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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[Translation]

INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsections 39(1) and 40(1) of the Access to Information Act, a special report to Parliament from the Information Commissioner.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this report is permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in relation to Bill C-317, An Act to establish a national strategy respecting flood and drought forecasting.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

[English]

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

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities entitled “Implications of Artificial Intelligence Technologies for the Canadian Labour Force”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking to the dissenting report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities' report, “Implications of Artificial Intelligence Technologies for the Canadian Labour Force”. This is on behalf of the Conservative Party of Canada. Through HUMA's study, witnesses testified to regulations about privacy concerning artificial intelligence, the poor state of Canadian productivity and innovation, how AI can be used by governments to boost efficiencies, and the need for consideration of artificial intelligence in international trade agreements.

While the report briefly mentions these points, it does not go sufficiently in depth about how the lack of action concerning these topics creates challenges to our ability to manage AI's impact on the Canadian workforce. Conservatives believe that greater emphasis should have been placed in the report on looking at AI for ways to improve efficiencies within the federal government.

Over the past nine years, the federal government has increased the use of outside consultants by \$21.1 billion. Issues around mismanagement of procurement processes have come to light at other committees. Conservatives believe that the federal government must take seriously the needs of Canadians when delivering government services in a responsible, cost-effective and efficient way.

Finally, Conservatives believe there should have been far more emphasis placed in the report on the potential opportunity to improve Canada's productivity. This is due to the fact that the OECD, which is the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, shows a direct link between a nation's productivity and quality of life. When compared to other OECD countries over the past nine years, the quality of life of Canadians has diminished, and Canada is on track to have the lowest productivity, or quality of life, of all OECD countries.

* * *

● (1005)

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY TO AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS ACT

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-389, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (automated external defibrillators).

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House on behalf of the great people of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte to introduce this bill. I thank my friend and colleague from Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston for being here with me today and for seconding this bill.

Simply put, this legislation seeks to eliminate the application of the GST or HST from the sale of automatic external defibrillators. This would increase the accessibility and affordability of these life-saving devices. According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, as many as 45,000 Canadians experience a sudden cardiac arrest each year, and 80% occur outside of a hospital setting. Defibrillation improves survival rates significantly if delivered in the first few minutes. AEDs, combined with CPR, increase the survival rates to 50% or more.

We know that making defibrillators easily accessible in public buildings, such as hockey arenas, libraries and airports, has the potential to save thousands of lives. We should be doing everything we can to get these life-saving devices in as many places as possible. In rural communities, AEDs can be few and far between. This legislation would greatly improve the ability for individuals living in rural communities who currently do not have access to an AED nearby to purchase an AED for their home, farm or cottage.

I hope all my colleagues in the House will join me in supporting this bill. Together, we can remove the tax from AEDs and help save lives.

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

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PETITIONS**NATURAL GAS**

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon who are concerned about natural gas bans being enacted by several municipalities across Canada. Natural gas produces far fewer emissions and is a lower cost alternative to heating oil, yet some municipalities are stopping families from using it to heat their homes.

My constituents are calling on the government to be thoughtful in its approach to shifting how homeowners use energy to power their lives. They encourage provinces and municipalities to do the same.

NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I would like to present today is on behalf of correctional officers in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon and across Canada.

Correctional officers are calling for the end of the prison needle exchange pilot program. Correctional officers want the federal government to focus on correctional officer safety as much as it focuses on inmate safety. Right now, they do not feel that their workplace is a very safe place to be, and they are calling for this very needed change to protect them and their loved ones.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the NDP's agriculture critic, and someone who has enjoyed working with Canada's organic sector, I am pleased to rise today to table e-petition 4909 on behalf of the petitioners.

The petitioners recognize that a transition to a more resilient food system and supply chain is needed to adapt to a changing climate, other foreseen disturbances and geopolitical instability to protect Canada's domestic food supply. They recognize that organic food and farming is a model for success in this transformation with documented benefits for the economy, public health and the environment. They recognize that organic production contributes to biodiversity and soil health, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, resilience to extreme weather events and a fulfillment of key government objectives. They recognize that ambitious policies and investments in organic by other countries have been successful in making organic food more affordable, available, diversified and competitive. They recognize that Canada currently has no strategic policy to develop organic food in farming.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to give Canadians better and more affordable access to the foods they want by establishing bold policies and programs that would encourage growth in the domestic supply of organic to meet the market opportunity, which has multiple economic, environmental, social and health benefits for Canadians, and to meaningfully recognize and incentivize sustainable, resilient food systems, such as organic, across all departments that relate to Canadian food policy.

● (1010)

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition today, which is signed by Canadians from across the country.

These Canadians are concerned about the nearly 100,000 preborn children who die every year since the Morgentaler decision. Canada is only one of two nations in the world that has zero laws protecting the preborn. They also note that a child's heartbeat begins when the child is six weeks old. They are calling on the Government of Canada and this place to strengthen the protections for the preborn in Canada.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to table e-petition 4431, which is sponsored by Shawna Angela Poy.

Petitioners cite that the citizens and residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to refute the doctrine of discovery and terra nullius by amending the national anthem's lyrics from "Our home and native land" to "Our home on native land". Canada would thereby symbolically uphold its commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 45th call to action, moving towards re-establishing a nation-to-nation relationship by recognizing that indigenous people occupied, cultivated and thrived on these lands before Europeans arrived.

To ensure abundant resources, indigenous people had a reciprocal relationship with the land characterized by responsibility, balance, and connection. The nature of this tie is not one of ownership but of stewardship. The land is a sacred gift from the creator, and indigenous people vowed to protect it. Disconnection from the land, water, and sky caused by displacement and the banning of ceremonies harmed indigenous people spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally. Indigenous peoples helped newcomers survive on the land by teaching them how to hunt and find shelter. Treaties declared that indigenous and non-indigenous relations were built on peace, friendship and mutual respect for one another's sovereignty, and indigenous people's relationship to the land is constitutionally recognized.

I hope that the government takes a serious look at this petition and acts on it.

* * *

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 ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2024, NO. 1

The House resumed from May 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the few seconds I have left before questions and comments from my colleagues, I would just like to say that, despite all the flaws in this budget and the things we would have liked to have seen, the NDP had a hand in it.

Basically, there would have been no dental care without the NDP, no pharmacare for diabetics and for women who want contracep-

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tives without the NDP, no anti-scab legislation without the NDP, no red dress alert system without the NDP, no increase in the capital gains tax without the NDP, no increase in scholarships for graduate students without the NDP, and the list goes on.

I would be happy to take questions.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my colleague's words, there are many things we can do if we work together.

Is it worthwhile to work together to ensure that Canadians have the programs that will help them through these very difficult times?

• (1015)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I congratulate her on her excellent French.

The answer to her question is yes. Since the 2021 election, the NDP has adopted a constructive attitude enabling it to advance files that are important to the party, files such as accessible dental care for the least fortunate. This year, it is for seniors, older people. I am very pleased to see that this is moving forward and that it is working.

The accessible dental care program for seniors has been in effect since May 1. Yesterday, we learned that during the first three days, 15,000 people were reimbursed 80% to 90% of the cost of their dental care under the program.

In the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, including the rising cost of groceries and rent, it is excellent news to see that people have more money and can save money at the dentist.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is from Quebec. He knows that Quebec already has a pharmacare program.

Would he rather have a program run by the federal government or by Quebec?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is quite right. Quebec has had a pharmacare program for years. However, it is a private-public hybrid system with many flaws. It fails to control drug costs, which are extremely high when negotiating collective agreements.

The NDP believes Quebec would have the right to opt out of the federal pharmacare program with full compensation. Furthermore, this is something the major trade unions and consumer advocacy organizations have been asking for in order to lower drug costs for everyone.

We will see what happens during discussions in the coming months. We feel this would be a step forward for Quebecers.

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Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP sent a letter inviting the Quebec Minister of Health and Vincent Marissal, a Québec solidaire member, to explain the benefits of pharmacare.

I am not sure if the leader of the NDP is aware, but we already have pharmacare in Quebec. Furthermore, I know that the riding office of my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is in the same building as the Québec solidaire member for Gouin.

Could he not have spoken with him so they could explain to the leader of the NDP that Quebec already has pharmacare?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP is fully aware that Quebec has a pharmacare program. He has said several times during interviews here, in the foyer of the House, that Quebec has the right to opt out with compensation.

