disagree with a lot of what that member said. If he is looking for more opportunities to further tighten money or to talk about rebates that are going back to big oil, I will have an open ear to listen to what he has to say.

I think it is also really important to remember that sometimes, when we subsidize the fossil fuel industry, it is to do important things such as clean up orphan oil wells, which perhaps—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will resume debate with the hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from King—Vaughan.

It is a pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about the importance of having the premiers meet with the federal government on issues that are very important to the future of our society.

As I think about the future of our society, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the arrival of my seventh grandchild, my third grandson, Octave Gourde. Octave joins my dream team of grandchildren, which includes Maéva, Loïc, Béatrice, Delphine, Arthur and Mathilde. Members will understand that my primary motivation here in the House is to ensure that my grandchildren have a very promising future in our country.

We are all at a crossroads regarding our country's future and the direction we must go in the face of the Liberal government's policy failures since 2015. The Liberals' relentless pursuit of a carbon tax is currently producing mediocre results when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is a monumental failure considering that the punitive carbon tax policy has not reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Quebec has a carbon exchange. This approach, which has been recommended for over 10 years now, has shown that it does not help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Those of us on this side of the House advocate for science and technology. Specific targets were set for successfully reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and we all know how important that is. However, here we are, faced with the fact that, for almost 10 years, it has not worked. It is high time to take stock and determine how we can make a meaningful, direct and tangible impact on our environment in the future.

That is why we are calling on the federal government to hold a meeting with the provincial premiers to establish a clear and precise strategy on the future of the carbon tax, which is taking money out of Canadians' wallets. It is very important that we make a move and take stock. This is how far we have come. Let us act on behalf of our children and grandchildren across the country.

We have a duty here in the House to do the right thing. We need a vision for the future of our country and we need to set reasonable terms to improve the lives of Canadians. We are facing very precarious situations. There is a serious lack of housing in this country. Millions of Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. Millions of Canadians are even struggling to put food on the table. There is proof of that. The federal government wants to implement a plan to feed our children at school. Let us consider how far we have come. It is very sad. We have to feed our children at school like some of the developing countries we assisted a few years ago.

This goes to show how much the Liberals' policies since 2015 have changed our country, but in the wrong way. Our Canada is in jeopardy, it is not the same as it once was, and that really scares me.

There is no doubt that members on this side of the House want a new government as soon as possible. We have a clear plan to restore hope to Canadians. We have a clear plan to lower interest rates, reduce inflation and increase housing construction. We need to give all Canadians hope that their work will pay the bills. For the sake of their legacy, we need to stay the course and drive inflation down.

We can no longer afford to have a Prime Minister leading a federal Liberal government that not only insists on keeping the carbon tax, but recklessly increases it by 23%. This Prime Minister has caused economic misery across Canada. Instead of offering Canadians relief, he decided to increase the carbon tax by another 23% on April 1. This is just one step in the Prime Minister's plan to make everything more expensive by raising the carbon tax over the next six years.

Seventy per cent of Canadians and 70% of premiers have called on the Prime Minister to walk the increase back, but he is refusing to listen or to open his eyes to the disaster he has caused.

● (1600)

The premiers of Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta also wrote to the Prime Minister to ask him to call an emergency meeting, but he did not listen. No doubt he will not listen after this motion either, yet it would be so easy for the Prime Minister to understand that if we tax the farmer who produces the food and the trucker who transports it, we are also taxing those who buy the food.

That is why, as Conservatives, we support our common-sense leader, who is moving a motion in the House of Commons today calling on the Prime Minister to convene an emergency meeting on the carbon tax crises with Canada's provincial premiers to discuss the possibility of allowing the provinces to opt out of the federal carbon tax and to pursue other responsible ideas to lower greenhouse gas emissions without a tax.

Common-sense Conservatives will continue to work with Canada's premiers to lower prices for Canadians and fight for a carbon tax election to permanently axe the tax on everything and everyone. The choice will be simple for Canadians in the next election. We will say goodbye to a government that wants to tax Canadians. We need a government that wants to really help Canadians and put more money back in their pockets so that everyone can have a prosperous future in this country, a future for us, our chil-

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dren and our future grandchildren. We need a government that will make work pay again and restore the value of our hard-earned dollars and efforts. When voters are faced with a choice, they will remember which parties recklessly supported this bad government and voted for the outrageous, wasteful spending that has doubled our country's debt since 2015. If not for the NDP and Bloc Québécois, we could have brought down this illegitimate, scheming government. Canadians will remember. I am confident they will.

In closing, I would like to know why the Prime Minister is so afraid to meet with the provinces when he is not shy about sticking his nose where it does not belong when it comes to respecting provincial jurisdictions. It should come as no surprise that this princely Prime Minister believes he can do whatever he wants. He refuses to respect the jurisdictional boundaries that were established by the fathers of Confederation. This meeting could simply set the record straight on what the federal government needs to do and also remind it that its management of the country is disastrous and that it cannot even achieve its own objectives in areas under its own jurisdiction.

That being said, if everyone does their job and works together as a real team, all of us federal, provincial and municipal legislators could help our economy thrive and help all Canadians live better. In the next election, we will have two diametrically opposed choices: a Prime Minister with a track record that is not worth the cost, leading a government that has caused rents, mortgage payments and down payments to double and has run record deficits that have made interest rates skyrocket; or a common-sense Conservative government that will work with Canada's premiers to lower prices for Canadians. Conservatives will fight for a carbon tax election to permanently axe the tax on everything for everyone. I hope that election will be called sooner rather than later.

● (1605)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the consistency of the Conservative Party is truly amazing. No matter what region of the country its MPs are from, they want to mislead Canadians. Members from the provinces of Quebec and British Columbia should be ashamed of themselves. Quebec and B.C. already have a price on pollution, and so they do not have the backstop of the federal carbon rebate, carbon tax system.

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When we take a look at it, we are talking about over 10 million Canadians who do not pay the carbon tax, as they refer to it, or receive the carbon rebate. The Conservatives continue to give misinformation no matter where they go. I wonder if there is any humility within the Conservative caucus. Is there not any member who will stand in their place and indicate that this misinformation does a great disservice to the whole concept of a price on pollution?

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, shame on the government across the way. With all the work it has done since 2015, is Canada in a good position internationally when it comes to reducing greenhouse gases? No, we are not doing very well. All the policies this government has put in place are not working. It is a colossal failure.

It only has a few months left. If it has any pride, it should call an election as soon as possible.

• (1610)

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his new grandson. Now that is an achievement.

I would like to point out to my colleague that there are people who have estimated the direct impact of the carbon tax per \$1,000. It is about \$1.50 for every \$1,000. This \$1.50 does not apply to Quebec. Why do we not have the figures for what would apply in Quebec? Because economists say the figure is too insignificant. One professor did give it a shot. When we look at the indirect impact of the carbon tax per \$1,000, we can say that it amounts to barely 25¢.

Does my colleague not think it is a bit excessive to have devoted so much time to the carbon tax for barely 25¢ per \$1,000?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, my colleague likes to play with numbers, but when Canadians go to the pump and pay 25¢, 30¢ or 40¢ on every litre of gas every time, that is taking a lot of extra money out of their pockets. Every time something is transported in Canada, the carbon tax applies.

The facts are simple. Two million Canadians are struggling to eat, to the point where a national program is needed to feed kids at school. The same thing was needed for third world countries about 10 years ago. We have reached that point here.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I hope my colleague knows that there is no carbon tax in Quebec. I think that would guide him a bit in his remarks.

The Conservative Party is so much the party of big oil and big gas, which have seen their profits increase, that when that party was in power, environmental groups were asking us to keep Conservatives out of meetings, because not only were they not helping, they were hindering the fight against climate change.

If Conservatives do not want a price on pollution, if they think pollution should be free, if they think technology works miracles like a magic wand, and if they want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, let them tell us today what their plan is to fight climate change, if they want any credibility.

The Conservatives do not want to do anything. All they want to do is give carte blanche to big oil and gas.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, science and technology will be a huge help as we face climate change.

I would like to tell my colleague that the carbon exchange does exist in Quebec. Every time I go to the pump to fill up my car, part of the price of gas goes toward the carbon exchange. Right now, that money is doing nothing for Quebecers. It goes to California, and we get nothing in return. Whether it is called a carbon exchange or a carbon tax, as it is in the other provinces, it is the same thing. The money is coming out of Canadians' pockets.

I would rather work for Canadians than ideologues.

[English]

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member for King—Vaughan, I am proud to rise today to forward the voices and the concerns of my constituents, and I hope that this does not land on deaf ears.

These past two weeks in my riding provided me the opportunity to connect one-on-one with friends, family and concerned citizens. I heard heartbreaking stories of young men and women who feel that they will never get out of their parents' basements and who cannot afford their own homes. Parents told me they could not afford to drive to work any more because gas prices are too high and the cost of electric cars is out of reach. I heard from seniors who are choosing between heating their homes and purchasing food. They know that the Prime Minister and my colleagues on the other side of the House just are not worth the cost. I had one very intuitive woman ask me if the Prime Minister would like to borrow her hearing aid because he is obviously deaf to the crisis he has created. At a time when food bank usage is at an all-time high, he decided to hike the carbon tax even further.

The Liberals claim there is no scientific proof that the carbon tax is creating higher prices or a cost of living crisis, but Canadians know this is not the case. The Liberal-NDP coalition even went so far as to try to portray the carbon tax as not being a factor in inflation. They continue to mislead Canadians by describing their carbon tax rebates as an affordability measure. However, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has again testified in committee that once we factor in not only the rebate but also the economic impact, the majority of households will see a negative impact as a result of the carbon tax. In fact, Statistics Canada has noted that Saskatchewan has lower inflation than the national average after the provincial government decided to stop applying the carbon tax on home heating fuel, beginning this past January. Since then, inflation in Saskatchewan has been declining faster than any other part of the country.

The Liberal-NDP coalition does not understand that if we tax the farmer who makes the food and the trucker who ships the food, we end up taxing the family who buys the food. Premiers understand this, and a 23% tax hike is the last thing Canadians need during this Liberal-NDP-driven cost of living crisis. In fact, the premiers of Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta have also written to the Prime Minister and have asked him to call an emergency meeting.

The Liberals raised taxes at a time when one-third of food bank charities are turning away people because they no longer have the resources to feed them. However, despite all of this, the environment minister has stated that the Liberals will continue to increase the carbon tax until it reaches \$170 per tonne and maybe even higher.

Previously, I spoke of Vishal who runs the independent food bank, Sai Dham. I will now give the latest numbers, so people at home, please, take a seat. In August 2023, they served 3.17 million meals per month. As of January 2024, they served 3.2 million meals per month. That is an increase of 30,000 meals per month. Last year, they had 2,809 seniors registered to receive support on a monthly basis. They now have 3,865 seniors, which is an increase of 1,056 seniors.

• (1615)

They also open their doors to serve breakfast to children. This is outside of the school programs. Last year, they served 9,876 breakfasts to children, and this year it is 10,476. This morning, they delivered 40,000 pounds of fresh green produce to other major food banks in the area.

This cannot happen without donations from those who can afford to give. However, due to the out-of-control inflation and the high cost of living, financial donations have dropped by 90%. Therefore, if the House will indulge me for a moment, I am going to make a plea: To all of those who can, please, donate so that Vishal can continue this important work. His mission in life is to ensure that no one goes to bed hungry. Without the support of the community, that is not possible.

When the NDP-Liberal coalition tries to convince us that things are looking up, these numbers tell the truth. Canadians are living this reality. Maria, an Italian working mother is struggling to keep the heat on. This past winter, she was unable to keep on top of her gas payments, and it was eventually cut off. She can no longer afford to stay in the family home. She has been buying groceries and gas using credit, and now, all available credit has been exhausted. She is going to have to sell her home. However, where will she go? If she could find an available rental unit, the cost would be more than she could afford, and her credit rating has deteriorated. The average cost of a two-bedroom apartment in Toronto went from \$1,288 per month in 2015 to a whopping \$2,671 per month today. What do I tell her?

Does the Minister of Environment think of her when he digs in his heels and refuses to put a pause on this tax? He claims the carbon tax is reducing carbon emissions. That is as delusional as believing that families are further ahead financially because of the rebates. Canada is ranked as 62nd out of 67 countries on climate performance. While the environment minister has no explanation for

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Canada's climate performance's drop, he jets off to Beijing and Dubai for climate conferences. That is the typical "do as I say, not as I do" scenario. It is fine for him to increase the carbon footprint with his lavish trips, but he lectures Canadians on their behaviour.

However, all is not lost. Common-sense Conservatives would axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. The common-sense Conservatives are calling on the House to convene a carbon tax emergency meeting with all of Canada's 14 first ministers. If the government is as transparent as it claims to be, this meeting would be publicly televised. Canadians cannot wait. We want this meeting held within five weeks of this motion's being adopted. Common-sense Conservatives will continue to work with Canada's premiers to bring home lower prices for Canadians.

Why will the Prime Minister not listen?

• (1620)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the issue of affordability has always been important to the Liberal government. The distortion of facts and the misleading information the Conservatives continue to spin, day in and day out, whether inside or outside the House, is ridiculous. When we talk about the impact of the carbon tax or the carbon rebate, then let us think about the carbon tax and the Governor of the Bank of Canada. We are talking about a fraction of a percentage point in regard to the impact on inflation. In fact, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, in a quote referring to that said, "Yes, but I would assume that the impact of the carbon tax on the price of food is probably not significant, even though there have been increases in the price of food. Not all of it—only a fraction of it—can be attributed to the carbon tax."

The Conservatives spread misinformation after misinformation.

However, having said that, I am interested in my colleague's response. We had the April 1 increase of three cents a litre in the province of Alberta, and the Premier of Alberta increased the cost of a litre of gas by four cents. Why did we not hear screaming and yelling coming from the Conservative Party members? Why are they not saying that four cents a litre was more than the price increase on pollution or the carbon tax? Why are they sitting on their hands and saying nothing? Is it because they are so partisan that they close their eyes and have nothing to do but just target misinformation—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for King—Vaughan the opportunity to answer.

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Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, perhaps the member opposite did not hear or was not paying attention, but I did highlight, in my speech, the testimony of the PBO, who stated, “once you factor in the rebate and also the economic impacts...the majority of households will see a negative impact as a result of the carbon tax.” Stats Canada figures prove that without the carbon tax applied to home heating, the inflation rate would decline.

I have a couple of questions. They hired over 400 employees to administer the plan at a cost of \$200 million. Do we know how many trees that would have planted?

I would also like to know this from the hon. members across the way. I spent the day, on New Year's Eve, volunteering at the food bank. I saw, first-hand, the lineup of people who were struggling and embarrassed but needed to get to the food bank to support their families so that they could sit down to a half-decent New Year's Eve dinner. Where were they?

• (1625)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, my question will be simple.

Yes, it is important that every Canadian premier feels not only heard but also listened to. However, is it really up to the House of Commons to order anyone, including the provincial premiers, to sit down with the Prime Minister of Canada? Should it not be up to the premiers themselves to request this meeting instead of being considered as this Parliament's puppets? They are not puppets. The premiers deserve to be treated with respect, to be listened to and, most importantly, to have leadership when it comes to their own needs.

[English]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I think that we keep hearing, over and over again, that the current government wants to work with premiers. The premiers want to work with the government. They want to sit down and want to be able to discuss the carbon tax and the unaffordable issue it is causing for their provinces.

Why will the government not listen?