While the Quebec pharmacare program was a significant social development 30 years ago, it is showing many cracks today. Even Dr. Jean Rochon, the former health minister who implemented it, has said it is time to finish the job.

Finishing the job means having a true universal public pharmacare program, as requested by the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux and the Centrale des syndicats du Québec.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, all the major Quebec trade unions—the Centrale des syndicats démocratiques, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux and the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec—have said that the pharmacare bill the NDP forced the government to introduce in the House is worthwhile and important.

Should Quebec members not listen to these unions, who have long been demanding the implementation of a public pharmacare system that does not have all the flaws and loopholes of the current Quebec system?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, we definitely need to listen to workers' representatives because this will have direct impacts.

Take, for example, a person who works part time in a grocery store three days a week and who has to pay for supplementary health insurance. Given the unaffordable and out-of-control cost of medication, we end up meeting people who have to spend 25% to 30% of their pay on supplementary insurance through their employer. That is not sustainable.

If we want to help these people, we need a true public, universal pharmacare plan.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak in the House today.

On April 16, the government introduced a new budget. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Finance for bringing forward a document that reflects where this country is today and aims to tackle some of the big challenges we face, but that

also looks for ways to seize the opportunity to help build a better tomorrow.

I have always viewed the budget as a road map a government puts forward to ensure that we can navigate barriers and help us position ourselves as a country to get to where we need to be. It lays out the necessary supports and programs that will assist the citizens of this great country to pursue their future, and it provides a glimpse into the potential of tomorrow. I believe that budget 2024 moves our country in the right direction, and it is very aligned with the people of Don Valley East, who are also committed to building a better country.

Today I want to talk about the budget, and I want to talk specifically about how it impacts young people, children and youth, in our country, but also I want to talk a little about the investments, specifically the investments into AI, we are making into the future to help support our economy.

First I would like to revisit a couple of points I made in the fall economic statement about our job here in the House. We are sent here on behalf of our constituents to make decisions. We have choices. Last year I said that we come into the House, are presented with a bunch of decision points and have the opportunity to vote yes or no. The Conservatives and all members of the House will have the opportunity to either support these programs or not support these programs.

This is a massive responsibility as an MP, one that cannot be taken lightly. We have a responsibility to do what is right for our community. This year's budget builds on a continued approach that puts people first and seizes opportunities. It builds on years of commitment toward supporting Canadians of all ages and all walks of life in all regions of this country.

I want to mention I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North today.

The budget builds on what has made Canada successful over all these years. It is why Canada continues to rank among the top countries in the world when it comes to economic development, safety, quality of life, cultural diversity, natural beauty, education and our health care system, but also our political stability. We can see these rankings every single day. A ranking a few days ago said that Canada was the safest country in the world to travel in. However, despite all of the accomplishments this country has, there are some members of the House who do not acknowledge the success of this country. I still believe Canada remains the best place on the entire planet to be.

There is constant rhetoric in the House from the Leader of the Opposition and other Conservatives that portrays this country as broken. It portrays an image that we, as a country, have a dim future. I understand that is part of a larger strategy, to downplay the country, but when we speak poorly of our country, what it actually does is that it destroys the dreams and aspirations of its citizens. It is our job as members of Parliament to build opportunity and to build up hope by putting in place the right types of programs and supports to make sure we elevate opportunity in this country.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the budget and what the Conservatives will be voting against, specifically around programs and supports when it comes to children and young people, but also the artificial intelligence investments we will be making. I am committed to helping all people in my community, but today I want to talk about children. I want to talk about what we are doing to prepare them for the future and I want to talk about some of the services we are putting in place and continue to support as a government. I want to talk about how we are going to invest into the future and invest into opportunity.

I am not sure whether the Speaker knows this, but I was a school board trustee. I served at the Toronto District School Board for eight years, and it was perhaps one of the most rewarding opportunities I had as a young politician. While I was there, we worked on student nutrition programs. My area, ward 33, was one of the first places in the city that had breakfast programs in every single school, and I was quite proud of that.

● (1020)

It was through the advocacy of people in my community, parents and also student advocates, that we were able to do that. One of the things I noticed is that our country, Canada, was the only country in the G7 that did not have a national food program. I am happy that, many years later, here I am in the House of Commons as part of a government that is investing in young people and creating a school nutrition program for this country.

We know that when a young person is not getting the right types of nutrients, this impacts their behaviour, their learning and their memory. We know that if we make the right investments into young people at an early age when it comes to getting the right type of nutrition, we are going to produce better students and therefore better Canadians.

We are also going to continue to invest in child care, \$10-a-day child care. We know that this will have a significant impact in our communities. It also impacts our workforce because it frees up more women and more men to go into the workforce rather than staying home, because it becomes affordable. I am very happy to support in the House that program and its expansion. Again, people listening should know that this program and the student nutrition program are other programs that the Conservatives will be voting against.

With respect to dental care, oral health is imperative for the success of young people. Young people were among the first to receive dental care. I am proud, again, to be part of a government that puts young people first. We are going to build off that. We are working on having all seniors, people living with disabilities and low-income Canadians at the forefront of the program so we can ensure that people get the right type of health care they need. Again, folks watching should know that this is another program that the Conservatives will be voting against.

The next thing I want to talk about is the investments into artificial intelligence. We know that AI is going to change the world around us. In fact, just minutes ago, I introduced a report for the HUMA committee that spoke to the workforce of the future and what it will look like. I am proud of the work we did on the committee to look into how AI will impact the workforce.

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The government is investing \$2 billion into artificial intelligence to better position companies, researchers and start-ups in this country so we can have a better handle on how AI is going to interact with our economy. This is about building a better Canada for the young people I mentioned earlier. These are the investments we are making as a government, as anyone who supports the budget will be, to support young people in this country.

Over the last two years that I have been here, I have noticed that the government has been bold over the last decade in putting forward new national programs that are changing the trajectory of this country. There were programs established, when we were a very ambitious country, in the 1960s and 1970s, like health care and old age security, programs that connected to all provinces, right across the country, such as our pension plan.

For the first time in many decades, there is a government that is investing in new national programs like child care, dental care, pharmacare and a student nutrition program. These are programs that should not be taken lightly. These are game-changers. I am proud to be part of a government that is investing into these types of programs.

Going back to my first point, we have choices as MPs in the House to decide which direction we want our country to go in. In the budget, and specifically speaking to investing in our future through our investments in AI and, even more importantly, our investment in the next generation of learners, the next generation of people within our workforce and the next generation of good citizens in our country, there are the types of investments we should be making to ensure that we as a country continue to remain the best country on the planet.

● (1025)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do see some irony in the fact that the budget bill is called Bill C-69, because one might remember that the last Bill C-69 ended up being ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court because the federal government was sticking its nose into provincial jurisdiction. Here we have, in budget 2024, the government sticking its nose into child care and creating fewer spaces than ever existed and into dental care and not consulting the dentists, and decriminalizing more hard drugs than are actually in its pharmacare plan.

Why is the government pouring \$40 billion more on the inflationary fire so that the Governor of the Bank of Canada cannot reduce inflation rates and get inflation down?

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● (1030)

Mr. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, I think this is a perfect example of where ideology overtakes common sense and decency in politics. Here, we have a situation where one in four young people are going to school hungry in this country, and some provinces may be responding well and some may not be responding well.

We have an opportunity, as members of Parliament, and this goes back to my point that we have choices to make in the House. Rather than getting wrapped up in jurisdiction, why do we not get wrapped up in doing what is right for young people in this country and make the investment into their nutrition?

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech. I am wondering what kind of alternate reality the Liberals are living in right now. I do not know. They talk about Canada as though it were one of the best countries in the world.

When it comes to the fight against climate change, almost all of the statistics out there show that Canada is dead last. That is not to mention the housing crisis. We need to build 5.8 million housing units in the coming years. The number of homeless encampments is growing across Canada. Homelessness has doubled in Quebec over the past five years, since the Liberals launched their major national housing strategy in 2017.

Yesterday, I was driving around Gatineau and I saw a homeless encampment on the side of the road. I had to wonder whether I was in Gatineau or Calcutta. I am wondering what planet my colleague is living on.

[English]

Mr. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, there are politicians out there who want to create the image that this country is a dim, miserable place; I refuse to believe that. This is a country where one can go out and seize opportunity and where governments, schools and so many great people will invest in young people and in recreational programs. I spoke about, for example, nutrition programs.

We have perhaps the most freedom, as Canadians, to speak our minds. People can walk into my office, and tell me what they think of me and what they think of this government, freely, and that is very rare in any country. People should never look at this country as being a place without opportunity and as having a dim future. I believe Canada remains the best country in the world to be in, and that is why I am so proud to be a Canadian.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for his intervention and for mentioning the national food program, which I think is quite important.

I would like to know what he would say to all the Nunavut children. Even with the program, they will still go to school without enough sleep because they are forced to sleep in overcrowded housing situations. They are forced to go to school without enough sleep because of the mouldy housing conditions they are forced to endure. They have no place to do home work and have schools that are falling apart.

What does he say to those children who might have the national food program, but they still struggle with hurdles to graduate with the same level of grade 12 as other Canadians?

Mr. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the really important question because there are many children across this country, in all regions, who still face challenges. I will say to those children directly that I will continue to work as hard as I can, like I have over my 20 years in politics, to ensure that we continue to fight and to build the best supports and programs aimed at children.

In this budget, we continue to build on child care and on dental care for young people, and a nutrition program for young people. These are programs that are investing in our future, and I will continue to do what I can to fight for every single child in this country.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I think of Bill C-69, I think of a sense of fairness for generations X and Z, and the millennials, and how important it is that, as a government, we provide hope. We have seen this put into practice over the years in budgetary and legislative measures that provide that sense of hope for all, recognizing how critically important Canada's middle class is, and those aspiring to be a part of it. Building a stronger economy, and building and reinforcing Canada's middle class, is good for all Canadians. It would ultimately ensure, as my colleague spoke about before, that Canada would be the best place in the world to call home.

The actions we have taken, to date, reinforce the opposite of what the Conservative Party has been talking about. As Conservatives travel the country, spreading misinformation, talking about Canada being broken, nothing could be further from the truth when things are put into the proper perspective of what is happening around the world.

Canada is doing well in comparison to any other country in the world, I would argue. It does not mean that we do not recognize the issues that Canadians are having to face today. That is why, when we talk about issues such as affordability, interest rates and housing, we not only understand and appreciate them, but also take tangible actions to support Canadians. We do not take that lightly. Much like during the pandemic, when the government stood up in a team Canada approach, working with people and other governments, we were there in a very real and tangible way.

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I love the contrast between today's Prime Minister and the leader of the Conservative Party. Canadians really do have choices, which is becoming more evident to the degree that they are opposites. We talk about measures such as a pharmacare program and the national school food funding program incorporated into this budget, and the first-ever Canada disability benefit, not to mention the Canadian dental care plan. There are many initiatives we have provided, both in this budget and in other budgets, which have led to ensuring a much higher sense of fairness. There are taxation policies, whether it is the capital gains, the extra tax on the wealthiest 1% in the first budget we introduced or the cut to Canada's middle-class tax bracket. We can talk about the grocery rebate and the enhancement of the guaranteed income supplement, not to mention the OAS being raised for those who are collecting it over the age of 75.

Compare that to what we hear from the Conservatives today. They say they would fix the budget. Fixing the budget is code. I would suggest there is in fact a hidden Conservative budget they do not want to talk about because it would put on the chopping block a lot of the work we have been able to accomplish over the last number of years, whether it is with respect to the national child care program of \$10-a-day day care, which has received phenomenal support across every region of our country, or whether it is the provinces and territories having signed on to programs such as pharmacare.

Yesterday, we witnessed Conservative after Conservative stand up to say that they do not support the pharmacare program. We saw Conservatives stand up to say that they do not support the investments we are making in health care because they do not believe the federal government has a role to play in health care. The contrast is immense. When the Conservatives talk about fixing the budget, they mean cuts, and let there be no doubt about that.

• (1035)

As we continue to bring in policies, whether they are budgetary measures or legislation, let us be very clear that the objective is to recognize the values that Canadians have and the sense of fairness that they want to see put into things such as budgets. They want to see a government that truly cares about the middle class and about expanding the middle class. The healthier and stronger the middle class is, the better the economy will be. We know that.

The Conservatives can spread false information, but the reality speaks volumes. Let me give two very specific examples. In 10 years, Stephen Harper, as prime minister, generated just under one million jobs. In less time, our Liberal government, working with Canadians and other jurisdictions, has generated over two million jobs. That is also taking into consideration a worldwide pandemic, where there was an economic shutdown in many areas.

Our policies are working. In my mind, one of the most powerful statements from the budget released by the Deputy Prime Minister was around foreign direct investment to Canada, and I referenced that yesterday. Individuals and corporations around the world are looking at Canada and saying that they want to invest in Canada. There is a reason they want to invest in Canada, and it is about economic stability and other factors.

On a per capita basis, Canada is number one of the G7 countries on foreign direct investment. The G7 includes the European Union,

England, Japan, U.S.A., France and Germany. We are number one when it comes to foreign direct investment. People are putting their money where they believe the potential is the greatest for being able to expand and to have opportunities. Contrast that to the world. If we do that for the entire world, we will see that Canada places number three for foreign direct investment, based on last year's first three quarters, which is where I got those numbers.

People around the world are looking at Canada as a place to invest, and I think that speaks volumes and is complemented by the fact that we have created over two million jobs, all while recognizing the important programs and the expectations Canadians have that we will be there for them, first and foremost, on the issue of health care. We continue to invest historic amounts of money in health care because we understand what is important to Canadians. Unlike the Conservative Party, we are going to be there to ensure that we have a health care system that we could all be proud of, not only for today but also for future generations.

Those types of commitments and contrasts are what Canadians will see between the Liberals and the Conservatives. We will continue to expand on that contrast in the coming months. In 18 months or so, when there is an election, people will see the leader of the Conservative Party for who he is, a leader who has no problem meeting with groups like Diagonal.

Liberals are meeting with real people, and who is the leader of the Conservative Party meeting with? Who is he listening to, in order to come up with policy ideas that would help Canadians? Contrast who we are to who they are. In the end, we will continue to work with Canadians to build a stronger, healthier economy and society.

• (1040)

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that “Canada is doing well”. I spoke to many residents over the past couple of weeks and want to give two examples of Canadians I spoke to. The member can let me know if he is differentiating between how Canadians are doing and how Canada is doing.

I had two calls last week. One of them was from a senior who is no longer eating lunch because she cannot afford it. She is trying to feed her disabled son, so she has cut out a meal. Is she doing well? The second one was from a lady who has missed the last couple of months of her mortgage payment. She has great fear that she will lose her house. She was in tears while on the phone with me.

I do not think those Canadians are doing well. In the member's speech, he said “Canada is doing well”. Can he please differentiate between Canada and Canadians? I do not think Canadians are doing too well.

Government Orders

● (1045)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, what I said was that in comparison to any other country around the world, Canada is doing relatively well. That does not mean that, as a society, even if the country is doing relatively well, we should not demonstrate compassion and heart in dealing with individuals. There are individuals who are going through a great deal of hardship. That is one of the reasons why we continue to work as hard as we do.

Not everyone is doing as well as we would like to see, but I think it would be a far stretch to say that because parts of society are not doing well, Canada is, therefore, broken. There always have been and, sadly, there will continue to be people who are going to have difficult times. That is why it is so important that the Conservatives get on board and support some of the social programming that we are putting in place, so that there is a higher sense of fairness and fewer people who are having difficult times.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for the past few days, the number of devastating articles published in Quebec newspapers about the housing crisis have really surged. This morning, Josée Legault wrote the following about the housing crisis in the *Journal de Montréal*:

Some Quebecers can't find reasonably housing. Some are forced to live in sub-standard apartments neglected by their landlords.

Some have been ruthlessly evicted so that the owner can rent out the property for more money. Some can't afford exorbitant rent increases. And some others are forced to live in a van, in Quebec, in 2024.

Housing committees everywhere are overwhelmed. The same goes for the Tribunal administratif du logement. Distress calls are on the rise.

Radio-Canada reported that members of the Regroupement des ressources alternatives en santé mentale du Québec and the Regroupement des comités logement et associations de locataires du Québec are sounding the alarm.

We are hearing about tenant harassment. Even depression and suicidal thoughts. At the same time...homelessness is becoming normalized....

In my colleague's opinion, how will the housing budget resolve the kinds of situations that Josée Legault talked about this morning, considering that it creates twice the administrative burden and will take years to produce results on the ground?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if the Bloc members are genuine about wanting to help solve the housing issue, they will do what we have witnessed in other jurisdictions. For example, recently we had the Premier of Manitoba join the Prime Minister, the respective housing ministers and the mayor of Winnipeg to talk about the housing issue and how the three levels of government, along with the different stakeholders, are going to work together in an attempt to deal with the housing situation in the province of Manitoba.