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, the member for King—Vaughan is right that affordability is a concern. Lineups at food banks are a concern.

If one listens to what food banks across this country are telling the government to do, one could look at every single pre-budget submission of theirs. None of them mention the carbon price. Let us look at the Daily Bread Food Bank, for example. Its top three recommendations, every single one, mentions the Canada disability benefit.

Is the member for King—Vaughan going to advocate for the Canada disability benefit?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I am part of the accessibility committee in my community. I have been volunteering there for 10 years. I have no issue with the disability benefit, but I do have an issue with this: If we reduce the cost to individuals, their lives would be much easier. Let us get rid of that carbon tax—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

[Translation]

I am pleased to take part today in this debate on a subject of great importance for the future of our country.

Once again, this motion from our colleagues in the official opposition makes it clear that they do not see the urgency of taking action on climate change. It is unfortunate, since it is very clear that the consequences of climate change are very real and very costly.

[English]

This year's strange winter, with record temperatures and barely any snow, reminds us again that climate change is real, and so are its disastrous effects on Canadian communities.

Just in the last year, communities across our country had to deal with historic wildfires, ice storms and tropical storms. The list goes on, as 2023 saw a record fire season in Canada. The area burned was more than double that of the historic record, with hundreds of thousands of Canadians evacuated from their homes as a result. In fact, the total area burned exceeded 18 million hectares, which is two and a half times the previous record set in 1995 and more than six times the average over the past 10 years.

Also, the Canadian Climate Institute has concluded that climate change is already costing Canadian households billions of dollars. These costs are just the tip of the iceberg.

[Translation]

For example, in May 2023, oil companies in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan were forced to curtail production as a precautionary measure in certain parts of these provinces.

Thankfully, our government understands that making the right to pollute free is not going to save Canadians money, and the days of doing nothing are behind us. Not only would inaction cost Canadians a lot of money, it would put their lives and safety at risk. Moreover, it would obviously compromise the environment we all depend on.

I am pleased to be part of a government that is shouldering its responsibilities and forging ahead to combat climate change. One of the ways we are doing this is through our carbon pricing system. As we know, experts agree that our pollution pricing system is the best tool we have to fight climate change and its devastating effects.

● (1630)

[English]

Putting a price on carbon pollution reduces emissions and encourages innovation. It gives households and businesses the flexibility to decide when and how to make changes.

I would also like to remind my hon. colleagues that our pollution pricing system is revenue-neutral. Every three months, the government delivers hundreds of dollars back to families through the Canada carbon rebate. In provinces where the federal fuel charge applies, a family of four will receive up to \$1,800 in Canada carbon rebate amounts in 2024-25.

[Translation]

For this fiscal year, residents of the provinces where the rebate applies will receive the first of their four payments next week. Thanks to this rebate, eight out of 10 families receive more money than they pay. We are also making sure that big polluters pay their fair share.

Our government also understands that Canadians living in rural areas face unique challenges because they travel longer distances to get to school, work and the grocery store. We are proposing legislative amendments in Bill C-59 to double the rural top-up from 10% to 20% of the basic rebate, because we understand their energy needs are greater and they have limited access to cleaner transportation options.

We also understand that some situations call for flexibility.

[English]

That is why we took temporary and targeted action to pause the fuel charge on heating oil with the goal of getting consumers off of home heating oil and onto a cleaner and far more affordable alternative. We took action to temporarily pause the application of the federal fuel charge on heating oil, not because it is a source of home heating but because it is the most expensive form of home heating.

[Translation]

It costs two to four times more to heat a home. That means that these costs are taking a big chunk out of the budgets of lower income Canadians.

[English]

Heating oil is currently used by 1.1 million homes in Canada, including 267,000 in Ontario and 287,000 across Atlantic Canada. We are committed to continue moving forward with our pollution pricing system while also supporting Canadians who need support to transition to greener options.

[Translation]

As our fall economic statement confirmed, we want to financially help Canadians to make the transition from home heating oil to

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better heating systems. Heat pumps are a cleaner way to heat and, in the long run, they lead to lower energy bills.

[English]

With our oil to heat pump affordability program, we are partnering with provinces and territories to increase the amount of federal funding that eligible homeowners can receive for installing a heat pump from \$10,000 to \$15,000, by adding up to an additional \$5,000 in grant funding to match provincial and territorial contributions via co-delivery arrangements.

[Translation]

This means that heating systems and installation are free for low- and middle-income households, since we keep lowering costs and making access to federal programs easier.

A heat pump is one of the best ways that homeowners can break free from heating oil, save money on their heating bills and help fight climate change. Homeowners who switch from heating oil to heat pumps save an average of up to \$2,500 a year on their heating bill.

Without question, we must keep up our efforts to fight climate change. Doing nothing, as the opposition wants, would have a devastating impact on the environment, our economy, our communities and the health of Canadians. Canadians can count on us to keep implementing our actions to fight climate change and support them through this transition.

● (1635)

[English]

I firmly believe that this is the responsible thing to do. The cost of inaction would simply be way too high.

[Translation]

Canadians deserve a government that handles this file seriously and responsibly. That is what we will continue to do.

[English]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened intently and I have to mention in the House something that I do not think the member even knows.

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Over 20 years ago, Saskatchewan, on its own initiative, without any kind of punitive action on the part of the government, removed oil heating from our province. The Global Institute for Food Security put forward and commissioned a study in 2022 that examined the carbon footprint from the production of five Canadian field crops, canola, non-durum wheat, field peas, durum wheat and lentils, and compared our footprint and supply chain emissions to the parts of the world that exported the same products: Australia, France, Germany, Italy and the United States. It was found that Saskatchewan, particularly, and western Canada are producing crops with the least amount of greenhouse gas emissions or carbon dioxide equivalents among any of those regions.

There is no recognition of the efforts that were already put forward back when the Prime Minister met with Mr. Moe, who was our environmental minister at the time, and said there were five or six options and to go home and decide what they wanted to do. We came back with our decision, and the Prime Minister said he had a change of mind, for a government that supposedly never does anything but exactly what it said it was going to do, and gave them only two options, yet here we are, an example to the world coming back from COP 23 with opportunities around the world to increase improvements in carbon reduction.

What is the problem with the government recognizing how incredible Canada already is and how we are working without this punitive tax?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, we obviously recognize the actions being taken across Canada. Right now, these are things that we need to do. The planet is in dire straits, so the more we do, the better.

I heard the member for Lévis—Lotbinière talk about his newborn grandchild, and I congratulate him. I was surprised to hear how little desire—and how little will—there is to take action to ensure that we are very actively engaged in the fight against climate change.

Climate change is here and it is real, and we must take action. The time for inaction is over. That is why we are proposing concrete measures that will have a real impact on the fight against climate change.

Ms. Andrée Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear the Liberals stand up for the environment.

We keep repeating that the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec. We have opted for a carbon exchange instead. More and more states, including Washington, will be joining this North American exchange.

It is time to send the message that this system can work, and that other places in North America are interested. Nevertheless, the Liberals are still investing in oil companies and ensuring that those people receive these credits.

Would my colleague not agree that if the government really wants to send a strong message on the environment, it absolutely must stop investing all this money in the oil industry and instead invest in a green transition?

• (1640)

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, my colleague said she is surprised to see the Liberals standing up for climate action. The fact remains that our government has invested more than any other government in recent years. Over \$100 billion has been invested in the fight against climate change. This amount alone is very tangible proof of our commitment and our willingness to take action.

In Quebec, the carbon exchange does work very well. Various American states are looking to us to see how we can work together. I think that is the direction we need to take in order to ensure that we are protecting our environment.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives will not do anything about the climate crisis, but the Liberals are flailing about doing all sorts of conflicting things.

I hope my colleague does not count in the \$100 billion the \$36 billion the Trans Mountain pipeline is costing us, or the authorization of the Bay du Nord gas project, or the \$18 billion handed out to oil and gas companies in subsidies every year, or the \$14 billion we learned today was not spent on the climate crisis.

How is it, and how does she explain, that they failed to spend \$14 billion on the climate crisis, when that is so urgent?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, there are two things on which I completely agree with my colleague: the fact that urgent action is needed and the fact that we have invested money and must continue to do so.

The crisis is here now. The Conservatives' lack of a plan is certainly not the solution.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, for giving me the opportunity to make a brief speech on today's motion. I thank him profusely.

[*English*]

I have been here for the full day of debate. Let me break down what the supply motion today from the Conservative Party deals with. It posits that we have a carbon tax crisis and suggests that the solution is to bring the premiers to Ottawa, or somewhere, and have a first ministers conference.

I am going to try to address two very large and complex questions in the next 10 minutes. One is the climate crisis, and associated with that, the role of carbon pricing. The other is the nature of our federation, the role of first ministers conferences and what else might work.

[*Translation*]

The first thing to do is to clearly state that there is no carbon tax crisis. The real crisis, the real urgency, is global warming and climate change. It is almost too late. Time is running out.

[English]

We have a very large climate crisis, which threatens all aspects of our lives in Canada. In British Columbia, in four days, 619 people died in the summer of 2021 because of a heat dome. Those were preventable deaths, but 619 people still died, according to the B.C. Coroners Service, which studied those deaths. In the same season, we had wildfires that also compromised our health and threatened lives.

That fall, we had the atmospheric rivers that were responsible for billions of dollars of infrastructure needing to be replaced, which was a huge hit to the economy. We also had the other side of the country dealing with hurricane Fiona, which lifted houses up along the shore of Port aux Basques and deposited them in the ocean. In other words, we have had loss of life, as well as unprecedented fires and floods that threaten lives.

We are seeing a climate crisis that requires us to pull together, yet how do we behave in terms of the question of a first ministers conference? I look at the European Union and at Canada, and I think we have a crisis where, for some reason, we cannot even think like a country. We act like a vulcanized group of federations that do not like each other very much. We have 10 provinces, three territories and one federal government, and we do not have our act together nearly as well as the European Union does.

It has 27 separate sovereign nation-states that are not part of the same country. In fact, they have countries that were, in my parents' lives, at war with each other: Germany and France. The European Union has 27 nation-states and 24 official languages. From the very beginning of addressing the climate crisis, going back to Kyoto in December 1997, the European Union came with a collective pledge, divvied it up among all the nations and started achieving it. Every single European nation more than achieved their Kyoto targets to well below 1990 levels, while Canada continued to soar above 1990 levels.

When Putin invaded Ukraine, the European Union said, "We'd better help Ukraine and make sure it can get electricity, because clearly Putin wants people to freeze." It took a matter of weeks for the European Union to tell Ukraine it was going to plug Ukraine into its electricity grid. We cannot get Quebec hydroelectricity into Nova Scotia, where the electricity is still generated by coal, because we cannot get Hydro-Québec to work with Emera in Nova Scotia to deliver zero-carbon hydroelectricity. We cannot get our clean electricity from southern Canada up to Nunavut so it can stop burning diesel. Why is this? We do not seem to be able to coordinate very well.

● (1645)

I will look at the history of first ministers conferences. We had a lot in the past, and maybe it is not the best way to get action. If we look back at the Mulroney government, action on acid rain was not taken by pulling everyone together into the same room. Mulroney's genius on this was to get one deal at a time bilaterally. If they were going to shut down the pollution that causes acid rain, they started with the easiest of the provinces, the one that polluted the least but was having a lot of damage. Prince Edward Island was the first bilateral deal between the federal government and a province, Canada-P.E.I.

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The last one was the federal government and Ontario, because Ontario's Inco smelter was the single largest point source of acid rain causing pollution in all of North America. One at a time, we got deals with each province all the way across; the Mulroney government then told the Americans that it was coming to them with clean hands. It had already cut its pollution in half, so the Americans should do the same; in that way, they could clean up acid rain.

Mulroney did have a lot of first ministers meetings as well. If we look at his history on this, Pierre Trudeau had five first ministers conferences, some of them historic. Repatriating the Constitution was a rather big first ministers meeting. Former prime minister Mulroney, whom I have mentioned, had 14 first ministers conferences; Jean Chrétien had seven. However, they came to a grinding halt under Stephen Harper, who, over a nine-year period, had two, one in 2008 and one in 2009. The current Prime Minister, over a nine-year period, has held three. It is not a great record in terms of collaboration, but at least there were far more first ministers conferences than under Stephen Harper.

Are first ministers conferences the way to go? How do we do it? What is the best way to get our country to think like a country? Today, April 9, happens to be the 40th anniversary of the day that the House unanimously passed the Canada Health Act. I was reminded of this fact by our former colleague and friend Jane Philpott, who has written a book about how we need to collaborate for health care.

We do not have a carbon tax crisis. I would say we have an affordability crisis right across Canada. There is no question. The carbon tax plays, according to every economist, a minuscule role in the affordability crisis. We have a health crisis. Family doctors are not available to everyone. Is health care a right in this country? That would be a good place to have a collaborative first ministers conference. Could we do that? We certainly have a climate crisis. How do we address that? How can we get ourselves to pull together?

Canadians pull together when the climate crisis hits home. When people are out of their homes because of floods or fires, we know Canadians pull together. We still have no national firefighting force or plan for it. We do not have water bombers sufficient to deal with the summer of climate crisis fires that we can expect to see. There is so much more we could do if we tried to figure out how to get collaboration to occur.

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One thing we need to do is agree that electrifying almost everything is one of the best ways to reduce emissions, and the best way to make that reliable is to treat the grid like a battery. Let more people produce. Let more people into the market. Let indigenous nations produce solar and wind. Let coastal communities produce tidal and wind power and sell it into the grid, and when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining, pull it out of the grid.

Going back to Europe, Denmark's excess wind is sold to Norway. Norway takes that excess wind power, pumps it up into reservoirs and lets it flow down to create electricity when the sun is not shining in Denmark. This is not rocket science. For God's sake, as Canadians, we know we are the same people and the same communities. We basically love each other, and we have to start acting like a country, because the climate crisis threatens our kids' future in a real way that carbon pricing does not. Carbon pricing, at long last, has gotten some reduction in emissions. However, the truth of the matter is that, for so long, the government in Canada, regardless of Conservative or Liberal, has been so busy trying to build up the fossil fuel industry and throw it tens of billions of dollars in subsidies that we have not confronted the problem.

The problem is big polluters. We need to address that. We need to move off fossil fuels. We need to do it quickly while we still have time to save our future. We need to tax the excess profits. So far this year, Shell has had \$28 billion in profits and paid it out to its shareholders. For heaven's sake, this is not rocket science. We can get this right. Let us move this debate to solutions.

● (1650)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Carbon Pricing.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, ultimately, I would take a look at the carbon rebate and carbon tax issue as more of a price on pollution and an environmental issue. However, I think that we lose that thought.

The best way to illustrate the politicization of the issue is to take a look at what is happening in the province of Alberta. One only needs to look at the current premier. Before she was premier, she seemed to be of the opinion that we were going in the right direction on a price on pollution and the impact it was having; she even cited a personal example. Today, she is a premier and one of the individuals who have really focused on getting rid of the carbon rebate or the price on pollution.

Could the leader of the Green Party provide her thoughts on the degree to which the politicization of the issue can be very damaging for good, sound public policy.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, the actions of the premier of Alberta are quite baffling, because her decision to put a pause on renewables when there are billions of dollars of investment trying to get into Alberta makes no sense.

Alberta has the best potential for solar, and that is where Alberta is a real energy powerhouse. The facility that was recently put in place near Okotoks is delivering solar power at under three cents a kilowatt hour, and it rolled out fast. There is nothing that can compete with that.