The difference between the Liberals and the Bloc is that the Bloc wants to separate, at all costs. From a Liberal perspective, we want to work with the different levels of government so that we can provide the types of services that people of all communities want to see. That includes addressing the housing issue. However, that is going to take more than one level of government. We know that. Fortunately, there are many levels of government working with the federal government. The federal government, for the first time, not

only has taken the initiative to be there on the housing file, but has invested historic amounts of money at the same time.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

I am honoured to rise in the House and add the voice of the people of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte to today's debate. I want to take a moment to go over the unfortunate state of this country's finances after nine years of deficit budgets and how the Liberal government's inflationary policies are affecting families in my community.

Under the Liberal government, mortgage payments have doubled, down payments have doubled, rents have doubled, the cost of gas, groceries and home heating has skyrocketed and people cannot afford to eat, heat or house themselves. The Prime Minister said repeatedly that doubling the national debt would have zero consequences and the budget would balance itself. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister did not have the foresight to realize that doubling the national debt would drive up interest rates to historic modern highs, and now the government will spend over \$54 billion in interest on the national debt. That is more than the government is spending on provincial health care transfers.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer, in his latest report, stated that budget 2024 marks the third consecutive fiscal plan in which the government's new measures, even after accounting for revenue-raising and spending reviews, have exceeded the incremental “fiscal room” resulting from economic and fiscal developments.

Conservatives had three simple demands leading up to this year's budget. We committed that if the Liberal government introduced measures to immediately pass Bill C-234 in its original form, require cities to permit 15% more homebuilding each year as a condition for receiving federal infrastructure money, and cap spending with a dollar-for-dollar rule to bring down interest rates and inflation, we would give our support to the budget. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister and the finance minister ignored our pleas for a balanced budget, lower taxes and more homes for Canadians, and decided to add more than \$60 billion in new spending that will keep inflation and interest rates higher than Canadians can afford. That means higher taxes, higher inflation, higher interest rates, higher rents and higher mortgage payments.

I would like to spend some time discussing three central issues that I hear often from members of my community: the high cost of housing, the carbon tax and public safety.

First, one of the top concerns for residents in my community is housing affordability. In my riding, the cost of housing has skyrocketed under the Liberal government. Residents in my riding are now forced to spend almost \$2,000 a month on a one-bedroom apartment. The only solution to this crisis is for the Liberals to build more homes. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister told Canadians directly that housing is not a federal responsibility, and bureaucrats in his own housing department have confirmed that the government has no plans to bring down housing costs by building the homes that Canadians need.

Government Orders

According to Statistics Canada, between January 1 and November 30, 2023, Canada built 17,000 fewer homes than in the previous year. Instead of taking real action to address this issue, the Liberal government is concerned with photo ops and ribbon cuttings. The numbers do not lie. The government has failed an entire generation of Canadians who fear that they will never be able to own a home.

I see the crisis surrounding interest rates playing out in my community. I receive calls and emails constantly from residents whose mortgage rates have doubled. Recently, a retiree in my riding saw their mortgage jump from \$1,100 a month to \$2,600 in less than a year. It has not always been like this in Canada. Nine years ago, the average down payment on a home was approximately \$20,000. Now the massive cost of even a modest home in my community is forcing residents to save for longer and longer. It now takes 25 years to save up for the cost of a down payment, and the needed down payment for a home has doubled.

Roughly 64% of the average pre-tax monthly income is needed to pay the monthly costs associated with housing. This crisis has made the dream of home ownership impossible for all but the wealthiest few. In fact, 76% of Canadians who do not own homes believe they never will. The Liberal government had nine years to address this issue. The housing crisis is a policy and leadership failure from the Liberal government.

I will go on to an issue that is directly affecting families and farmers in my community: the carbon tax. Just a few weeks ago, the Prime Minister hiked his punishing carbon tax by 23% as part of his plan to quadruple the carbon tax over the next six years. The Parliamentary Budget Officer told members of this House that Canadians would be better off without the carbon tax, saying that they would experience higher income growth while the price of food would come down, but the Liberal government went ahead with its tax anyway.

To illustrate the impact this tax is having on the lives of Canadians, I want to share some of the correspondence I have received from people living in my community. I have a bill here from a family of six in my riding that is paying \$142 a month plus HST in carbon tax on their home heating bill.

● (1050)

I have another Enbridge bill from a Barrie resident where the carbon tax makes up 33% of the total bill when the HST is factored in. This resident bought a programmable thermostat that automatically turns down the temperature in her home to 15°C from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. She believes that she is doing all she can do lower her gas bill, but she still feels punished by this costly carbon tax.

I hear this government boast often about the rural top-up of the carbon rebate. Meanwhile, we know that the calculations it made on who qualifies as a rural Canadian are deeply flawed. Residents in my riding who live in rural places like Anten Mills, Elmvale, Hillsdale, Midhurst, Minesing, Phelpston, and Snow Valley are deemed to be living in urban areas, according to the Liberal government's rural top-up formula. Budget 2024 finally says that the government will look to better define rural areas, but it only commits to putting forward a proposal to do so later in the year. This is unacceptable for residents in my riding who are forced to pay more in

carbon tax, and it is proof of why we simply need to axe the tax for everyone, forever.

I will move on to how this tax is affecting the hard-working farmers in my riding. I am proud to represent a riding with a large, vibrant agricultural industry. I was recently sent an Enbridge bill for almost \$10,000 from a farmer in my riding who runs a poultry operation. Their bill shows a carbon tax charge of \$2,700 on the cost of fuel to dry grain corn. Shockingly, the carbon tax is more than the value of the gas before delivery and global adjustment. The Prime Minister just does not understand that if we tax the farmer who grows the food and the trucker who ships the food, we end up taxing the food that a family buys.

Finally, I will spend some time discussing the crime and chaos that the Prime Minister has unleashed, which is deeply affecting members of my community.

Small businesses bring life and a sense of community to our downtowns and neighbourhoods, yet they are sounding the alarm about the impacts of crime on their livelihoods. These businesses, including in my community, face significant challenges related to vandalism, theft, loitering, and public intoxication.

In my riding, a beloved Italian restaurant named Limoncello Bistro was recently broken into for the sixth time. Thieves who recently broke into Limoncello Bistro stole everything from the restaurant, even the meat and seafood. These repeated break-ins have cost the owners thousands and thousands of dollars. One of the owners of Limoncello Bistro has stated, "I find it hard to swallow that I have to pick up and leave a place where 5 short years ago this wasn't as bad as it is today. We fell in love with downtown Barrie. The waterfront, the community and the people. We as business owners shouldn't have to leave because criminals are putting us out of business."

I agree. Small businesses like Limoncello Bistro are on the front lines of the Canadian public safety crisis, and we urgently need to address this issue of skyrocketing crime rates. We know that the Liberal government caused this problem with its soft-on-crime laws: Bill C-5 and Bill C-75.

Another issue that is directly affecting small businesses in my community is the Liberal government's nonsensical attack on law-abiding hunters, farmers, and sport shooters. The budget proposes to spend \$30.4 million on a hunting rifle buyback plan that does not exist. This is on top of the \$42 million it has already committed. Members can think about that. The Liberal government will now spend \$72.4 million to buy exactly zero guns from owners and businesses. Not one gun has been bought back after spending \$72.4 million.

Government Orders

I recently received an email from a small business owner in my riding. He is a responsible business owner who gives back to the community and is facing devastating financial losses because of this failed policy. He is now struggling to pay for his everyday expenses. He has over 40 firearms, worth almost \$50,000, sitting in safes that cannot be sold but must be insured and housed in a secure rental space, while the Liberal government forces him to pay GST on them. The owner of this business says that this government is “clearly bent on just winning political points and not truly caring about the safety of the general public surrounding firearms and criminals who use them.” I agree with him. While the Prime Minister wants to protect turkeys from hunters, common-sense Conservatives want to protect Canadians from criminals.

The only way to reverse the damage the Liberal government has caused is by reversing course and doing the opposite. Canadians want change. They want lower taxes, lower mortgage rates, lower grocery bills and safer communities. Most of all, they want a change in government. The Conservative promise is simple: no gimmicks, no half measures. We will axe the tax, build more homes, fix the budget, stop the crime and bring home affordability for all Canadians.

I will be voting alongside my Conservative colleagues against the budget, and we will be voting no confidence in this costly NDP-Liberal coalition.

• (1055)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about housing, and I want to talk about the lack of support the party opposite, the Conservative Party, has actually had with respect to housing.

We came forth with the national housing strategy. We came forth with the rapid housing initiative, the federal co-investment fund, the housing accelerator fund and many other wonderful transformational programs for cities and communities across this country that would help build housing. Also, we all know that the issues, the challenges and the emergency we face with housing have been unfolding over many years.

The Conservative Party voted against every one of those initiatives. My question to members of the party opposite is this: How can they vote against those wonderful initiatives and still say they support housing?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, Canada was not like this nine years ago. One could live the dream. I remember buying my first home, freshly married, and it was a goal to be able to do that. That is long gone. The Liberal government and the NDP have been in power now for nine years. A huge issue has been created over that time.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says nine more to go. Hopefully it means months or days, because that is enough. We need to get back to having an election and bringing the Conservatives back in, and we will bring back this dream where young people, especially teenagers, can afford to buy a home.

• (1100)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have respect for my colleague in my day to day.

The narrative I am hearing from the Conservatives throughout this debate is around the concerns of the impacts on private interests and any loss that may occur for them in moving forward with a national health care plan, national pharmacare, dental care. Could the member share why that might be and why we are not seeing instead an emphasis on people who need access to insulin, birth control or dental care?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, hopefully I heard the entire question. We are a long way down from each other right now.

What the Conservatives and myself are afraid of is more bureaucracy. It has been proven over the last nine years that the Liberal-NDP government has been building bureaucracy, which is costing more and more money. That is our biggest fear. We do not believe more bureaucracy is going to solve a lot of issues. People are struggling. We need tangible, good results, and we do not think building more government bureaucracy is going to build such results for Canadians.

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, has the member had people coming to his constituency office to say how much better it is than it was nine years ago, or seven, six, five or four years ago? I can honestly say I have not had one person come to my office to say how glad they are and that things are working out. Can you relate what it has been like in your area?

The Deputy Speaker: I remind folks to go through the Chair and not say “you” directly to hon. members.

The hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, yes, quite frankly, some of the calls and emails I get are heartbreaking. I was recently in my office, returning a bunch of calls. By the end of that, things felt very daunting and very stressful. I heard negativity from every single person I spoke to.

I mentioned earlier, and I will mention it again, two specific people I spoke to on the phone who really stuck in my mind. One was a senior lady who has a disabled child; she has literally cut out her own lunchtime meal to feed her disabled son. She is going on two meals a day now.

Another lady was in tears because she had not been able to pay the last couple of months of her mortgage payment. The bank had been working with her, but she felt that was going to end and she would lose her home. She worked her whole life. She worked hard, as a Canadian, bought a home and was enjoying it. Just because of the interest rates and the price of inflation in Canada, she fears she is going to lose her home. It was a very tough call to hear. Those are the types of calls I get in my office.

Government Orders

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I get those kinds of calls in my office as well. We reach out and try to provide connections for people who are falling between the cracks, with other charitable agencies and help.

However, as a party, we believe that we need to go to where the wealth is. We are surprised and disappointed that the Minister of Finance has not done that. Corporate assets in this country have more than doubled in recent years from, believe it or not, \$14 trillion to \$28 trillion in assets. Nevertheless, corporate tax rates remain among the lowest in the world.

Does the Conservative Party believe we should, for instance, bring in a guaranteed livable income? This would actually end poverty in Canada and ensure every Canadian can meet their basic needs, while not having clawbacks, being able to earn money and becoming successful taxpayers within the nation of Canada.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Mr. Speaker, it is great to hear the member opposite mention that she helps people as they come in, which is my biggest goal. Being in here is one aspect of our job, but helping residents is really the best part of it. Every time someone comes in to our office, we try to point them to the right place to get assistance.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to be able to rise on behalf of the residents of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake and raise their voices here in this chamber. In the last number of months, I have had many people reach out, sharing their concerns regarding the cost of living. They are sharing that they are in crisis or nearly in crisis as they see ever-rising costs of gas, groceries, home heating and everything.

We see so many who are struggling, and all they see is their costs going up under the punishing carbon tax regime and the tax and spend from the NDP-Liberal government. What they have also come to clearly understand is that this is a tax plan that has been sold to Canadians as an environmental plan. However, Canadians can now see it for what it truly is; they have come to understand that it means they pay more, but there is no environmental gain.

After nine years, the NDP-Liberal coalition is simply not worth the cost.

A few weeks ago, I had a group of bright young students come for a visit from Ardmore School. Members might not know where Ardmore is. It is in northeastern Alberta, between the communities of Bonnyville and Cold Lake along Highway 28. This is a relatively rural community that has two major economic drivers: the energy industry and agriculture.

The students from Ardmore School saw the wonder of Parliament Hill. It was inspiring to me, and it reminded me of how lucky we are, each and every one of us, to be able to sit here and work hard for the constituents in our ridings. One boy shared that the whole experience of coming to Parliament Hill was the highlight of his life.

These students were able to see the inner workings of Ottawa when they came here. They got to watch question period from up in the gallery and had a wave from the leader of the official opposition. They got to meet many members of Parliament in the hallways

of this magnificent building and watch the debate on Bill C-50, the unjust transition bill, a bill that is, simply put, an attack on Canada's energy sector.

These students questioned very succinctly why so many politicians in the chamber constantly attack the energy industry. These students see first-hand, day in and day out, the positive impacts the energy industry has in their community. They understand how hard these people work and how the members of the energy industry are there when it is -50° so we can stay in our homes and stay warm.

One student shared her concerns regarding the increasing cost of living, what it would mean for her future and, specifically, what it would mean for her ability to attend post-secondary education. This is really important to highlight: These were students in junior high, and they could see very clearly that the cost of living, which has been made a crisis under the NDP-Liberal government, is having real impacts on someone that has not even gone to high school yet.

A couple of weeks ago, I had the opportunity to visit with a group of grade 7, 8 and 9 students from Frank Spragins High School in Fort McMurray, along with their principal, my friend Dan Tulk. They shared their thoughts and fears about what the cost of living crisis would mean for their future. Again, they highlighted their concerns about the cost of groceries and the cost of gas and what these costs would mean for their ability to attend post-secondary education, buy a house and have a family.

One particular student, in very unparliamentary terms, shared his thoughts about our Prime Minister's leadership. When we started to tease through the fact that name-calling was not okay, he said that people cannot afford to live right now. This student, Ryder, had many really intelligent comments about what he saw. He spoke very succinctly, and it was really frustrating to me when this student said that he did not understand why so many politicians hate the oil sands and the energy industry. It was a tough question for me, because I too struggle with it.

I am proud of the work done by our hard-working oil and gas, and, like Ryder, I do not understand why politicians in this chamber fail to understand the opportunity that exists in Canada's world-class energy sector.

We constantly see attacks on our energy sector at every possible opportunity. There are eco-radical politicians who do this at the direct cost of our hard-working energy workers, the future of communities right across Fort McMurray—Cold Lake and Canada, and Canada's economy.

Government Orders

• (1105)

At a time when we desperately need economic growth, eco-radicals guide Canadian policy. They have an intense hate for our world-class energy industry. They sit at the cabinet table and hold the pen on the costly coalition that keeps the government in power, pushing for ever more blows to this industry.

They have made no attempt to hide their distaste for the oil and gas industry. However, in this budget, I think it is kind of interesting that we see the Minister of Finance use a rather rosy benchmark for West Texas Intermediate, the crude oil price of \$78 U.S.

It is worth noting that this is a rosier outlook than my home province of Alberta's forecast, which was \$74 U.S. At some point, I would be very curious to see the modelling that was used to get to this number. While they attack the industry, they have no issue whatsoever benefiting from the profits.

The anti-energy agenda from the government has been consistent and punishing over the last nine years. Anti-energy messaging, delays, arbitrary and inconsistent regulatory conditions, and an outright veto of approved export pipelines have all hurt this industry.

Despite asks to export Canadian liquefied natural gas from Germany, Japan and, most recently, Poland, among others, time and time again, the answer from the Prime Minister has been that there is no business case. At a time when the world is calling, Canada's NDP-Liberal government refuses to answer. It seems more interested in supporting dirty dictator oil and fuelling Putin's war machine than in supporting Canada's world-class energy industry. That is absolutely shameful.