If we look at solar and wind as sources of electricity, the price to consumers plummets. However, when the marginal cost of a kilowatt hour is zero, the utilities are resistant. Their profit model, their business model, is that they make energy in big megaprojects and sell it along long, stringy lines, where it loses efficiency, to consumers who have no choice but to buy it.

We can bring down the price of electricity. Let little communities, indigenous nations and people produce their own electricity with renewables. If we bring down that price, it will help everyone except, for some reason, the Premier of Alberta.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, on the one hand, we are seeing a desire to reduce our carbon footprint, but on the other hand, we are seeing investments in the oil industry, in particular, as well as in carbon capture, which is not very effective.

Does my colleague not think that there is a double standard here? Should we not be more consistent in regard to the measures we are taking to fight pollution so that we can become a world leader and keep other countries from making the same mistakes we made?

● (1655)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is making decisions that are big mistakes. The biggest mistake is to continue to give huge subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. That makes no sense.

For example, \$34 billion in taxpayers' money was invested in the Trans Mountain pipeline. Not only does that not make any sense economically, but it is also a big threat to our environment. That was done with public money. That is more than all the subsidies for clean, green energy.

It makes no sense.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I share the member's dismay; on issues like this, it feels as though we are less and less a single country pulling in the same direction.

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The motion before us calls for a first ministers meeting, and I cannot help but feel that the only path towards greater unity involves talking to each other. Does the member feel that, if such a meeting were to take place, if the Prime Minister were to heed this motion and call a first ministers meeting to talk about this, the premiers would engage in that meeting in good faith?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Skeena—Bulkley Valley, who, by the way, was one of the few MPs able to attend COP28. There, the decision was taken to triple renewable energy globally and double energy efficiency by 2030. These are important decisions that we should be moving on quickly.

I would like to think that every premier would participate in good faith. We can start naming the ones we think would, but let us start with the evidence. Let us have a first ministers meeting that has scientists present to explain the real crisis we are in.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very much looking forward to hearing the speech by my colleague, the member for Yellowhead, and I will be splitting my time with him.

It is my pleasure to join the debate on our official opposition motion to have the Prime Minister take the time to meet with the 14 premiers of the country. I do not think it is too much to ask, and I find it interesting that all the government members are very opposed to having the Prime Minister do his job.

He has not met with the 14 first ministers since 2016. I remember that because, during that time, I was an MLA in Saskatchewan with former premier Brad Wall. I remember Premier Wall came back and said that the Prime Minister committed to not announcing any forced carbon tax until there were discussions and the premiers had had the chance to come back and bring forward options. That is what the Prime Minister said to the 14 premiers at that meeting.

I also remember that the environment ministers were called to have a meeting with then-environment minister Catherine McKenna to talk about the backstop of the carbon tax on provinces that had not yet gotten their plans in place. There was good faith. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley asked about good faith. In that meeting of environment ministers, they announced the backstop of the carbon tax. That is when our environment minister walked out of that meeting. When we talk about good faith, a lot of that good faith has to come from the federal government as well. When we talk about good faith, it is very important.

A lot of the Liberal and NDP members of Parliament have talked about misinformation. I will stick strictly to the facts for the member for Winnipeg North, so he cannot talk about misinformation.

It is a fact that in our country, over the last year, two million people have accessed a food bank. The expectation is that a million more people will access a food bank in 2024 because of high food prices. That is a fact and is not to be disputed in the House. I do not think any of us think that is the type of country that we should be living in, where that many Canadians, and especially those in our armed forces, have to access a food bank just to get by. That is something we should all take to heart and try to do better.

This has been caused by the continuous rise in inflation. The fact is that the Parliamentary Budgetary Officer and the Governor of the Bank of Canada have said that the carbon tax adds to inflation. These are undeniable facts.

I would also say that, throughout the years, we have done some studies in Saskatchewan, and the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan has said that the carbon tax will add \$1.93 per acre in 2019, increasing to \$7.42 in 2024. This is something that is amazing. The carbon tax will cost \$17.31 per acre by 2030, once it gets to \$170 a tonne.

There is no way a rational person could look at those numbers and think that the carbon tax is not increasing the price of our food. If we tax the farmer who produces the food and we tax the trucker who trucks the food, we tax every single Canadian who goes to the grocery store to buy the food.

Talking about continued increases, we can see that across this country rents have doubled and mortgages have doubled. When I was younger and we bought our first home, it took 25 years to pay that home off. Now it takes 25 years to save for a down payment on a home. Eight to nine out of 10 young Canadians do not think they will ever own a home in our country. That is not the country our children should grow up in. There should be hope. There should be optimism in this country.

We should take some of the members of the Liberal caucus at their word. A couple of years ago, the member for Whitby stood in his spot in this chamber and said that Canadians would feel pain. There is a success. Canadians are feeling pain, and it is because of their out-of-touch policies.

Let us look at the Prime Minister. He just did an interview in Alberta saying that life was going to get more expensive. He made an out-of-touch comment that, for people who own a pool or drive three vehicles, life would get more expensive. That is not the fact. The fact is that, in this country, life is more expensive for each and every Canadian. There is always more month left than paycheque now for Canadians. That is because of the out-of-touch policies brought forward by the government.

• (1700)

I find it very interesting that Liberal members are still talking about the rebate. They think they are heroes. I congratulate them for giving rebates to Canadians. It is their money in the first place. If they did not take the money from them, they would not have to bend over backward to give it back to them. Government never earns a dollar ever. It only gets money by taking it from Canadians and businesses who have earned that money first.

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I would like to end by saying that it is not unreasonable for us to ask the Prime Minister to sit down, defend his flagship carbon tax policy and explain why the government should take more money from Canadians than it is going to give back in front of our premiers. If he is so proud of his carbon tax and it is doing such a wonderful job, when we are ranked 62 out of 67 in the world on the environmental index because he is doing nothing to meet that target, he should have no problem defending his policies to our premiers.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, ironically, there was a provincial budget in the province of Manitoba that saw the price of a litre of gas drop because it reduced the tax.

In the province of Alberta, the Conservative premier, who has been so critical and onside with the leader of the Conservative Party saying to axe the tax, actually increased gas in Alberta four cents a litre, which is more than the three cents from the carbon tax, yet Conservatives collectively have been silent on that. They will criticize the federal government on a three cent a litre increase, but are absolutely silent on a four cent a litre increase from an Alberta Conservative premier.

The member posed the question about two million people going to food banks. How does that four cents a litre factor into that?

• (1705)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, what I would love to do this summer is to go on a rural tour in Manitoba with the member and ask all the farmers there how they feel about the carbon tax costing the agricultural producers of our country \$1 billion in 2030, and if they think that would be fair.

It is going to cost the average farm of 5,000 acres \$175,000 a year in carbon tax. I want to know if the member thinks those farms are going to be able to survive.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, related to today's discussion is Bill C-234. Conservatives have been campaigning loudly about how they would like to see the Senate amendments to that bill rejected and it be passed in its original form. I can say now, as I have said before, that the NDP supports that position because we think the bill's principles are in line with what is in the original Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act. Every time the bill has come forward to the House, it is lined up with Conservative speakers; thus we never seem to get to a stage where it will come to a vote.

I hear Conservatives complaining about all of these costs. When is the member's party going to let the bill come to a vote so that we can actually get these changes implemented?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I would like to join with this member and say we should pass it right now with unanimous consent. Then it can go back to the Senate and we can get the relief our producers need.

One more thing I would like to say about the Liberals' rebate program is this. They say it is revenue-neutral. If they thought the carbon tax was revenue-neutral, they would not have exempted home heating in the Maritimes and across the country. They have admitted that the carbon tax is not revenue-neutral by bringing in

exemptions, because they knew that people were out more money than they were getting back.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am going to ask my colleague the same question I asked earlier.

Canada's provincial premiers are not Parliament's puppets. They will never be Parliament's puppets, no matter who is in power.

Should it not be up to Canada's provincial premiers themselves to demand a meeting as soon as possible, and with our support, since it is important that they are heard? Is it not actually their prerogative to put their foot down, pound their fists on the table and say they want a meeting?

[*English*]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member opposite. The premiers of Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta have all written the Prime Minister to ask for a meeting. Adding our voice to support those premiers is something the House has the ability to do and should do. The problem with the Prime Minister is that he just does not give a damn what the premiers say.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would advise the member to be a little more careful with his language.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Yellowhead.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, in a move that can only be described as completely out of touch, the NDP-Liberal coalition has once again chosen to burden Canadians with a staggering 23% increase in the carbon tax.

As we gather in the House, families from coast to coast to coast are struggling under the weight of soaring prices for essentials like fuel, food and heating. This tax hike is a direct hit on the wallets of hard-working Canadians, particularly in Alberta, where the carbon tax costs by far the most.

Opposition is not limited to just voices in this chamber. It echoes from the west to the east, with premiers across Canada standing united against this absurd increase. The message from Canadians is loud and clear: Enough is enough. It is time for the Prime Minister to convene an emergency carbon tax meeting with all of Canada's first ministers.

This issue is bigger than just partisan politics. It is about the livelihoods of our citizens. We demand action and we demand it now, for the future of our federation and the well-being of every Canadian family.

The April 1 23% increase in the carbon tax orchestrated by the NDP-Liberal government significantly inflates the cost of living, affecting not just the cost of gas but everything that goes through our supply chain. The burden is most felt in Alberta, where, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the average family will pay a staggering \$2,943 in carbon tax this year, which is the highest in the nation.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer also disproves the claim that the government keeps making about the rebates. The rebates fall dramatically short of offsetting the financial impact on families, no matter whether they reside in urban centres or rural Alberta.

This tax hike is not an isolated issue. It is representative of a broader, more concerning trend of inflationary pressures made worse by the government's fiscal policies. As prices soar, the government's insistence on increasing the carbon tax adds fuel to the inflationary fire that is engulfing Canada.

The notion that the rebates would cushion the blow has proven to be false, leaving Canadians to grapple with diminishing household budgets. This policy does not discriminate. Its reach extends to every corner of the country, leaving no one insulated from its effects. From the single parent in Edson struggling to make ends meet to the small business owner in Rocky Mountain House facing increasing operational costs, the message is clear: This carbon tax increase is financially and morally wrong and one that demands immediate re-evaluation.

The fiscal health and well-being of Canadians must be the priority, not the relentless pursuit of a tax scheme that deepens the divide between fantasy policies and real-world outcomes. The backlash against the carbon tax is not just a small group of angry Canadians. It is a national outcry for change from millions.

Representing the will of the people are the premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and P.E.I. These leaders, representing diverse political and geographical backgrounds, have united in their opposition. Their stance reveals a critical flaw in the carbon tax policy, which is that it fails to acknowledge the unique economic and environmental realities of each province. This united front of opposition is mirrored by the Canadian people, with two-thirds expressing opposition to the tax hike.

On April 1, I met with many of these Canadians who are frustrated, and I joined them at axe the tax protests along Highway 43 and in Drayton Valley. Every business owner I meet and every person at the homes I door knock has shared their experiences with the worsening cost of living because of this tax.

Between the provinces and the federal government, the essence of Canadian federalism is collaboration and respect for jurisdiction, yet the current approach to the carbon tax defines the NDP-Liberal government's preference for unilateral decision-making. It disregards the principle that provinces should have the autonomy to pursue their own economic objectives. This moment calls for a return

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to true partnership, where provincial voices are not only heard but answered, crafting a more cohesive and effective strategy for Canada's future.

● (1710)

Aside from this, the imposition of a steep carbon tax by the government, under the banner of environmental preservation, presents a glaring problem. Despite the financial strain this policy places on Canadians, there is a troubling lack of evidence and measurable targets concerning its impact on emissions.

Astonishingly, by the government's own admission, specific outcomes tied to the tax's effectiveness in reducing emissions do not exist. This is further compounded by an inconvenient truth: emissions in Canada are on the rise, not the decline. Our country finds itself ranked 62nd out of 67 countries on the climate change performance index, a clear example of the policy's ineffectiveness.

I would like to move an amendment.

I move that all the words after "That" be replaced with:

the House note:

(a) that the federal carbon tax is causing a debate in the country, and

(b) that, while Quebec, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories already have their own systems in place, the federal government mandates carbon tax policy;

that the House call on the Prime Minister to convene an emergency carbon tax and tariffication meeting with all of Canada's 14 first ministers; and

that this meeting be publicly televised and held within five weeks of this motion being adopted.

● (1715)

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are taking the amendment under advisement and will be back in a few minutes, as soon as it is considered.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 5:15 p.m.)

● (1725)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 5:26 p.m.)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would like to ask the hon. opposition House leader if he accepts the amendment as moved.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I do.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The amendment is in order.

It is now my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the amendment.

*Private Members' Business**[Translation]*

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. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I know that Canadians are very curious as to how members in this House vote and whether they vote to agree to have their premiers have a sit-down meeting with the Prime Minister over the carbon tax urgency. Therefore, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 10, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask to see the clock at 5:30 p.m., so we can begin private members' hour.

• (1730)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

STOPPING INTERNET SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ACT

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC) moved that Bill C-270, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (pornographic material), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, imagine being the parent of a teenage daughter who has been missing for months and somebody discovers 50 explicit videos of that daughter being sexually abused on Pornhub, the most popular porn site in the world. Imagine how one would feel if intimate images of one's sibling was uploaded and Pornhub refused one's request to remove that content. Now, imagine if those videos of their exploited loved ones were being monetized and published for profit by Pornhub and were made available to Pornhub's over 130 daily visitors.

How would someone feel if Pornhub's only response was an auto-reply email? Understandably, one would be outraged. One would be furious, yet this happens over and over. Survivors, including a 12-year-old from Ontario, have had to seek justice through their own lawsuits because in Canada, the onus is on survivors and on law enforcement to prove, after the material has been uploaded, that the individuals depicted in those videos are either under age or have not consented to their distribution. This is a serious problem that Bill C-270, the stopping Internet sexual exploitation act, seeks to fix.

It's important to note that for years, survivors, child protection agencies and the police have spoken out about this exploitation. They have not been silent. Survivors have shared how pornographic companies like Pornhub have been profiting from content depicting

minors, sex trafficking victims, sexual assault, intimate images and gender-based violence for years. As early as 2019, companies like PayPal cut ties with MindGeek due to the availability of exploitive and abusive content.

In March 2020, a few parliamentarians and I wrote a public letter to the Prime Minister to alert him about the exploitation that was happening on MindGeek. We followed up in November 2020 with a letter to the then Minister of Justice, urging him to ensure that our laws were adequate to prevent women and girls from being exploited by Pornhub.

It was The New York Times exposé on December 4, 2020, in a piece written by Nicholas Kristof, that finally got the public's and the government's attention. It was entitled "The Children of Pornhub: Why does Canada allow this company to profit off videos of exploitation and assault?" That article finally kicked off a firestorm of international attention on Pornhub, which is one of many pornographic websites owned by MindGeek, a Canadian company based in Montreal. About a year ago, it was bought and rebranded as Aylo by a company called Ethical Capital Partners, based in Ottawa.

A few days after that article, the House of Commons ethics committee initiated an investigation into Pornhub. I joined the ethics committee for its study on Pornhub and listened to the harrowing stories of young women who had videos of sexual assaults or intimate content shared without their consent. Many of these women were minors when the videos were created and uploaded to pornography sites like Pornhub. I want to take a moment to share some of their testimony.