After nine years, the NDP-Liberal budget is just more of the same that got us into this mess. The Prime Minister did not do anything to stop the inflationary deficits that are driving up interest rates. He did not stop putting our social programs, jobs and economy at risk by adding more debt. Simply put, he is not worth the cost for any generation, despite what he says. He is responsible for record deficits, which are driving up record inflation rates. Both have very real impacts on the budgets of hard-working Canadians.

We see story after story about record-breaking visits to food banks right across the country. Last year, food banks received a record two million visits in a single month. They are anticipating that an additional million people will visit food banks this year, an extra million people having to access food banks.

While life has gotten worse for Canadians, the Prime Minister is spending more than ever before. This year's budget will include over \$61 billion in new inflationary spending, costing the average Canadian family an extra \$3,687. Most families do not have that lying around.

Students from communities right across my riding see the insanity. They understand that, when governments spend more of their money, costs go up. The hard-working energy workers who see the industry they work in under constant attack understand the hypocrisy.

World leaders who are looking for energy solutions understand the potential in Canada's world-class energy industry. Can one imagine a world in which our Prime Minister believed in our econ-

omy as much as these world leaders do? Sadly, what else can we expect from a Prime Minister who would rather wedge, divide and stigmatize Canadians?

Hope is on the horizon. It is not all doom and gloom. Canada's common-sense Conservatives will support Canada's world-class energy industry. We are ready to stand up and govern. As has been shared by many of my colleagues, it is time to get Canada back on track.

We will axe the carbon tax, reducing the costs for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We will invest in technology, not taxes, to deliver environmental gains. This is common sense.

I would invite all members of the House to vote non-confidence in the Prime Minister, who, after nine years, is simply not worth the cost. We can vote against this budget and deliver common sense for the common people.

• (1110)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the theme of misinformation, we can think about this: The last Conservative prime minister did not build one inch of pipeline to coast waters in 10 years.

We have TMX, in which Danielle Smith and Rachel Notley, both United Conservative and New Democrat, have supported the Government of Canada's approach. That is bringing resources to tidewater.

On what grounds does the hon. member believe that Stephen Harper, in any way, did anything to support resources going from her home province to tidewater in B.C.?

• (1115)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, what we get is what we often get from that member, disinformation and blaming Stephen Harper, in all his answers. Stephen Harper was a proud supporter of Canada's world-class energy industry.

He supported LNG exports. We had 18 LNG projects when the Liberals took office. Unfortunately, we have one under them. The Liberals refuse to support LNG. They refuse to claim that there is a business case for this. They refused to allow the energy east project to go forward, which not only would have benefited my home province of Alberta. It would have benefited the Speaker's home province of Nova Scotia. It would have benefited the province of New Brunswick. It would have benefited all of Canada. However, the Liberal government decided it was more important to play politics and fuel Putin's war machine than it was to support Canada's oil and gas.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I got a message from Jessa. She cites that pharmacare deductibles prevent coverage for her nine-year-old daughter with type 1 diabetes for most years. If they are lucky, they hit their deductible by November. She said that, over the last seven years since her diagnosis, they have easily spent \$60,000 out of pocket for her diabetic supplies and insulin, even with help from Fair PharmaCare.

Pretending things are already covered is atrocious and shows a lack of care and understanding on the Conservatives' part. What we are hearing from Conservatives is that they are more worried about the private insurance companies. Maybe my colleague could respond to Jessa and explain how she is supposed to deal with her nine-year-old daughter and continue to make sure that she has access to insulin.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, the interesting part about this pharmacare scheme that was put forward by the NDP-Liberal government is that it is not actually a plan. It is a promise to eventually, possibly, maybe explore a plan.

If the NDP-Liberal government was really interested in delivering for Canadians, it would have worked with provinces and territories to expand plans, to go after the 3% of Canadians who did not currently have a plan or had plans that were not sufficient for them. The government would have already been able to have pharmacare delivered to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

However, that is not what the NDP-Liberal government wanted. It wanted photo ops, announcements and promises, but it did not actually want to deliver for Canadians. This is the tragic trend that we see, after nine years of a government that is not worth the cost. It is all about the announcements; it is not about the delivery.

As I said in my speech on pharmacare, if the government actually wanted pharmacare, it would have worked with provinces and territories to develop their plans out so that Canadians could have already benefited.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent presentation, as well as for pointing out the fact that the Liberal government seems to put a little more emphasis on putting hard drugs into people's hands than on pharmacare and getting actual medications to Canadians.

With that said, the member talked about technologies and how we are looking forward to developing those technologies, which would create jobs. As we saw with the just transition task force that basically created no jobs, other than bureaucracy, it is not stepping up for our coal miners. I know my colleague has some in her riding and in her province. I am wondering if the member would comment a little more on that technology and how it is going to improve Canada.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. The government is more interested in building bureaucracy than actually creating jobs. The government wants jobs here in Ottawa rather than jobs in our ridings right across the country. That is absolutely inappropriate and not the right way to do it. It is government central planning at its absolute peak.

Government Orders

This is something that common-sense Conservatives will continue fighting for, day in and day out, to make sure that Canada's world-class oil and energy industries have the support they need so that those workers can keep the lights on when it is cold outside.

[Translation]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying I will be sharing my time with the member for Yukon.

Today, I am very proud to be able to make a speech on implementing the provisions of the budget. Before investing in something, it is extremely important to make sure there is a solid foundation. When I say foundation, I am of course talking about the economy. We have put in place certain things that ensure we can continue to invest.

I would first like to say that inflation has fallen from 8.2% to approximately 3% and is now in the range where banks seek to reduce interest rates. On that front, things are going well.

In addition, Canada is one of two G7 countries that has a AAA credit rating. That also shows that it is in good shape in that regard. The unemployment rate is between 5.5% and 5.6%, which is a historically low rate. According to the International Monetary Fund, Canada's net debt-to-GDP-ratio is the lowest in the G7. Furthermore, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Monetary Fund anticipate that Canada will have the highest economic growth in the G7 in 2025. It is very important to note that. Already, this shows why we are well placed to make investments for Canadians.

Yes, there is a housing crisis. We recognize that. It must be said that a large part of this crisis is due to the fact that the Conservative government, in the past, did not deem it had the obligation, the responsibility, to invest in housing. In contrast, our government works in close collaboration with the provinces, territories and municipalities to make investments. That is very important.

In this budget we are continuing to invest in the rapid construction of new housing and in the housing accelerator fund. The investments added to this program will make it possible to continue building new homes. Eliminating the GST will enable developers to build housing much faster and cheaper, of course. For a \$10-million building, the developer will save \$1.5 million. Modular home innovations will also help us make a lot more progress in this area. This is very important.

Government Orders

On top of that, we are employing a new strategy. We will transfer public lands owned by the government for leasing or as part of other approaches to help build housing. That could amount to as many as 250,000 homes. We will work in close co-operation with universities so that they can invest in student residences. This may allow students to leave condos and apartments and move back into residences. This too will be a great help.

In this budget we are proposing to invest in organizations working on the ground with the homeless or those living in encampments. We will work in close co-operation with organizations on the ground that have a great deal of experience combatting homelessness, with a view to identifying how we can address this issue. We will work in close co-operation with the provinces and territories to invest in refurbishing and building more shelters and transition houses. This is very important.

• (1120)

[English]

One thing I want to touch on is the government's transformative investments since 2015. We know that it has been the Liberal government that has been there from the start. I think back to medicare in 1968, which was a very important initiative that all Canadians are very proud of today.

Let me share some of the investments we are making to close the gap between those who have and those who do not have, those who are experiencing challenges and those who are experiencing fewer challenges.

Last year, in the 2023 budget, we made an investment of over \$200 billion in health care for more doctors, nurses and front-line workers. We also made major investments today that I am extremely proud of. The first one is the new Canada disability benefit, which is \$6.1 billion over six years. We know that most people living with disabilities are living in poverty. We need to come forward. It is not as much as we would have liked, but it is an important step forward that will help over 600,000 Canadians.

We are also bringing in, as I spoke about yesterday in my speech, pharmacare. It is a first step, phase one, if you will, which will help many women but also help about four million people living with diabetes. When I go to the pharmacy, my pharmacist reminds me each time I go that we have to do something to help people with diabetes. They need help. It costs them thousands of dollars and we need to be there for them. The government is moving forward on that, which I am extremely proud of.

There is dental care for nine million Canadians. We can say there are all kinds of insurance and programs, and everybody has access to this, that and the other thing. Let us be real here: There are nine million Canadians who do not have dental care and we are going to help them. We are now completing the seniors category in registration. We are also doing this for young people 18 and under and people with disabilities. I am very proud of that investment as well.

Continuing with those proud investments, there is early learning and day care. This budget supports investments in creating more spaces and more renovations, so we can offer great programming. Finally, I want to touch on the national school food program that

we have been talking about for years. It is a must and it is going to help at least 400,000 Canadians.

Those are very important investments in the social net of our country, and this is why many people want to come to live in Canada, because we walk with people and support them.

• (1125)

[Translation]

I will now say a few words about safer and healthier communities, which is to say places where we will invest to help improve the situation on the ground.

Tourism was certainly an industry that suffered terribly during the COVID-19 pandemic—which is why we are continuing to invest in this sector. The budget also contains investments for volunteer firefighters. We are doubling the tax credits for the volunteer work they are doing to help communities. Another very significant investment is being made to attract health workers and social service workers to rural regions. I am talking about certain professionals like dentists, teachers, social workers, physiotherapists and so on. Many of the investments are concentrated in sectors where there are essential needs. To encourage this, we will be amending the legislation pertaining to the Canada student loan forgiveness program.

Since I know I only have a minute left, I will jump straight to the conclusion. I do not have a monopoly on sharing all this good news. Deloitte, an independent firm, had this to say:

Budget 2024 attempts to navigate a fine line: invest enough to have an impact on key priorities, from housing, social programs, and affordability to growth and good jobs, while maintaining sufficient fiscal discipline to adhere to fiscal guardrails and support the continued easing of inflation.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. It is always a pleasure to hear him.

In the last minute of his speech, my colleague talked about good jobs. However, something is completely missing from the budget. Once again, we are waiting for an aerospace strategy. As we know, Quebec is one of the world's three leading aerospace hubs, along with Seattle and Toulouse.

Pratt & Whitney manufactures aircraft engines in my riding and sells them all over the world. My riding is also home to Héroux-Devtek. I like to say that Longueuil set foot on the moon before Neil Armstrong, because that company makes landing gear systems.

We must encourage this industry, which accounted for 37,000 jobs in 2022 and \$18 billion in economic activity. We are still waiting for the federal government to take a stance on this and say it will encourage this industry, because it provides good jobs and generates an economic impact. What is the government waiting for?

• (1130)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and for his enthusiasm about the aerospace industry.

I agree with him that the aerospace industry is an extremely important industry in Canada and that Quebec plays a key role in this industry. As parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, I want my colleague to know that I just attended two meetings on aerospace. We are examining the possibility of making serious investments to maintain our position in this area that is very important for Canadians and Quebecers.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for each of the flawed programs that have been introduced in this budget, the government seems to not understand the reality.

Let us talk about the dental care program, for which the government will cover 70%. For people who cannot afford dental care, and let us say they need one crown, that means the government pays \$1,000 of taxpayer money and individuals have to pay \$300. People who cannot afford dental care do not have that \$300.

Not only that, but the government has picked Canada Life as the monopoly that will deal with this situation. It will reimburse dentists, who were never consulted. Therefore, not enough dentists have subscribed. Once again, we see the government getting into provincial jurisdiction with skills it does not have in a program that does not understand the basic needs of the people who want to use it.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, my first impression is always that my glass is half full, not half empty. This is a very important program for Canadians. As I said in my speech, nine million Canadians will have access to dental care because of this crucial program.

On the cost for dentists, the government is setting the rates and those rates are respected. Dental care should be covered 100% unless dentists ask for more than the set rates. We will work together with dentists, who are very proud professionals and want to support each and every Canadian who needs that dental care. We will be there for them.

I am sure the end product will be like any of the other programs, such as medicare, pharmacare and various other programs. We always find, as Canadians, the right way to make them work, and we shall be there for them this time around as well.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, because of the work of the NDP and the collective voices of so many advocating across Canada, we are seeing some real solutions being implemented, many of them mentioned by the member, including dental care, free birth control, diabetes medication, a national school food program, a rental protection fund. There are some real and positive solutions as a result of the work of the NDP.

Government Orders

One thing I need to bring up, which is vitally important, is the national disability benefit. The member did say that it was not as much as he would have liked. People living with disabilities are legislated into poverty. Two hundred dollars a month in additional funds will not lift people out of poverty.

When will the Liberal government finally put in place the legislation and funding to lift people living with disabilities out of poverty?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I, too, have been advocating, as the member and many in the House and across the country have, to support people with disabilities. We know they are the largest percentage of people living in poverty. I said in my speech that \$200 a month were not enough. There is more we will focus on as we move forward. However, let us not forget that this is biggest single-line investment in the budget, \$6.1 billion for this new initiative. It is a very powerful one. The \$2,400 a year are not enough, but this is a first step and an important step.

• (1135)

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity today to speak to budget 2024 as I believe it presents a number of investments and initiatives critical to ensure that Canada keeps moving forward in difficult times.

We are living difficult times. Not only are Canadians dealing with a high cost of living, driven by a complex mix of global factors, but we are struggling with dramatically increasing costs of climate change and serious geopolitical upheaval, issues which are spilling over onto our own shores and deeply affecting our communities both directly and indirectly.

This is happening as the income gap, more critically the purchasing power between the lowest income-earning households and the highest income quintiles, has continued to grow. That divide, whether economically, socially or as a measure of health, is not a good one.

Recently I was talking with one of my constituents, who is based in Whitehorse. Even with a well-paying public service position and while owning a house, she described her struggle getting by from day to day: fuel costs, food costs and an upcoming mortgage renewal, with not a lot left over for extras.

Government Orders

All Canadians at low and middle-incomes are feeling the strain, from deciding not to go on a family trip this year to not doing the Friday dinner date. It is those younger Canadians, millennial and gen Z, who are feeling the strain the most. In addition to being saddled with the cost of services for boomers and others as they age, our younger generations now are facing the unconscionable, perhaps unforgivable, debt of the cost of the climate crisis.

According to the Canadian Climate Institute's estimates, \$89 billion will be added to our health care costs annually by mid-century. We could face \$100-billion fall in annual GDP and the lowest income levels could drop by 25%.

Yes, this budget carries costs, but those costs are investments in Canada and Canadians so that we can face the future with confidence, restore equity and avert the worst effects of climate change.

[Translation]

The cost of inaction will be far greater.

[English]

Let us talk about investments.

We are implementing a clean electricity tax credit, the clean technology manufacturing tax credit, to allow companies and tax-exempt entities to invest in clean energy equipment, helping us not only to green our electricity systems but scale them up to meet the demand of zero emission in electric vehicles and support our provinces and territories in working toward net-zero grids.

We are investing in entrepreneurs, including more than \$200 million for Canadian start-ups for equity deserving or underserved communities, which I know will give a boost to the many enterprising entrepreneurs who populate the communities across Yukon.

[Translation]

We are also further adapting the Canada growth fund, a fund worth over \$6 billion for stakeholders looking to accelerate their investments in decarbonization and clean growth technologies. This is a crucial addition to our price on pollution to ensure that Canada can successfully reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

[English]

It is not only the cost of climate change that Canadians face. Far too many Canadians are housing insecure, which is why our budget launch is a bold strategy to unlock almost four million new homes by 2031. We are reintroducing a post-World War II-style design catalogue to speed up the building of good quality homes, including duplexes, triplexes and low and medium-density options. These will be coupled with an additional \$15 billion to the apartment construction loan program, \$1.5 billion to protect affordable rentals and a billion dollars for our affordable housing fund.

Not only are we investing in good homes, a healthy environment and strong communities to raise our families, we are protecting our assets as well.

We have one of the longest coastlines in the world. We have a vital waterway over which we exercise our sovereignty, the Northwest Passage. Canada's north represents more than 40% of

Canada's territory, located in an increasingly unstable world where major or emerging powers, friendly or unfriendly, are watching.

While the north is experiencing some of the most dramatic effects of climate change, we are also just starting to tap into the north's huge potential in equitable economic and resource development, all while protecting an increasingly threatened landscape and advancing reconciliation and true partnership with indigenous citizens.

Building on our \$40-billion investment to modernize NORAD, along with our American partners, budget 2024 begins to lay out further critically needed investments in defence and a defence policy update to chart the course to ensure our armed forces are ready for what the future will hold. This includes \$8.1 billion to ensure Canada is ready to respond to global threats, including almost \$2 billion to replenish supplies and equipment, and more than \$500 million to replace satellite communications equipment critical for our future investments in new tactical helicopters and long-range missile capabilities.