Serena Fleites, whose story was covered by The New York Times exposé, had videos of her at age 13 uploaded by her ex-boyfriend. After that, her whole life came crumbling down. She experienced depression and drug use. She was harassed by people at her school who found her video and sent it to family members. She was blackmailed. She had to pretend to be her mother to have the videos taken down from Pornhub. This was all while she was 13 years old. In the end, she stopped going to school. She told us:

I thought that once I stopped being in the public so much, once I stopped going to school, people would stop re-uploading it. But that didn't happen, because it had already been basically downloaded by [all the] people...[in] the world. It would always be uploaded, over and over and over again. No matter how many times I got it taken down, it would be right back up again.

It basically became a full-time job for her to just chase down those images and to get them removed from Pornhub.

Some witnesses appeared anonymously to protect their identities. One witness stated, “I was 17 when videos of me on Pornhub came to my knowledge, and I was only 15 in the videos they [were] profiting from.” She went on to say, “Every time they took it down, they also allowed more and more videos of me to be reuploaded.” That witness also said, “Videos of me being on Pornhub has affected my life so much to the point that I don’t leave my house anymore. I stopped being able to work because I [am]...scared to be out in public around other people.”

● (1735)

Another survivor who spoke to us at committee is Victoria Galy. As a result of discovering non-consensual images and videos of herself on Pornhub, she completely lost her sense of self-worth, and at times, she was suicidal. She told us at committee, “There were over eight million views just on Pornhub alone. To think of the amount of money that Pornhub has made off my trauma, date rape and sexual exploitation makes me sick to my stomach.” She added, “I have been forced to stand alone and fight Pornhub”.

It is a serious failure of our justice system when survivors have to launch their own lawsuits to get justice for the harms caused by companies like MindGeek. This Canadian company has not faced a single charge or consequence in Canada for publishing its videos of exploitation and for profiting from them. This is truly shameful.

Last year, a survivor named Uldouz Wallace reached out to me. Uldouz is a survivor of the 2014 iCloud hack. She is also an award-winning actress, executive producer, activist and director of Foundation RA. Uldouz had photos and videos taken in the 2014 iCloud hack and uploaded onto porn sites like Pornhub, and she fought for years to get them taken down. As a result of this, she told us, “I lost followers, I lost everything that you could think of. It was just such hard time for me. I ended up spending over a million dollars over a three-year span just to get the content taken down on me with no success.... They’re making so much money off of the non-consensual uploading of images and videos. The re-uploading is also a billion dollar industry.” She added, “There’s still no federal laws. There’s barely any laws at all to hold anyone online accountable. There’s currently foreign revenge laws but for people like me there’s nothing.”

Rachel, a survivor from Alberta, said that it was devastating and that it is going to haunt her for the rest of her life. She said that she will always be someone’s porn.

I want to point out the incredible courage of Victoria, Serena, Uldouz, Rachel and many other survivors who have spoken out. In the midst of one of the most difficult moments of their lives, they are fighting back against a billion-dollar industry that seeks to profit from their pain and exploitation. I thank Victoria, Serena, Uldouz, and Rachel for refusing to back down. I thank them for their courage. I thank them for their relentless pursuit of justice. I would encourage members to listen to their full testimonies, and they can do so at www.siseact.ca.

Throughout the ethics committee hearings and from the interactions I have had with survivors since, it is clear that this is a common problem. Pornographic companies are publishing and monetizing content without verifying the age and the consent of the people

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depicted in them. This is particularly a problem for Canada as many of those websites are hosted here.

Bill C-270, the stopping Internet sexual exploitation act, would stop this. I am going to quote right from the summary of my bill. It states that the SISE act would:

...prohibit a person [including companies] from making, distributing or advertising pornographic material for commercial purposes without having first ascertained that, at the time the material was made, each person whose image is depicted in the material was 18 years of age or older and gave their express consent to their image being depicted.

The SISE act would also allow individuals to revoke their consent. This is an important part to express the ongoing consent. Finally, the SISE act would provide for aggravating factors when the material created or published actually depicts minors or non-consensual activity.

I am also pleased to share that I consulted on the bill with a variety of child protection agencies, law enforcement groups and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to ensure that there are no gaps and that police have the tools to ensure they can seek justice.

The heart of the bill is consent. No one should be publishing sexually explicit material without the express consent of everyone depicted in that material. Children cannot consent to exploitation. Victims of sex trafficking and sexual assault cannot consent. Those filmed without their knowledge cannot consent, yet pornography companies freely publish this content and profit from it because there is no onus on them to verify the age or the consent of those depicted.

That is why the second recommendation of the 2021 ethics committee report is:

That the Government of Canada mandate that content-hosting platforms operating in Canada require affirmation from all persons depicted in pornographic content, before it can be uploaded, that they are 18 years old or older and that they consent to its distribution, and that it consult with the Privacy Commissioner of Canada with respect to the implementation of such obligation.

● (1740)

We have heard from survivors who testified that their images of abuse would not be online if companies like Pornhub had bothered to check for age and consent. Bill C-270 would fulfill this important recommendation from the ethics committee report and, importantly, I should add that this report was unanimously supported by all parties at the ethics committee.

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The recommendation also suggests consulting with the Privacy Commissioner. I happy to share with my colleagues that on February 29, 2024, the Privacy Commissioner released his investigation into Pornhub's operator Aylo, formerly MindGeek. The report was initially scheduled to be released on May 23, but it was delayed for over nine months when MindGeek, or Aylo, and its owners, Ethical Capital Partners took the Privacy Commissioner to court to block the release of that report.

The Privacy Commissioner's investigation into Aylo, MindGeek, was in response to a woman whose ex-boyfriend had uploaded intimate images of her to MindGeek's website without her consent. The young woman had to use a professional service to get it taken down and to remove her images from approximately 80 websites, where they had been re-posted more than 700 times.

The report shared how the publishing of the woman's intimate images led to a permanent loss of control of the images, which had a devastating effect on her. It caused her to withdraw from her social life and to live in a state of fear and anxiety. The Commissioner stated:

This untenable situation could have been avoided in many cases had MindGeek obtained direct consent from each individual depicted in content prior to or at the time of upload.

Pornhub's own Monthly Non-Consensual Content reports suggest that non-consensual content is still regularly uploaded and viewed by thousands of users before it is removed.

We find that by continuing to rely solely on the uploader to verify consent, MindGeek fails to ensure that it has obtained valid and meaningful consent from all individuals depicted in content uploaded to its websites.

Ultimately, the Privacy Commissioner recommended that Pornhub and its owners adopt measures that would verify age and consent before any content is uploaded. I would urge all members to read the Privacy Commissioner's report on Pornhub.

While Pornhub and its owners are the biggest pornography company in the world, this bill would ensure that age verification and consent applies to all pornography companies because whether it is videos of child exploitation, sex trafficking, AI deepfakes, sexual assault or an intimate encounter filmed by a partner, once a video or image has been uploaded, it is virtually impossible to eliminate. Each video can be viewed and downloaded millions of times within a 24-hour period, starting an endless nightmare for victims who must fight to get those videos removed, only for them to be uploaded again within minutes or hours.

Canada must do more to prevent this exploitive content from ever reaching the Internet in the first place. I hope I have the support of my colleagues in ending this nightmare for so many and in preventing it for so many more. To the survivors, some of whom are watching today, we thank them. Their voices are being heard.

I want to thank the organizations that have supported me along the way in getting this bill to this point: National Centre on Sexual Exploitation, National Council of Women of Canada, Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking, London Abused Women's Centre, Defend Dignity, Vancouver Collective Against Sexual Exploitation, The Salvation Army, Survivor Safety Matters, Foundation RA, Montreal Council of Women, CEASE UK, Parents Aware, Joy Smith Foundation, Hope Resource Centre Association, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Colchester Sexual Assault Centre, Sexual

Assault and Violence Intervention Services of Halton, and Ally Global Foundation.

• (1745)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the topic that the member is dealing with is particularly important. One of the arguments that he is making is with respect to taking down this heinous material online. I agree with him. However, the bill does not make any provisions for it.

Bill C-63, which is government legislation, does make provisions for taking down these types of heinous materials. The member's leader has said that he would vote against it. I wonder if the hon. member will be supporting Bill C-63 or if he is going to stick with what is here that would not accomplish the objectives that he is seeking, which I hope we would all be in favour of.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, Bill C-63 has no criminal offences around the uploading of this kind of content. In this bill, it would be a criminal offence to upload. We want to make sure this content never hits the Internet. A 24-hour takedown period is not good enough. We want to ensure that companies are doing their due diligence to ensure that their content is of people who are of age and that people consent to it.

An important piece of this bill is also that, if somebody has made a written request saying they revoke their consent, immediately that content must come down.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I were at a meeting this morning, and one of the things we talked about was the online exploitation of children in the Philippines. Digging into the issue, we can see how far behind Canada is. This issue has received international attention, and other models are out there.

I would like my colleague to comment on other such models currently in use around the world that may have inspired his bill.

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, there are a number of initiatives around the world that seek to tackle this online content and child safety online. I would point to the work of Baroness Beeban Kidron in the U.K. The U.K. Parliament, in general, has been working to try to tackle some of these things. I know that France, Germany and Spain have all passed legislation trying to tackle the safety of kids online.

I think about six American states have passed legislation around keeping kids safe online, and I know that the American Congress has before it right now a bipartisan bill called the kids online safety act, which is proceeding through their legislature. This is something that is being tackled around the world. This morning, the Filipino embassy pleaded with Canada to help prevent sexual predators in Canada from accessing livestreaming content from the Philippines of CSAM, child sexual abuse material.

This bill would only be a start to preventing some of the heinous crimes that are being committed on the Internet.

• (1750)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward this private member's bill, which directs our attention to some really important problems.

Is the member familiar with the report from the Department of Justice on cyber-bullying and non-consensual distribution of images from just a year ago, which takes quite a different approach from his bill and says we need to rewrite the existing offence so it is easier to prosecute and include measures, which are now in Bill C-63, to allow forfeiture, seizure, restitution and peace bonds in connection with these kinds of things?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I am happy to support that initiative. I would say we can do both of these things. This bill is to try to prevent, in the first place, any of this content from being uploaded, rather than trying to deal with the mess after the fact.

What the member is suggesting is more about dealing with something after it has been uploaded. That is an important aspect. Bringing the people who upload this content to justice is an important piece, but this would be put in place to prevent the uploading of this content in the first place.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, to be very clear, with regard to the issue of non-consensual pornography and child pornography, I like to believe that every member in the House would be deeply offended by any activity that would ultimately lead to, encourage or promote, in any fashion whatsoever, those two issues. It angers a great number of us, to the degree that it causes all forms of emotions. We all want to do what we can to play an important role in making our online world experience a safer place.

I must say that I was a little surprised when the member for Peace River—Westlock responded to the issue of Bill C-63. I did have some concerns.

When one thinks of non-consensual pornography and child pornography, they are already illegal today in Canada. We know that. I appreciate what is being suggested in the private member's legislation, but he was asked a question in regard to Bill C-63, the government legislation dealing with the online harms act. It is something that is very specific and will actually have a very tangible impact. I do not know 100%, because this is the first time that I heard that members of the Conservative Party might be voting against that legislation. That would go against everything, I would

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suggest, in principle, that the member opposite talked about in his speech.

The greatest threat today is once that information gets uploaded. How can we possibly contain it? That is, in part, what we should be attempting to deal with as quickly as possible. There was a great deal of consultation and work with stakeholders in all forms to try to deal with that. That is why we have the online harms act before us today.

I wanted to ask the member a question. The question I was going to ask the member is this: Given the very nature of his comments, would he not agree that the House should look at a way in which we could expedite the passage of Bill C-63?

By doing that, we are going to be directly helping some of the individuals the member addressed in his opening comments. The essence of what Bill C-63 does is that it provides an obligation, a legal obligation, for online platforms to take off of their platforms child pornography and non-consensual pornography. For example, the victims of these horrific actions can make contact and see justice because these platforms would have 24 hours to take it off. It brings some justice to the victims.

I do not understand, based on his sincerity and how genuine the member was when he made the presentation of his bill. I have a basic understanding of what the member is trying to accomplish in the legislation, and I think that there are some questions in regard to getting some clarification.

• (1755)

As I indicated, in terms of the idea of child pornography not being illegal, it is illegal today. We need to make that statement very clear. Non-consensual pornography is as well. Both are illegal. There is a consequence to perpetrators today if they are found out. What is missing is how we get those platforms to get rid of those images once those perpetrators start uploading the information and platforms start using the material. That is what the government legislation would provide.

Hopefully before we end the two hours of debate the member can, in his concluding remarks, because he will be afforded that opportunity, provide some thoughts in regard to making sure people understand that this is illegal today and the importance of getting at those platforms. If we do not get at those platforms, the problem is not going to go away.

There was a question posed by, I believe, a New Democratic member asking about countries around the world. People would be surprised at the motivation used to get child pornography on the net and livestreamed. I have seen some eye-opening presentations that show that in some countries in the world the person who is putting the child on the Internet is a parent or a guardian. They do it as a way to source revenue. They do it for income for the family. How sad is that?

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How angering is it to see the criminal element in North America that exploits these individuals, and children in particular. This is not to mention of course the importance of non-consensual pornography, but think of the trauma created as a direct result of a child going through things a child should never, ever have to experience. This will have a lifetime effect on that child. We know that. We see generational issues as a direct result of it.

That is the reason I like to think that every member of the House of Commons would look at the issue at hand and the principles of what we are talking about and want to take some initiative to minimize it. Members need to talk to the stakeholders. I have had the opportunity in different ways over the last number of years to do so. It is one the reasons I was very glad to see the government legislation come forward.

I was hoping to get clarification from the member on Bill C-270. He may be thrown off a little because of Bill C-63, which I believe will be of greater benefit than Bill C-270. After listening to the member speak though, I found out that the Conservative Party is apparently looking at voting against Bill C-63.

We come up with things collectively as a House to recognize important issues and put forward legislation that would have a positive impact, and I would suggest that Bill C-63 is one of those things. I would hope the member who introduced this private member's bill will not only be an advocate for his bill but be the strongest voice and advocate within his own caucus for the online harms act, Bill C-63, so we can get the support for that bill. It would literally save lives and take ungodly things off the Internet. It would save the lives of children.

• (1800)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, on November 21, 2022, a team from the TV show *Envoyé spécial* travelled from Paris to my office on the Hill. The France 2 team was there for a major investigation into Pornhub and the tragic experience of women and girls being sexually exploited by massive online pornography companies for profit.

The French public television team wanted to see me because, during the 43rd Parliament, I was a member of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, where we studied this unbelievable industry. I would actually describe this industry as disgusting, and people can understand why. It exploits and abuses women to create and distribute pornographic content with neither their knowledge nor their consent. I was absolutely shocked by what I heard.

The committee heard from Serena Fleites, whose story was reported in a New York Times article. According to the article, the 14-year-old found herself in sexually explicit videos uploaded to Pornhub. It is abominable.

I was also shocked by when the administrators of MindGeek, the parent company behind Pornhub, whose office was in Montreal at the time, came before the committee. I was stunned by the administrators' pathological lack of consideration for victims. As far as they were concerned, it was not really their fault if those videos ended

up on their platform, and it would not harm their lives. It was appalling.

The work we did in committee on Pornhub's practices enabled every member from every party present to understand the dubious mechanisms by which platforms distributing pornographic material get rich by exploiting the flaws in a technological system that is far from being able to control the content being distributed. In fact, it is built and designed to encourage criminal sexual exploitation practices by covering them up.

The committee I was on heard about the failure of moderation. We were told that the content was moderated, that people's privacy and reputations were protected. We heard about the failure to prevent the presence of child sexual exploitation material, despite the claims of the MindGeek representatives who testified in committee.

The committee made a number of recommendations, including the following: We must now, as a matter of urgency, pass legislation to respond to these crimes and deal with these troubling issues. I would remind the House that this study took place during the 43rd Parliament, which ran from 2019 to 2021. Now it is 2024. We had to wait for a bill from a Conservative member before we could finally talk about it in Parliament. What is the government waiting for? We are talking about human dignity. Young girls are having their reputations tarnished. Young people are committing suicide because they have been manipulated and cheated, because people have abused their trust. This has to stop.

I am going to give some figures on what happened from 2014 to 2022. This is important because we will understand the seriousness of the situation. Police reported 15,630 incidents of online sexual offences against children and 48,816 incidents of online child pornography.

• (1805)

The rate of police-reported online child sexual exploitation has risen since 2014, reaching 160 cases per 100,000 Canadian children and youth in 2022. Between 2014 and 2022, making and distributing child pornography accounted for three-quarters of child pornography cases, while possessing or accessing child pornography accounted for the remainder. The rate of online child pornography increased 290% in that short period of time.

Girls were overrepresented as victims for all offence types over the nine-year period. The majority of victims of police-reported online sexual offences against children were girls, particularly girls between the ages of 12 and 17.

Incidents of non-consensual distribution of intimate images most often involved a youth victim and a youth accused. Nearly all—97%—child and youth victims between 2015 and 2022 were aged 12 to 17 years, with a median age of 15 years for girls and 14 years for boys. Nine in ten accused persons were minors. For one-third of youth victims, a casual acquaintance shared the victim's intimate images with others. The goal is that once the image has been uploaded, it can be uploaded again, even months after it has been viewed.

I am calling on my colleagues to refer this bill to committee so that it may be improved and become an example to the world. We must no longer allow sexual exploitation.

Bill C-270 “amends the *Criminal Code* to prohibit a person from making, distributing or advertising pornographic material for commercial purposes without having first ascertained that, at the time the material was made, each person whose image is depicted in the material was 18 years of age or older and gave their express consent to their image being depicted.” To me, that is essential.

The voluntary agreement, in writing, of the person whose image is depicted in the pornographic material will be required before the content can be uploaded to the platforms.

Makers and distributors who do not comply with the requirements of the legislation will be subject to fines of up to half a million dollars and a prison sentence of up to two years. Alternatively, the offence may be punishable on summary conviction and liable to a fine of not more than \$100,000. What is more, convicted distributors or makers will be subject to an order.

I could go on at length, but I have only 30 seconds left. I just want to close by saying that this is a serious subject that raises a lot of questions, that this bill must be referred to committee and that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of it.

• (1810)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, New Democrats support, as all parties do, tackling the important issues that the bill before us seeks to tackle. We also know that there has been an explosion of sexual exploitation of individuals online without their consent and an explosion of child pornography. What we have to do is find those measures that would be effective in bringing an end to these heinous practices.

Like the member for Peace River—Westlock, I would like to support and salute the survivors who have told their tales, at much personal sacrifice and much personal anguish, publicly acknowledging what has happened to them and the impact it has had on their lives. We would not be making progress on these issues without that work by those survivors, so I think we all want to salute them for their bravery in taking up this problem.

However, the challenge with these issues is to find what will actually work to end sexual exploitation. We know that a lack of resources for enforcement is almost always at least equally important to any gaps in legislation. What we need to see is dedicated funding to specific and skilled police units to tackle these questions because it can become highly complex and highly convoluted in trying to bring these cases to prosecution, and we know that is one of the problems with the existing legislation. It is difficult to prosecute for these offences under the *Criminal Code* as it now stands.

We look forward, as New Democrats, to hearing from expert witnesses in committee on what measures will actually be the most effective in bringing an end to these practices, and whether and how the measures proposed in Bill C-270 would contribute to bringing an end to online sexual exploitation. The bill, in some senses, is very simple. It would require checking ID and keeping records of

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consent. Some would argue that the existing law already implicitly requires that, so is this a step that would make it easier to prosecute? I do not know the answer to that, but I am looking forward to hearing expert testimony on it.

While this legislation is not specific to women, it is important to acknowledge the disproportionate representation of women as victims of both child pornography and of sexual exploitation online without consent. However, I would also note that we have had a recent rash of cases of sexploitation or sextortion of young men who thought they had been speaking to other partners their own age online. They later find out that they were being threatened with the images they had shared being posted online and being asked for money or sexual favours to avoid that. Yes, it is primarily women, but we have seen this other phenomenon occurring where men pose as young women to get young boys to share those images.

Obviously, we need more education for young people on the dangers of sharing intimate images, although I am under no illusion that we can change the way young people relate to each other online and through their phones. Education would be important, but some measures to deal with these things when they happen are also important.

If we look at the *Criminal Code*, paragraph 162.1(1) already makes it illegal to distribute an intimate image without consent. Of course, child pornography, under a succeeding subsection, is also already illegal. This was first brought forward and added to the *Criminal Code* 11 years ago. I was a member of Parliament at that time, and the member for Peace River—Westlock joined us shortly after. It came in an omnibus bill brought forward by the Conservatives. In that bill, there were a number of things, to be honest, that New Democrats objected to, but when the bill, which was Bill C-13 at the time, was brought forward, our spokesperson Françoise Boivin offered to the government to split the bill, take out the section on online exploitation without consent and pass it through all stages in a single day. The Conservatives refused, at that point, to do that, and it took another year and a half to get that passed into law.

New Democrats have been supportive in taking these actions and have recognized its urgency for more than a decade. We are on board with getting the bill before us to committee and making sure that we find what is most effective in tackling these problems.

What are the problems? I see that there are principally two.

One, as I have mentioned before, is the difficulty of prosecution and the difficulty of making those who profit from this pay a price. All the prosecutors I have talked to have said that it is difficult to make these cases. It is difficult to investigate, and it is difficult to get convictions. Are there things we can do that would help make prosecution easier, and are the things suggested in the bill going to do that? I look forward to finding that out in committee.

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• (1815)

The second problem is the problem of takedown, and we all know that once the images are uploaded, they are there forever. They are hard to get rid of. As members of the government's side have pointed out, there are measures in government Bill C-63 that would help with warrants of seizure, forfeiture, restitution and peace bonds in trying to get more effective action to take down the images once they have been posted. I am not an optimist about the ability to do that, but we seem to lack the tools we need now to make a stab at taking the images off-line. It is also important to remember that whatever we do here has to make our law more effective at getting those who are profiting from the images. That is really what the bill is aimed at, and I salute the member for Peace River—Westlock for that singular focus because I think that is really key.

We also have to be aware of unintended consequences. When subsection 162.1(1) became law, in court we ran into a problem fairly early on of minors who share private images between each other, because technically, under the law as it is written, that is illegal; it is child pornography, and it certainly was not the intention to capture 15-year-olds who share intimate images with each other.

Whenever we make these kinds of changes, we have to make sure they do not have unintended consequences. Whether we like the practices that young people engage in online or not is not the question. We just have to make sure we do not capture innocent people when we are trying to capture those who profit from exploitation. The second part, in terms of unintended consequences, is I think we have to keep in mind there are those who are engaged in lawful forms of sex work online, and we have to make sure they are not captured under the broad strokes of the bill.

Again, I am looking forward to hearing the testimony about what will work to tackle these problems. We know the images are already illegal, but we know we lack effective tools in the legal system both to prosecute and to get the images taken down. New Democrats are broadly supportive of the principles in the bill. We are looking forward to the expert testimony I am certain we will hear at committee about what will actually work in tackling the problem. I look forward to the early passage of the bill through to committee.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a lot to say about the bill. I will just start with a brief personal anecdote. I want to be very clear when I say this: I do not do this as victim porn or looking for sympathy. It is an example of how if somebody like me, in a position of privilege, has a hard time accessing the justice system, what about others?

When I was a minister of the Crown, over 10 years ago, I received very explicit sexualized online threats, very graphic descriptions of how somebody was going to rape me, with what instruments, and how they were going to kill me. I was alone in a hotel room. My schedule had been published the day before, and I was terrified. The response at that time from law enforcement, and the process I had to go through as a minister of the Crown, to attempt to get justice in a situation that did not involve intimate images, sticks with me to this day. If I had to go through that at that time,

what hope is there for somebody who does not have my position of privilege?

What the bill would do is recognize that the forms of discrimination and harassment that, as my colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke says, disproportionately impact women, sexual minorities and other persons, have outpaced Parliament's ability to change the law. Here we are today.

Briefly, I want to respond to some of the points of debate. First of all, my colleague from the Liberals suggested that we expedite Bill C-63. That bill has been so widely panned by such a variety of disparate stakeholders that the government has not even scheduled it for debate in the House yet.

Second, and this is particularly for my colleagues who are looking to support this, to send the bill through to second reading, Bill C-63 would not provide criminal provisions either for any of the activities that are in the bill or for some of the other instances that have been brought up in the House for debate tonight, particularly the non-consensual distribution of deepnudes and deepfake pornography.

I raised the issue in the House over seven months ago. The intimate image distribution laws that are currently in the Criminal Code were only put in place in 2014, about a decade after social media came into play, and after Rehtaeh Parsons and Amanda Todd tragically died due to an absence in the law. Seven months have passed, and the government could have dealt with updating the Criminal Code with a very narrow provision that the Canadian Bar Association and multiple victims' rights groups have asked for, yet it has chosen not to.

There are so many articles that have been written about what is wrong with what is in Bill C-63 that we now need to start paying attention to what is wrong with it because of what is not in there. There is no update to Canada's Criminal Code provisions on the distribution of intimate images produced by artificial intelligence that are known as deepnudes.

I want to be very clear about this. There are websites right now where anyone in this place can download an app to their phone, upload any image of any person, including any person in here, and imagine what that looks like during an election campaign, erase people's clothes, and make it look like legitimate pornography. Imagine, then, that being distributed on social media without consent. Our Criminal Code, the Canadian Bar Association, as well as law professors, and I could read case after case, say that our laws do not update that.

At the beginning of February, there was a Canadian Press article that said that the government would update the law in Bill C-63, but it did not. Instead, what it chose to do was put in place a three-headed bureaucracy, an entirely extrajudicial process that amounts to a victim of these crimes being told to go to a bureaucratic complaints department instead of being able to get restitution under the law. Do we know what that says to a perpetrator? It says, “Go ahead; do it. There is no justice for you.” It boggles my mind that the government has spent all of this time while countless women and vulnerable Canadians are being harassed right now.

● (1820)

I also want to highlight something my colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke said, which is that there is a lack of resources for law enforcement across the country. While everybody had a nice couple of years talking about defunding the police, how many thousands of women across this country, tens of thousands or maybe even millions, experienced online harassment and were told, when they finally got the courage to go to the police, that it was in their head?

One of those women was killed in Calgary recently. Another of those women is Mercedes Stephenson, who talked about her story about trying to get justice for online harassment. If women like Mercedes Stephenson and I have a hard time getting justice, how is a teenager in Winnipeg in a high school supposed to get any sort of justice without clarity in the Criminal Code if there are deepnudes spread about her?

I will tell members how it goes, because it happened in a high school in Winnipeg after I raised this in the House of Commons. I said it was going to happen and it happened. Kids were posting artificial intelligence-generated deepnudes and deepfakes. They were harassing peers, harassing young women. Do members know what happened? No charges were laid. Why were no charges laid? According to the article, it was because of ambiguity in the Criminal Code around artificial intelligence-created deepnudes. Imagine that. Seven months have passed. It is not in Bill C-63.

At least the bill before us is looking at both sides of the coin on the Criminal Code provisions that we need to start looking at. I want to ensure that the government is immediately updating the Criminal Code to say that if it is illegal to distribute intimate images of a person that have been taken with a camera, it should be the exact same thing if it has been generated by a deepnude artificial intelligence. This should have been done a long time ago.

● (1825)

Before Bill C-63 came out, Peter Menzies, the former head of the CRTC, talked about the need to have non-partisan consensus and narrowly scoped bills so it could pass the House, but what the government has chosen to do with Bill C-63 is put in place a broad regulatory system with even more nebulousness on Criminal Code provisions. A lot of people have raised concerns about what the regulatory system would do and whether or not it would actually be able to address these things, and the government has not even allowed the House to debate that yet.

What we have in front of us, from my perspective, is a clear call to action to update the Criminal Code where we can, in narrow pro-

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visions, so law enforcement has the tools it needs to ensure that victims of these types of crimes can receive justice. What is happening is that technology is rapidly outpacing our ability to keep up with the law, and women are dying.

I am very pleased to hear the multipartisan nature of debate on these types of issues, and that there is at least a willingness to bring forward these types of initiatives to committee to have the discussions, but it does concern me that the government has eschewed any sort of update of the Criminal Code on a life-versus-life basis for regulators. Essentially what I am worried about is that it is telling victims to go to the complaints department, an extrajudicial process, as opposed to giving law enforcement the tools it needs.

I am sure there will be much more debate on this, but at the end of the day, seven months have passed since I asked the government to update the Criminal Code to ensure that deepnudes and deepfakes are in the Criminal Code under the non-consensual intimate image distribution laws. Certainly what we are talking about here is ensuring that law enforcement has every tool it needs to ensure that women and, as some of my colleagues have raised here, other sexual minorities are not victimized online through these types of technologies.

● (1830)

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join the second reading debate with respect to Bill C-270, an act to amend the Criminal Code on pornographic material, which was introduced on April 28, 2022, by the member for Peace River—Westlock.

I want to take an opportunity off the top to thank an organization that has played a critical role in advocacy in terms of dealing with so many of the challenges that the members opposite have raised. This organization, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, is located in the heart of my riding in Winnipeg South Centre. I want to thank Lianna McDonald, Signy Arnason, Noni Classen and the entire team at the Canadian Centre for Child Protection for the work that they have done and continue to do in helping to protect children across this country.

[Translation]

I know we all agree that non-consensual distribution of intimate images, child sexual abuse, sexual assault and human trafficking, as well as any images of such conduct, are among the most heinous crimes. I know that we are all deeply concerned that depictions of these crimes have been uploaded and shared on online platforms.

Ensuring that our policies and legislation effectively address this serious issue is a priority for our government. Victims must be protected, and digital platforms have a critical role to play in protecting them.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

I know we all agree that non-consensual distribution of intimate images, child sexual abuse, sexual assault and human trafficking, as well as any images of such conduct, are among the most heinous crimes. I know that we are deeply concerned—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have eight minutes the next time this matter is before the House.

[Translation]

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.

* * *

*[English]***CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867**

The House resumed from January 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-347, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (oath of office), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in this place and talk about the issues that are so important to Canadians. Specifically today, I am rising to talk about Bill C-347, an act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867, specifically in relation to the oath of office that those of us in this place all take prior to our being able to take our seats.

I know the bill was meant to be up for debate a number of weeks ago. Finally having this opportunity, I cannot help but think about so much of our history and its legacy and what this means to our democratic institutions. In speaking to the privilege motion that was debated yesterday and in talking about what some of the privileges of members of Parliament are, I mentioned the mace and some of the other symbols we have in this place and across our country and how so many of those lend to the history we have in this country we are able to call Canada today.

When it comes to the specifics of this institution, there has been more than 800 years of these green carpets. There was a decision on the fields of Runnymede that, instead of fighting a war, there would be deliberation and debate that would take place and the Crown would willingly give authority to the people. That is represented through the mace that sits on the table that our clerks reside at, where it points toward the government side of the House of Commons as a symbolic message to this day that speaks of that history of democracy and the empowerment of the people.

I enter into the debate on Bill C-347 with that history in mind. Here we have something that may seem small, in terms of adding an option for MPs to use instead of swearing an oath or affirming allegiance to the Crown. Members who were sworn in prior to the passing of the late Queen Elizabeth II, as on the two opportunities I have had, swore an oath of allegiance to the late queen, and those who have been elected more recently or will be elected in the future have an opportunity to swear an oath to King Charles III.

What I will attempt to do over the course of my speech is highlight a number of what I find are concerning aspects of the bill

The first is that we have a private member's bill, which has a very limited opportunity for debate in this place. Its provisions are not given the ability to have a fulsome discussion and debate on an issue as important as changing the perspective around the Crown's role in Canada. There is a reason I would say that. Some would say that this would just give another option. Practically, yes, that is what would happen here, but I would urge members of this place to consider this simple giving of a third option to members. Instead of swearing an oath or affirming allegiance to the Crown, they would be able to say that they would uphold the Constitution.

I suggest that members reflect carefully on the significance of that change because it shows a very symbolic shift in the way we approach our relationship with so much of our national history, of which the monarchy and the British Crown have been such a significant part. I have some concerns about doing this in the form of a private member's bill. It would be taking constitutional matters, I would suggest, somewhat flippantly and without acknowledging some of the seriousness with which we should approach these important things.

I know there are debates. In fact, I have heard some debates. There is one political party in the House that is no fan of the monarchy, and there are various opinions as to the future role of the monarchy in both the House of Commons and also in the other place, in the Senate. Those are important discussions that we can have as a country, but to simply provide an out without actually engaging in those fulsome discussions is deeply problematic.

● (1835)

One challenge I have with this bill is that it is somewhat contradictory in nature. While it gives a third option, and I have mentioned what that third option would be, I would suggest that it is very typically Liberal. It adds a third option as a workaround to do the exact same thing that the first two options provide.

On swearing an oath to the Crown, in 1905, there was a solemn affirmation and, in my understanding, significant debate around that at the time. What this change would bring about is basically that people would not have to do either of those, but they would swear to uphold the Constitution. However, by doing that, they are basically saying, indirectly, that they are swearing an oath of allegiance to the monarchy.

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My suggestion would be, when it comes to the context of the bill we have before us, that we should have the honest conversation as a nation as to the future of that in the context of our national discourse as opposed to the very limited few hours of debate that it has in a PMB slot. I would just note that one of the ironies I find when it comes to this bill is that we have a Liberal member of Parliament bringing this forward. I understand he has a long history of some of his opposition, and I believe it dates back to some controversy in relation to becoming a lawyer. There is obviously some personal history there. I greatly respect one's personal history and advocacy, even if I do not agree with it. One can respect people they do not agree with, which may be a news flash for many in this place.

I find it interesting that a Liberal would bring forward a bill that includes a mechanism with a very U.S. style of politics. If passed, this type of response would be integrated into something that has been very uniquely Westminster, very uniquely Canada. It already acknowledges that, in some cases, whether it is faith or ideology, some people do not feel they can swear an oath, so they simply affirm their allegiance to the Crown. I understand that.

However, it is ironic, I would suggest, that it is bringing forward some of that American style, because if one was to look at the oath that members of Congress, the U.S. President or members of the U.S. military swear, there is certainly a similarity. Nevertheless, it would not accomplish the same thing, because it is a workaround that still swears allegiance to the Crown; this is upheld through the constitutional values.

What is unique is that, as we undertake some of these significant discussions, it is okay to have disagreements. I am proud to be part of a party that provides a tremendous amount of latitude to be able to discuss and, in many cases, agree. I know that, for my Conservative colleagues and I, the reason we are Conservatives is very clear and straightforward. That is something we often talk about. However, that does not mean that one universally agrees on everything. It is that ability to disagree that is so fundamental to who we are as Canadians.

I would simply say this: Earlier today, I met with an organization that talks about media literacy. One fundamental takeaway is that it is okay to disagree in our society. It is okay to have dialogue and debate, to have different opinions on matters. Simply because someone has a different opinion does not necessarily make that person a bad person.

I fear that we have moved down that line, where we simply demonize those whom we disagree with. I would suggest that this is fundamentally incorrect.

To conclude, we may debate what responsibility is particular to the oath of office, which I certainly take very seriously. There may be a debate to have around the role of that responsibility to uphold the more than a century and a half of democratic tradition here in Canada, and prior to Canada becoming a country in 1867, the advent of responsible government with Robert Baldwin and Louis LaFontaine. There is some significant history there. Let us have those serious conversations and not adopt a bill that, I would suggest, is something of a cop-out from having those serious conversations that we should be able to have in this place.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois's position will come as no surprise: We will be voting in favour of this bill.

First of all, I would like to salute the courage of the member for Madawaska—Restigouche, who introduced this bill. I do not know what the future holds for this bill, but first and foremost, I must salute the member's courage. As someone who knows the history of the Acadians, I have a real admiration for him. I wanted to say that before I began my speech.

The bill aims to offer the possibility of choosing an oath and no longer forcing people to swear an oath to the King of England or Canada. Usually, we say: "I...do swear, That I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to [His or Her] Majesty", followed by the name of the king or queen who is on the throne. With this bill, there is the possibility of introducing a second option, which is to say: "I, A.B., do swear that I will carry out my duties in the best interest of Canada while upholding its Constitution."

Is that the best solution from the Bloc Québécois's perspective? I would not say so. This is not a bill the Bloc Québécois would have drafted. That does not mean it is not good. It is a step in the right direction. I am not trying to make my colleague sad. We would simply have drafted an oath of allegiance to the people. The people elect us. They are the reason we are here, the reason we make decisions. The people are always the reason we take the most informed action possible.

I know it will come as no surprise that the Bloc Québécois is against the monarchy. It is an old system whose glory days are long past, from a time before things such as the airplane and the car were discovered. That was ages ago. We believe in democracy. We believe that the people are sovereign, not the King. What matters to us is the equality of all people, regardless of the colour of their skin, the language they speak, or where they come from. Everyone is equal.

When we swear allegiance to someone born into the right family, under a lucky star, no one can claim that everyone is equal. It transgresses the foundations of democracy from the start. Guess what? Democracy is the reason we are here. A person is either a supporter of democracy or not.

In 1776, Adam Smith wrote a treatise on the wealth of nations. According to his extraordinary book, people deserve to be treated with respect and on an equal basis. People who succeed by their merit, skill and hard work have earned their success. That is what economic liberalism is all about. I am not saying that we all have to be economic liberals; that is not what I am saying. In the country of today's king, Adam Smith laid the groundwork for an economic system coupled with a political system that upholds the equality of all and reward based on merit. No one can claim that Charles III deserves to have his shoelaces ironed based on merit. Nothing justifies the royal treatment given to this individual, who should be the equal of everyone else. For that reason and others, we therefore object to swearing an oath.

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That being said, there is something else. The Governor General of Canada, who represents the King, could potentially gain political power even though they are not elected. That is crazy. We cannot accept that possibility.

We have power because we are given that power by virtue of being elected. People say that they have confidence in us for certain reasons. They read our platform, they listened to us and they decided that we should represent them. The fact that we are making these decisions is justified. If people are unhappy with my work, we know what will happen. I will have to step down. The people will decide.

• (1845)

Before I get into the rest of my remarks, I must say that swearing an oath to the Constitution is problematic. First, the Constitution places a lot of emphasis on God, which is problematic. Second, Quebec did not sign the Constitution. It was shoved down our throats. We would therefore be swearing allegiance to a Constitution that has not been signed by my people. I have a bit of a problem with that.

Furthermore, I am looking at Canada's current Liberal government, and it does not respect the Constitution. It will be swearing allegiance to the Constitution while interfering in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. It is simply going to renege on the very foundations of this Constitution. When we talk about a normal country, we are not quite there. Lastly, why are we against swearing allegiance to the King? Because it is the British monarchy. He is the king of another country. We are swearing allegiance to a king who comes from somewhere else and lives somewhere else. He will come and do a little tour once in a while, at taxpayers' expense, of course. Honestly, I think he might as well stay home. That would be a good deal; it would allow us to keep more money to solve our own problems.

For Quebeckers, this king is the conqueror. The English won the Seven Years' War, which we call "la guerre de la Conquête" or the war of the conquest. It is funny because, when we talk about the war of the conquest and the Plains of Abraham, we always think about defeat, whereas native-born Canadians think about victory. Then they wonder why we say that we are a distinct nation. Perhaps that is part of the reason. There were moments in history when we were at war. That is because we do not even come from the same people. Before the British Crown came along and conquered Quebec, it crossed the St. Lawrence River and burned down farms belonging to Quebeckers, to French Canadians at the time, all along the river.

Incidentally, the British also deported the Acadians. Why? The Acadian population totalled 18,000. The British separated families. They deported 12,000 Acadians, and 8,000 of them died of an epidemic before they even reached their destination. It is the British Crown that did that. Am I really supposed to swear an oath to that? It makes no sense.

Then there was Amherst's germ warfare. I think it was in 1760. He decided he wanted to help indigenous people, after a fashion. He infected blankets with smallpox, and then he distributed the blankets to indigenous people. Some say it was the first case of

germ warfare. The British Crown did that. I am supposed to swear allegiance to that?

When the patriots were hanged, strangely enough, 12 French-speaking patriots were hanged, and yet some of the people who participated in the patriots' rebellions were English, Irish and Quebeckers or French Canadians. The 12 who were hanged were francophones. How bizarre. I am the member of Parliament for La Prairie. Joseph-Narcisse Cardinal, who was the member for La Prairie, was sentenced to hang because he had gone to Kahnawake to get weapons and been caught. He had five children, and I think his wife was expecting a sixth. His wife wrote a letter to Colborne's wife. Colborne was Governor General at the time. She begged her to save her husband's life. She did not get a response. She went to see Colborne's wife and Colborne gave her \$8. That is the British Crown. They seriously want me to swear an oath to that?

Lord Durham wanted to put a definitive end to problems related to the patriot rebellion. He said that it was not a political war, but an ethnic war because of French Canadians. He said he would fix things. He said they were a people without history, a people without literature. He said they had to be assimilated for their own good. That is why the powers that be set out to unite Lower Canada and Upper Canada. That is how we were treated. There is a member here from Durham. Canadians see Durham as a good person. We see him as a force for assimilation. We can read what Durham wanted to do in the 19th century and look at what is happening today. We know that history does not tire of its own tales. If we do not listen, it repeats itself. As Jacques Parizeau put it, the best way to make someone a separatist is to teach them history.

• (1850)

That is how I know that what would make Quebeckers and the members of the Bloc Québécois truly proud would be to swear an oath to the people of Quebec in the republic of Quebec.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I lost my flower that acknowledges Cancer Awareness Month, so I do not have it on right now, but I do want to acknowledge that it is Cancer Awareness Month. I do not want to take up too much time, but I want to acknowledge all those who are impacted by cancer.

I recently lost a friend of mine, Cindra, who leaves behind her three children. She also lost her husband just over a year ago, so they have left behind their children as a result of cancer. I want to thank the Canadian Cancer Society and all those who do all the work to do research and provide supports to help all those who are impacted.

With that, I am here today to talk about Bill C-347, an act to amend the Constitution Act. This is my very first speech as the new NDP critic of democratic reform, so I am very proud and pleased to speak to this issue.

Private Members' Business

I want to thank the member for Madawaska—Restigouche for bringing forward this bill. As we know, this bill brings forward the ability for a member of the House of Commons or Senate, before they take their seat, to choose to take and subscribe to the oath of allegiance, an oath of office, or both. We all subscribe to the oath of allegiance, so this would be an alternative for people.

Members would have a choice to swear an allegiance to the monarch, as has always been done in Canada, or to take an oath of office, therefore committing to work in the best interest of our country and in accordance with the Constitution. Members cannot currently legally assume their seat in Parliament until they have taken the oath to the sovereign.

When speaking with constituents in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, I have heard a mix of responses. Some are very much in favour of such changes, some are very much against and there are others who are quite frankly apathetic to the issue. It is for these reasons my New Democrat colleagues and I will decide individually whether to support this legislation or not.

I respect the member for his creativity in this bill. Whether intended or not, I believe this could be a small, positive step in addressing potential barriers for Canadians in putting their names forward to serve and represent constituents as members of Parliament. I believe this to be a small change but worth discussing, as such decisions can have an impact on the composition of who is elected into the House of Commons.

However, as we all know, this is not an issue I am finding is front of mind for Canadians. This is understandable as Canadians and people in Nanaimo—Ladysmith are struggling to make ends meet. People are unable to afford housing and are unable to keep food on the table. Canadians are feeling the real impacts of the climate crisis.

In my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, for example, “forest fire season” is now a term being used by locals. Forest fire season is now a part of our summer, where the smoke fills the air, kids are unable to go outside to play and people struggle just to breathe.

There are serious problems facing Canadians across the country. Front of mind for most, rightfully so, is not this issue, but we do need to be talking about how to adapt to meet the needs of Canadians to ensure our democracy is strong and representative.

However, I do believe, and I am willing to be proven wrong, but if the Liberals who are currently forming government were serious about wanting to make this change, it would not have come forward today as a private member's bill. They would have instead made it happen. This is a pattern of Liberal behaviour picking off low-lying fruit instead of implementing legislation that would bring forward real democratic reform and the real changes Canadians so desperately need.

Now, more than ever, we need to be seriously evaluating the ways in which our electoral systems and parliamentary processes create barriers to full participation of Canadians. This is why I brought forward my previous bill calling on the government to implement a national citizens assembly on electoral reform. This would have provided Canadians with the tools needed to develop

and form the recommendations to the federal government as to how to best strengthen our democracy.

We all know the Liberals first promised electoral reform in 2015 and continued to make such promises time and time again. The Conservatives, on the other hand, for the most part have been silent on this issue as, let us be honest, the current system benefits them.

• (1855)

Out of 118 elected Conservative MPs, only 21 are women. This is about 18% of the party. Women account for over 50% of the general Canadian population, and yet the Conservative Party is composed of only 18% women. One would think the Conservatives would be eager to make changes to increase representation; instead, they fight to maintain the existing systems and the status quo.

I will say this: This motion, as well as much of the work still required, is an opportunity for all MPs to come together and implement a positive path forward for Canadians, because we cannot keep doing what we have always done. We know that, currently, only 30% of those elected to the House of Commons overall are women. This is the highest it has ever been. However, the rate at which Canada is increasing representation is too slow, and we are falling shamefully behind on the global scale. Those elected to the House of Commons should be representative of our communities. Instead, we have seen an under-representation of so many, including indigenous people, Black Canadians, those living with low incomes, people who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and I could go on.

We also know that the current first-past-the-post system encourages divisive and adversarial politics. We are seeing more than our fair share of this in this House, and the current system encourages such poor behaviour. It does not have to be this way.

When we look at countries such as Norway, New Zealand and Scotland that have adopted a system of proportional representation, where voter support means better-represented seats in Parliament, we also see increased collaborations among those elected and political parties. This is because, to get legislation through Parliament, working together is the only choice. The winner-take-all approach that we have in Canada, in contrast, results in what we see all around us: division, misinformation and personal attacks rather than respectful debate about the priority at hand.

Instead of providing Canadians with the tools required to ensure those important discussions and solutions were made a priority, both the Liberals and Conservatives, including the mover of this motion, voted against moving forward.

• (1900)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I appreciate what the member is saying, but we need to keep it relevant to the legislation at hand. That would be nice.

Private Members' Business

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. parliamentary secretary that, as he is aware, there is some latitude in the debates and speeches in the House. I am sure the hon. member will ensure that her speech is related to the matter, but it flows in different ways sometimes and then it is brought back. I would remind members to make sure they are speaking to the motion before the House.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, I thought perhaps I had not followed a parliamentary rule of some sort. As it turns out, it was a chance to deflect from the truth, which is the voting record of the Liberals in not moving forward on electoral reform and strengthening our democracy.

I appreciate this motion and the need for changes to be made, but let us take a moment to reflect on the work required ahead and commit together to make real changes, to listen to the needs of Canadians and to implement the necessary solutions. I cannot reiterate enough that we no longer have time to wait.

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am grateful to speak to this bill today. The oath of allegiance is one everybody in the House is familiar with because they have taken it. Everybody sitting here has taken it at least once. Some of us have been lucky enough to take it more than once.

The moment a member of this place takes the oath for the first time has a powerful impact. It is a moment filled equally with excitement and solemnity: excitement because it is the start of something, a bit of an adventure, something that the member had been working on for months; and solemnity because of the task ahead. Serving our constituents and Canadians more generally is a serious task and one that is an honour to undertake.

The oath of allegiance is currently required by section 128 of the Constitution Act. The courts have interpreted it as a symbolic oath to Canada's system of government, a constitutional monarchy. The oath of allegiance has been described as an affirmation of Canada's societal values and constitutional architecture and a symbolic commitment to our form of government and the unwritten constitutional principle of democracy.

I do not begrudge the honourable member for wanting to update our oath. He is my friend and he is my colleague. Swearing an oath of allegiance in the 21st century may seem to be a relic of a bygone colonial era. I understand that sentiment. I appreciate where he is coming from. I just do not believe this is the appropriate time to have this debate.

The oath of allegiance is a bond that links members of this place and members of the other place in many ways. Even prior to Confederation, section 35 of the Union Act of 1840 required members of the legislative council and the legislative assembly of the Province of Canada to take an oath of allegiance prior to taking their seats and voting. The oath of allegiance also connects us with our colleagues in the provincial legislative assemblies who are also required by section 128 of the Constitution Act to take the same oath.

The Crown remains an ever-present feature of our system of government and symbolizes the state. The Crown in Parliament participates in the legislative process, most critically in its culmination by granting royal assent. In this sense, the Crown is a unifying symbolic feature of our system of government and of our constitutional order. As the courts have recognized, viewed in this way, the oath to the King of Canada is an oath to our form of government, as symbolized by the King as the apex of our Canadian parliamentary system of a democratic constitutional monarchy.

The oath of office proposed by the hon. member in Bill C-347 would invite us to swear to carry out our duties in the best interests of Canada while upholding its Constitution. I cannot dispute this sentiment. As the courts have held, however, the oath of allegiance, properly construed, is quite similar in meaning. The reference to the King in the oath of allegiance is really a reference to the state and the source of all sovereign authority.

However, this proposed oath of office, well intended though it may be, does not reflect our system of government. Changing shared rituals like the oath of allegiance involves changing the Constitution. This is not something that should be done lightly or without careful reflection. Having expressed my own reservations about the hon. member's proposal, I and the government would oppose this measure and vote against the bill.

● (1905)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-347 seeks to give members of Parliament and senators a choice regarding the oath they take. They can choose to swear allegiance to a foreign monarch, take the new oath of office or both. I want to commend the member for Madawaska—Restigouche for this bill. He is also the chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, of which I am one of the co-chairs.

Of course, the Bloc Québécois opposes any expression of this system of monarchism and its underlying philosophy. When a people does not know its history, it is a bit like when an individual has amnesia. It is important to remember the actions and decisions of the British monarchy, the deportation of the Acadians, and the horrors of the siege of Quebec and the Seven Years' War, which resulted in the death of 15% of the population of New France. It is also important to remember the military suppression of the Patriotes rebellion of 1837-38.

In the wake of the Durham report, England declared the union of Upper Canada and Lower Canada to assimilate the francophones and keep them in the minority. In the 19th century, in the name of the Queen of England, for the supremacy of the English race, the Anglo-Protestants pushed the provinces outside Quebec to ban all Catholic schools and any form of French teaching in the schools. In April 1982, Queen Elizabeth II came to Ottawa to give royal assent to the 1982 Constitution, which was an anti-Quebec and anti-Bill 101 constitutional power grab that has never been signed by any government of Quebec.

If we do not remember, as my colleague said, and if we do not learn from history, it will repeat itself. We see again today the Canadian government interfering in Quebec's jurisdictions to constantly impose and promote English. Some 94% of official languages funding goes to English-language institutions and interest groups in Quebec. The decline of French continues in Quebec and Canada.

The change established by Bill C-347 is also a significant democratic improvement, because in a democracy the collective will of the people is the source of political power. In a democracy, as the Patriotes used to say, elected officials serve the people and the laws. The people are the true source of sovereign power. It is only fitting that elected officials pledge their loyalty to their true sovereign, the people.

For the Bloc Québécois, the reference to the Crown expresses a profoundly anti-democratic idea, namely that the Crown is the guarantor of democratic institutions and that the power of these institutions exists only by virtue of that of the Crown. The Bloc Québécois rejects both royalism—that is, loyalty to the individual person of the monarch—and modern monarchism. Our political goal is to create a democratic Quebec republic.

Historically, Canada's institutions have retained characteristics specific to former monarchist regimes. This continues to have a major influence on the development of democracy in Quebec and Canada. Our head of state is the king of another country. We have an unelected Senate that exercises some of the legislative power. The recognition of peoples' right to self-determination has not been enshrined in our institutions. The Crown has repeatedly used executive powers. The prerogatives of the Crown are still present, written down in black and white. The tradition of the Crown not exercising its prerogatives can be broken, as it was in 2007. In Canada, the monarchy is the institution entrusted with the sovereignty and continuity of the state. Canada is an unfinished democracy, in large part because of its undemocratic institutions, the Crown and the Senate.

In a democratic republic, the people have sovereignty over their institutions and laws, including the foundational law, the Constitution. All legislators are elected and can be removed.

• (1910)

Fundamental freedoms are guaranteed, including freedom of religion and its corollary, the separation of church and state. As long as the suggested oath of office contains a reference to the Constitution and the Constitution enshrines the power of the Crown, this new oath is not completely free of monarchical references. Still, the absence of explicit reference is considered to be at least an improvement over previous versions.

That being said, the oath of office suggested by Bill C-347 may appear to be at odds with the founding principles of the Bloc Québécois and our political vision, namely Quebec's independence. Indeed, the oath commits the oath-taker to perform their duties in the best interests of Canada, a country we wish to leave, and in accordance with its Constitution, which was forcibly imposed on the people of Quebec and to which the state of Quebec has never subscribed. Nevertheless, it is easy to show that these two aspects, the best interests and the Constitution, are not contradictory to the political action of the Bloc Québécois, because the new formula is an

improvement. For the Bloc Québécois, it is in Canada's best interest that Quebec become an independent country.

The Bloc Québécois is a democratic political party that respects the rule of law. Its political agenda is already carried out in compliance with the law and the Constitution. We believe that the current Canadian system fails to accurately reflect Canada's sociological reality. Canadian society is made up of nations: the English Canadian nation, the Quebec nation and all indigenous nations. Canadian multiculturalism defines the Canadian people as an aggregate of individual identities and cultural communities, with no regard for their national identity. Acadians, we must remember, are also a nation and a people.

Naturally, Quebec and the people of Quebec do not subscribe to this multicultural view, and the federalist camp has repeatedly failed to offer the people of Quebec an acceptable solution that would lead them to participate voluntarily in the Canadian federation. All attempts to bring the Quebec nation into the fold with honour and enthusiasm, as it was once said, have fallen by the wayside.

For all these reasons, the oath of office would enable Bloc Québécois members to solemnly undertake to carry out their duties in the best interest of Canada.

We believe that as soon as Quebec becomes independent, it will give the other nations and peoples of Canada an opportunity to begin a new dialogue on the nature and components of their political ties. With that in mind, this bill is a small step in the right direction and constitutes a significant democratic improvement that would enable us to swear an oath more in line with our freedom of conscience.

• (1915)

[English]

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak in favour of Bill C-347, an act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867, oath of office, which was sponsored by my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche. I want to thank the hon. member for the work he has put into this piece of legislation. Like any experienced lawyer, he has left no stone unturned. He has anticipated every argument and every detail.

It is a simple enough change that would have no impact outside of Parliament Hill, but it has the potential to revitalize the institution itself, arguably helping Parliament evolve and usher in a new era. This bill would see future parliamentarians have the choice to swear allegiance to the monarch, as is presently the case, or take an oath of office swearing to act in the best interests of Canada while upholding its Constitution before taking their seat in Parliament. Some may choose to both swear allegiance and take the oath of office. This is the important principle on which the bill rests, and that is the principle of choice.

Private Members' Business

It is my belief that all parliamentarians, both in the House and in the other place, and yes, including Conservatives, work day in and day out for the betterment of this great nation. Whether it be in our respective ridings, in committee or in this chamber, we strive to act in the best interest of Canadians. We might not always agree on what that looks like, but we have a shared goal of supporting Canadians now and setting the stage for a positive future.

The oath of office proposed in Bill C-347 would remind us of this shared goal and would set the stage from the get-go that we are here for Canada. This would not in any way diminish the role of the monarchy in our Constitution, but it would allow for future members to celebrate their purpose in Parliament and remember that they are accountable to Canadians in everything they do. Having sworn the oath of allegiance on four instances now, I know that an oath of office, in addition to or instead of the oath of allegiance, would serve as a powerful motivator for new parliamentarians as they take their seats.

Then there is the matter of inclusivity. The oath of allegiance itself emerged in the 16th century due to political and religious conflicts in Great Britain. The Act of Supremacy established the Crown as the head of the Protestant Church and members of Parliament had to swear allegiance to the sovereign in their capacities as both the head of state and the head of the church. The goal at that time was to exclude based on religious belief as Roman Catholics and Jewish people would not recognize the Crown as supreme in all matters and thus would not have access to public office.

In Canada, we have shaped things since then in a uniquely Canadian way, with the oath not only reflecting allegiance to not only the Crown but also the institutions it represents in our country. The aim here is to ensure that members remember that they are acting in the best interests of Canada and to impress upon them the serious responsibilities they are assuming. These same goals can be achieved by an oath of office.

In an increasingly diverse Parliament, we must reflect on the necessity of asking first nations, Métis and Inuit members to swear allegiance to a system of monarchy that has long disadvantaged them. Understanding that the Government of Canada has long affirmed that its most important relationship is the one with indigenous peoples, we must work toward reconciliation and allow indigenous self-governance to exist on Parliament Hill as it does elsewhere across the country. This also rings true for other potential members who, for historical or ethnic reasons, might hesitate to take an oath of allegiance to the Crown. This hesitancy does not make anyone less Canadian, nor does it make them less suited for public office. In fact, some of these perspectives are essential and may serve as lessons to us as we debate legislation, undertake studies and make important decisions that affect Canadians. We must find ways to allow members to take their seats without compromising their identities.

• (1920)

I know that talk of amending the Constitution is justifiably met with skepticism, but this is where the simplicity of the bill makes it effective. It proposes that the Constitution Act, 1867, be amended to give every federal parliamentarian the option to take and subscribe the oath of office contained in the act instead of, or in addition to,

the oath of allegiance. If the bill had included provincial legislative bodies in the proposed amendment, we would indeed have to go through the general procedure, as outlined in section 42 of the Constitution Act, 1982. However, the amendment specifically refers to the House of Commons or Senate, thereby having no impact on provincial or territorial affairs.

By limiting the scope of the bill to Parliament, section 44 of the Constitution Act, 1982, is triggered, which reads:

Subject to sections 41 and 42, Parliament may exclusively make laws amending the Constitution of Canada in relation to the executive government of Canada or the Senate and House of Commons.

Hence, Parliament has exclusive jurisdiction over decisions that impact only its affairs. Thus, by a simple act of Parliament, we can modernize both chambers without going through the general procedure for amending the Constitution. This amendment does not in any way change the Constitution's architecture or spirit, nor does it jeopardize the democratic institutions of Canada. In fact, it improves them.

This is also not the first time in history that our democracy has been modernized in Parliament. As was stated earlier in debate, from 1905 onward, members have been able to make a solemn affirmation of allegiance instead of an oath, acknowledging the religious diversity of our country. Let us reflect on that for a minute. In 1905, we made it optional to make any reference to God in our oath. Here we are in 2024, debating whether we should make it mandatory to include the monarch in the oath.

This 1905 development is in line with the living tree doctrine in Canadian law that the Constitution must be read in a progressive manner, allowing it to adapt to changing times. It must reflect the realities of Canadian society and evolve with it. This, once again, is a simple, meaningful change.

I thank the member for introducing the bill, which brings a modern, inclusive and uniquely Canadian perspective to our institutions, and I will be proud to stand with him in support of it.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche has five minutes for his right of reply.

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank all those who spoke to my bill.

The purpose of Bill C-347 is to amend the constitutional requirement to swear an oath of allegiance to the British monarch following the election of a federal member or the appointment of a senator. As we know, this requirement appears in section 128 of the Constitution Act, 1867.

[English]

My bill proposes to make this oath of allegiance to the monarch optional while allowing, for the first time in the history of our country, an oath of office by which we swear to carry out our duties in the best interests of Canada while upholding its Constitution.

[Translation]

A person can choose to swear both oaths. What could be more inclusive? The current option of a single oath of allegiance to the British monarch no longer really reflects the modern Canada of today.

[English]

In this regard, I would like to reassure my colleagues and Canadians who are listening that my bill is neither monarchist, anti-monarchist nor republican. This bill is inclusive and 100% Canadian.

[Translation]

As I said, and as my colleague from Prince Edward Island noted, the constitutional amendment I am proposing affects only members who are elected to this Parliament or members who are appointed to our Senate, period.

Section 44 of the Constitution Act, 1982, allows us to make the constitutional amendments I am proposing. It states that “Parliament may exclusively make laws amending the Constitution of Canada in relation to the executive government of Canada or the Senate and House of Commons”. These words are legally robust, significant and unambiguous.

In its 2014 reference on Senate reform, the Supreme Court supports my claims. We are all lawmakers here, so I invite all my colleagues to read this decision and get to know it.

My bill in no way affects the roles and functions of the cornerstones of our country's constitutional architecture, such as our two levels of government with their own areas of jurisdiction and our Parliament, which is made up of an elected House and a Senate. Any changes to this constitutional architecture would have required the unanimous consent of the provinces, Parliament and the Senate.

Similarly, my bill in no way affects the interests of Canada's provinces or their areas of jurisdiction. If that had been the case, the government would have had to open up the Constitution, as some like to say, and ask seven out of 10 provinces, representing 50% of the Canadian population, for their consent.

• (1925)

[English]

To the contrary, Bill C-347 is much simpler. It is specifically designed to limit the effect of its constitutional amendment to Parliament Hill. It has no ambition to interfere with the constitutional architecture of our country or even the interests of the provinces.

[Translation]

At the risk of repeating myself, Parliament has exclusive jurisdiction to make the constitutional amendment that I am suggesting in my bill.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

There is no doubt in my mind that this Parliament has exclusive jurisdiction to amend our Constitution to make this bill a modern, inclusive and one hundred per cent Canadian law.

[Translation]

I therefore invite my colleagues to support my all-Canadian, all-inclusive bill, Bill C-347. May never again one of our own, for historical, ethnic or religious reasons, have to feel less than fully Canadian before sitting in the seat he or she has earned in this quintessential place of democracy called the Parliament of Canada.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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.

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

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 10, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to follow up on a question I asked the government in December about the carbon tax and Bill C-234. Notably, the question I asked got over 13 and a half million views on Instagram; clearly, many Canadians are very interested in the issue. It also might have had something to do with the hearty laughter from the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, who was sitting behind me at the time.

The issue is with Bill C-234, which we continue to champion today in this House. Conservatives are fighting for farmers to be exempt from the carbon tax.

We believe in axing the tax completely. However, in this Parliament, in order to make some incremental progress, we have put forward a bill that has gained the support of a majority of the House of Commons, seeking to exempt farmers from the carbon tax.

Adjournment Proceedings

This bill was on the verge of passing in the Senate when the government started to lean into their supposedly independent senators, making personal phone calls to try to pressure them to change their vote. The bill is now back in the House of Commons, and Conservatives are pushing to pass it in its original form, to exempt our hard-working farmers from the carbon tax.

Applying the carbon tax to farmers does not make any sense even if one believes in the carbon tax in general. The carbon tax is designed to be a Pigovian tax, that is, a tax on something that is believed to generate a negative externality in order to try to discourage that behaviour. That is the theory behind the carbon tax.

It seeks to make gasoline and airplane travel more expensive in the hopes that people will drive less, fly less, etc. That is the theory of the government's carbon tax. However, on what basis is it applied to our farmers?

Does the government hope that people will farm less if it makes farming more expensive? Does it think that farmers should do the essential work of farming less in response to the Pigovian tax that they are applying? It does not make any sense.

Farming is not an activity we want to discourage. Farming is an activity we should be encouraging. We should be making it easier for people to go into farming, to work in farming, to continue with this critical livelihood, feeding people across the country wherever they live.

Why is the government applying a punitive tax on farmers? What possible rational policy objective could taxing farmers in this way have? It just does not make any sense.

To be clear, Conservatives oppose the carbon tax in general. We will axe the tax after the carbon tax election. At a minimum, the Liberals should understand that, even in theory, the carbon tax makes no sense. Even on its own justification, the tax makes no sense when applied to farmers. That is why Conservatives have championed and will continue to champion the passage of Bill C-234, to push the government to pass the bill in its original form.

We have also called on the government to meet with the premiers; along with the Canadian public, they overwhelmingly oppose the carbon tax. Liberals are afraid to gather and meet with the premiers to have a carbon tax conference. I am sure that, if they did, they would clearly hear a call from the premiers to axe the carbon tax on farmers and on all Canadians.

● (1930)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is nice to be back in adjournment debate with my friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

The member spoke about pressure on senators. I think it is relevant to the debate to talk about what pressure on senators actually made the news, with respect to the failed former Conservative leader from Regina—Qu'Appelle's bullying tactics towards some non-Conservative senators, which actually resulted in their feeling extremely unsafe. People were showing up at their private residence. That kind of bully politics is unbecoming of any member. It should

not be part of how we come to decisions, how we debate in the House and how we put forward good ideas.

I would say that the only senators who are partisan in the other place are Conservative senators. The Liberals do not have senators at our caucus meetings. There are independent senators. There are senators who have their own views. That is the way it should work. For the member to suggest that pressure was put on any senators, other than the pressure that was very clearly documented in the media, from the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and other Conservatives, was totally unbecoming of the offices they hold. They should have apologized for that.

On the topic of farmers and agriculture, farmers are the backbone of our country. Their work is essential. It is difficult, especially with climate change heavily impacting their livelihood. The number one risk and the number one impact that farmers are experiencing is our changing climate and severe weather. Drought, floods, very focused precipitation and wildfires are having a devastating impact on the agriculture sector, with people having to evacuate their homes and communities in the summer, during wildfire season. Last year, I think 1.5 million acres of our forests burned; actually it was much more than that, but I do not remember the total number off the top of my head. Farmers face climate change's harsh realities every single day, whether it is through drought, wildfires, floods or invasive species. They are all becoming more prevalent.

Our government supports agriculture, farmers and their families, and the practice of farming. We subsidize innovations. We ensure that farmers are made whole. It goes without saying that they are the breadbasket of Canada. It is absolutely essential that we make sure farmers can continue their important work. I meet with my local farmers in Milton on a frequent basis, and I am very grateful for all of the work they do.

That is why 97% of on-farm fuels are exempt from carbon pricing altogether. It is also worth mentioning that farmers in Quebec and British Columbia are not subject to the federal backstop of carbon pricing, because those provinces have a plan to fight climate change and lower their emissions. It is up to the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and Ontario, if they do not want to continue to have Canada carbon rebates go to their constituents, or if they do not want to have the federal price on pollution, to come up with their own plan.

Adjournment Proceedings

In the last federal election, the last time my colleague from Alberta went to the doors, he ran on a commitment to price carbon. With Erin O'Toole as their leader, the Conservatives ran on a promise to have a carbon pricing scheme. It was called "The more you burn, the more you earn", because every dollar would get deposited in some kind of green bank account. However, they did not win the last election. In a hypothetical alternate universe, if the Conservatives had won the last election, farmers would be paying the price on pollution.

It is clear to me why they made such a big deal about the April 1 hike, and that is because in Alberta, Danielle Smith increased the price of gas by four cents on April 1. That was not a rebatable increase; it was just an increase in provincial tax, and it had an impact on the cost of living in Alberta. However, we do not hear about that from the Conservative Alberta MPs.

● (1935)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the member began with a ridiculous and irrelevant attack on the Conservative House leader. I want to be very clear about what happened. The Conservative House leader made a post on social media with the names and photos of senators, in terms of how they voted, with their publicly available office phone numbers, and invited people who disagreed with the public votes of senators to contact their office and share their views.

I would just say that if any citizen has a concern or an opinion about how an elected official voted, they should have the ability to phone their office and share their perspective. If anyone disagrees with anything I say or do in the House, they can call my office at 780-467-4944. I am not afraid of accountability. No minister, no member of the government nor a senator should be afraid of people calling their publicly available office number in order to share their perspective.

What farmers want and need in this country is the ability to grow their food without the punitive carbon tax. That is why the government should axe the tax.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, Canadians do not need to hear it from me. They can hear it directly from the senators in question. Three independent senators said they were bullied by the Conservative leader in the Senate, in the red chamber, after a member from their group attempted to put off debate on a controversial bill. Police and the Senate had also investigated the matter, and the Conservative leader in the Senate did concede that he got a little angry over the matter.

The Conservatives can stand over there and justify that behaviour if they would like, but there are senators who did not go home that weekend. They stayed in a hotel because they feared for their safety due to the bullying of the Conservative Senate leader. That is unbecoming of the office they hold. Certainly, there is lots of time for debate, but instructing people to harass senators, or any other elected or non-elected official, is wrong.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan that there are no more opportunities for him to reply.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. If the hon. members want to continue having their conversation, they should take it outside.

I would also ask members to stick to the subject matter they brought before the House, as opposed to trying to expand into other debates and issues.

● (1940)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, when I last spoke in the House on this particular issue about the carbon tax being imposed on Canadians, including to a young farmer trying to raise a family, the response I got from the minister was far from satisfactory. As long as the Liberals decide to keep the carbon tax in place and raise it every year, there is nothing they can say. Canadians will not be satisfied until the government finally gets rid of it.

Conservatives will not stop until we axe the tax for good. That is why we have been debating a new Conservative motion in the House today on the carbon tax. Maybe the members from all the other parties are tired of talking about it, but they need to continue to hear it because the issue is not going away. More and more people are doing their best and working hard every day, and they can barely afford to live anymore. Instead of easing that burden, the NDP-Liberal coalition went ahead with its out-of-touch plan to raise the carbon tax by another 23%.

Before the Liberals did that on April 1, we heard from a growing number of Canadians telling them not to do that. Apparently, they were not paying attention and they ignored all this. I want to at least highlight the impact the carbon tax is having back home. Hopefully it will help the government to understand the damage it is doing.

The mayor of Shaunavon wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister and broke it down for him. He offered a straightforward explanation of the problem created for a rural community like this one.

This is what Mayor Bennett had to say about the carbon tax increase that impacts communities like ours all across the country. He wrote, "the Town of Shaunavon's total utility costs for public buildings on an average monthly basis during the winter months amount to [about] \$38,477.18. It is highlighted that a total of 14% or \$5,267.91 of this total is paid toward the Carbon Tax. This Carbon Tax is set to increase by 23% as of April 1, 2024, amounting to a new total of approximately \$6,500 per month", which is an annual impact of \$78,000.

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To understand this in proportion, that alone would require a town such as Shaunavon to increase its municipal taxes by 8% or more to generate enough to cover the federally implemented carbon tax.

The mayor continues, “We bring this to your attention out of concern towards the Federal Government's lack of transparency around the Carbon Tax and that personal tax rebates do not accurately reflect the actual costs of this program.”

Unlike the federal government, municipalities do not have the ability to borrow and spend like the feds do. The mayor of Swift Current also released an open letter to the Prime Minister. He included this information in his quote: “Two percent...of our municipal taxes will be required this year to pay the carbon tax—this 2% comprises more than half of the property tax increase we requested from our ratepayers in 2024. We estimate that over \$400,000.00 in carbon charges will be paid by the City of Swift Current to the federal Government of Canada this year alone.”

The Liberals have the nerve to tell the public that they are not increasing the tax burden, but that is misleading. What is really going on is that their federal policy forces taxes to go up at the lower levels. How is that fair to anyone? I shared two examples, but it happens in a lot of other places. The carbon tax adds to the cost of everything, and some of the worst damage is done indirectly. Along with municipalities, small businesses have not yet received a rebate of \$2.5 billion in carbon tax revenue. The government has repeatedly said it will return that money, but the delay has continued.

There are so many ways that the carbon tax is harming families, communities and businesses. That is why it is not good enough for them to pretend that a rebate will solve everything. It does not cover all the costs for everyone. A strong majority of Canadians oppose it. I am going to ask the question on Canadians' minds: Why will the NDP-Liberals not axe the tax, or at least pause it? What excuse do they have left?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me first correct my colleague. As the Supreme Court has recognized, the carbon price is not a tax. It is a regulatory charge that is essential to reducing the pollution that is causing climate change and all the money is returned to Canadians. In fact, eight out of 10 households receive more money back through the Canada carbon rebate than they pay toward the fuel charge, with lower- and middle-income households receiving the most. They benefit the most.

Claims that the carbon price is increasing the cost of living are false. It has been widely refuted by hundreds of economists across this country. The math has been done by those who conduct the research on a regular and frequent basis and the fuel charge is a slow and steady increase, which does not affect inflation to a large degree and also does not increase the cost of living.

I have been reflecting on why the Conservatives have taken this approach on April 1. I started considering who they are working with. The fact is that, on April 1, Danielle Smith increased the price of fuel in Alberta by four cents. That was more than the increase. They talk about a 23% increase. That 23% increase on just the very small carbon price on gasoline added up to three cents. There is a three-cent increase in the price of a litre of gasoline, but Danielle

Smith, the Premier of Alberta, increased it by four cents. The difference between those two increases is that the four-cent increase did not come with a rebate, whereas the price on pollution with the Canada carbon rebate is sent back to Canadians. It is an incentive. It is a proven strategy and it works. It is lowering our emissions in Canada.

However, my colleague is not from Alberta, so who might he then be working for? There are a couple of options, I suppose. One is that big oil and gas posted record profits last year. The vast majority of the price of fuel goes to profits for big oil and gas executives, which is worth considering, but there have also been calls in Saskatchewan, the home province of my colleague across the way, to reduce its provincial tax, which is in excess of 15¢ per litre. The Saskatchewan government has refused to, despite the fact that other provinces have recognized that there is an affordability crisis and their governments ought to do what they can to lower the cost of fuel.

One might say that the federal government just increased the cost of fuel with the price on pollution going up on April 1. That is true, but the rebate went up as well. It is a fully rebated increase on the price of fuel, but the provincial excise tax in Saskatchewan is the highest in the country. It does not come with a rebate and Saskatchewan has refused to cut it. It is also possible that Conservative members are kind of creating this Conservative cover-up campaign to make it look like gas is expensive just because of the price on pollution, whereas there are multiple factors. There is corporate greed from big oil and gas. There are provincial excise taxes that are not rebated and a lot of other global factors, including climate change, which has an impact on the price of fuel.

Climate change is the number one cause of the increase in the cost of living with respect to groceries. It is another well-documented thing by the 200-plus economists from right across the country who the member for Carleton, the leader of the Conservatives, called “so-called experts”. That is unfair. Those experts are experts. They work at Canadian universities and conduct that research, and that is the evidence, the facts and the science, the pure mathematics, that the government relies on when making decisions.

Carbon pricing is a proven strategy to lower emissions. It is working. Since 2018, our emissions are down 8%.

I would remind Canadian voters that Conservatives ran on a plan to price pollution in the 2021 election under the auspices of Erin O'Toole, the former Conservative leader. The member across the way ran on a promise to price pollution. He went door to door with that campaign commitment and platform. Since then, the Conservatives have decided that carbon pollution and climate change is not an issue. However, it is an issue and it requires all of us to work on it.

● (1945)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I have a couple of things I need to clarify for the member. The only people I work for are the residents of southwestern Saskatchewan. Those are the only people I work for. Also, I have never campaigned on a carbon tax. Regardless of what the former leader of the Conservative Party may have tried to do, I never ran on that promise. I never have and I never will. That is also reflected in what the people of southwest Saskatchewan want.

I have some more data that works. The Premier of Saskatchewan said:

When the latest consumer price index came out, Saskatchewan was at 1.7%, down from the 2% projected target that the Bank of Canada hit and one full point lower than the Canadian average. Statistics Canada said specifically that this was due to a decision the Saskatchewan government made to remove the carbon tax from home heating. You can imagine what would happen to our CPI nationwide if we were to pause, first of all, and then remove the consumer carbon tax on Canadians.

Right there we can see the benefits of removing the carbon tax for all Canadians.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, as I said previously, carbon pollution pricing systems across Canada are designed to limit impacts on farmers, on the cost of living, on the cost of food,

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and they have been doing that. However, when premiers either refuse to cut their very high provincial excise tax, which is still 15% in the province of Saskatchewan, or actually increase it, as the Premier of Alberta, Danielle Smith, did, they are creating inflation within their provinces. Perhaps the inflation in Saskatchewan, as the member opposite just said, has not gone up by as much. The Premier of Saskatchewan has not increased the price of gas; it was already more expensive than in other provinces.

This is a journey that we take together. Carbon pollution and climate change are inescapable realities, and we need to help Canadians lower their emissions as well as navigate this affordability challenge. Climate change is upon us. The wildfire season has already started, and it is only April. Last year, 2023, was the hottest year on record.

I am hoping the Conservatives will come up with some kind of plan to lower our emissions, to fight climate change and to make sure that our grandkids have a planet to live on.

● (1950)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes not being present to raise during Adjournment Proceedings the matter for which notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[Translation]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:51 p.m.)

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