● (1140)

[Translation]

This is in addition to critical investments we have made to build new homes and renovate existing ones, to provide child care services to Canadian Armed Forces personnel and families on bases across the country, to increase the number of civilian specialists working to support DND operations, and to support their consolidation. We are also working on ways to improve retention as we modernize the forces.

[English]

Part of that is recognizing the increasing risks cybersecurity threats pose to Canadians. I am pleased to see the importance of this work recognized in budget 2024, with a commitment of more than \$900 million over the next five years to enhance intelligence in cyber-operations and to protect Canada's economic security from rapidly evolving security threats.

With a world that is increasingly connected online, the threats we face in the cyber realm are growing, not only to individual Canadians and our personal data and finances but to our country's critical infrastructure.

[Translation]

Our government is investing in our future and in defending that future, but we also want to support Canadians today.

[English]

We are investing \$273.6 million for Canada's action plan to combatting hate, to support community outreach, law enforcement reform, tackle the rise in hate crimes, enhance community security and counter radicalization. This is alongside \$7.3 million to address the rise in anti-Semitism and \$7.3 million to address the rise in Islamophobia. Expressions of both have been rising for some years, but have broken out in a more ominous way since the onset of war in the Middle East.

In addition to our government's historic investment in strengthening public health care over the past year, I am pleased to see our new national pharmacare plan announced, with \$1.5 billion over five years to ensure its effective rollout, while providing, as first steps, support for reproductive health care and diabetes care.

We are also addressing the critical needs of our communities in the ongoing overdose crisis, with \$150 million through the emergency treatment fund.

[Translation]

We are also continuing to expand the Canadian dental care plan to cover more than nine million Canadians who currently do not have dental insurance, and we are investing an additional \$1 billion to support affordable day care.

[English]

It is not only day care that families need. I am looking forward to seeing our partners in Yukon work with our new national school food program to expand access to existing school food programs to those who need it, so no child has to go to school hungry.

For students already on the pathway to a career, we are increasing student grants and loans, making it easier for the more than one million Canadian students to afford their desired education and get their start in life.

Teachers, social workers and more health care professionals, who have found new opportunities in our rural and remote communities, will now be a permanent part of the Canada student loan forgiveness program.

New investments to boost research and innovation, including support for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, will ensure Canada remains a world leader in science and new technologies like artificial intelligence.

This budget is about ensuring that young people in particular, but all Canadians, have a chance to realize their dreams and aspirations.

[Translation]

To deliver on all of the promises in the budget, we are asking some of the wealthiest Canadians to pay a little more for certain things, because in doing so, they are investing in their fellow citizens and in their country, and everyone benefits.

[English]

Pierre Poilievre and his Conservatives have already committed to voting against the budget. This means they will be voting against increased health care funding and—

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have to remind the hon. member not to use the proper names of members of the House of Commons. Maybe he could back up and say “Leader of the Opposition” or “the member for Carleton.”

The hon. member for Yukon.

Mr. Brendan Hanley: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has already committed to voting against the budget, and this means voting against increased health care funding, a national school food program, funding to build nearly four million more homes, support for renters, free contraception and diabetes medication, affordable dental care and much more.

What kind of country do Canadians want to live in? What kind of country do they want for their children and grandchildren? I know what constituents are asking me. They want support to get through the affordability crisis. They want affordable options for housing, whether to rent or to buy. They want Canada to be a country of innovation, a country that is forward-looking, climate resilient and a leader among peers. That is the kind of country we are building.

• (1145)

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Yukon talks about innovation and the cost of climate change to the world. To me, it seems interesting, because we have the opportunity to get more liquefied natural gas to global markets. As a Wood Mackenzie report just showed, if we get more Canadian LNG to Asia, we can actually reduce emissions, yet the climate change minister across the way, one of the radical ministers in the House, is putting a cap on getting LNG to that very market that wants to lower emissions.

Does the member support getting more of Canada to the world to reduce emissions?

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Mr. Speaker, there is so much in this budget, and in previous budgets, that is building toward a new energy future. In my community of Yukon, we are investing in the critical minerals that will drive our move toward green energy and a green future and also stimulate and revive the economy for all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about homelessness a bit. My colleague spoke of housing, and it is an important issue, but the government approach on homelessness is a bit hard to follow.

Government Orders

The only federal program dealing with homelessness is Reaching Home. Still, the government cut 3% from this program in recent months. The budget proposes a \$1-billion investment over four years, and \$250 million for encampments. However, encampments are a problem.

Last weekend, I attended a summit on youth homelessness in Quebec. Every group dealing with homelessness in Quebec was there, and all were asking how this \$250 million would be spent, since, ultimately, fighting homelessness means building social housing.

Would it not have been better to simply invest money to actually build social housing units to get people off the street?

Does my colleague have any idea how this \$250 million will be spent? As it stands, there is quite a bit of uncertainty around that.

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question. I am going to focus on the range of investments found in the budget, which includes investments in the housing market. The federal government is still ready to work with provincial partners, including Quebec, to ensure we also make investments for the homeless.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning, I met with nurse Crystal Edwards, who is the director of the women and children's and mental health programs at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, as well as Dr. Justin Jagger, who is the chair of pediatrics at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, and Children's Healthcare Canada. We talked about the children and youth crisis regarding physical and mental health in Canada and how band-aid solutions will not measurably improve child health care systems or children's health outcomes. They are calling on the federal government to take a leadership role in resolving this crisis by declaring children's health and well-being a national priority.

I worked with my colleague from Yukon, as he was part of the negotiations, to create the youth mental health fund. It is historic, and it is a step toward parity between mental and physical health. However, they are also calling on the government to create and implement a national children's strategy that would include targets and timelines to improve children's health outcomes, the establishment of a chief children's health officer and the creation of a dedicated funding envelope to ensure a robust maternal child and youth health research agenda.

Does my colleague support those asks from Children's Healthcare Canada?

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank my colleague from Courtenay—Alberni, who is a strong advocate and friend in working together toward common aims in health, and children's health in particular.

We should shortly be able to present the report from our study at the health committee on children's health. There are many recommendations in there to inform a national perspective and coordination in improving the health of children. My colleague is right to point to the importance of the mental health of youth and children in general.

• (1150)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the good people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. I will inform the House that I will be splitting my time with the incredible member of Parliament for Prince Albert.

I have been around this place long enough to see a clear pattern of what a Liberal budget is. What exactly is the pattern of a Liberal budget? We have to go back to 2015 for a moment. What happened back in 2015? The Liberal Prime Minister promised three years of modest deficit-spending budgets before he made a cast in stone promise to return to a balanced budget in 2019. What happened to that promise?

[Translation]

In each of those three years, the Prime Minister spent much more than he had promised. In 2019, he did not even try to keep his cast in stone promise about returning Canada to a balanced budget. In other words, this Liberal Prime Minister did not even try to do what he had promised.

Why even promise to return Canada to a balanced budget when he had no intention of ever doing so? Of course, we all know the answer. The Prime Minister is willing to say literally anything if he thinks it will get him votes and help him gain voters' confidence. That is the real problem with what has become the trend in the libertarian budgets tabled by the Liberals and the Prime Minister, because Canadians have lost confidence in this Liberal government.

[English]

Let me provide yet another example of this.

To do this, we have to go back to the 2022 Liberal budget. Back in 2022, following the pandemic, the Prime Minister and his finance minister introduced what his Liberal government called the return to fiscal responsibility budget. That begs the question of what fiscally responsible spending was, according to the Liberal government in 2022. The answer is that the Liberals' 2022 budget proposed total federal government spending of \$434 billion.

This is an interesting amount of money because it represented a \$90-billion spending increase over the Liberals' very own pre-pandemic spending in the 2019-20 fiscal year, which had a budget of \$338 billion. Now, here we are with the latest Liberal 2024 budget, which proposes total spending of \$535 billion for the 2024-25 fiscal year. Let us pause for a moment to recap.

The 2022 return to fiscal responsibility budget was \$434 billion. Now, here we are in 2024 with the current budget, and the proposed spending is \$535 billion. This means that the latest Liberal budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year proposes to spend \$100 billion more than what the Liberals themselves labelled a return to fiscal responsibility budget just a short time ago.

Let us look at the bigger picture for a moment. Before the pandemic began, in 2019-20, the Liberals were spending \$338 billion. Today, the Liberals now propose to spend \$535 billion. That is an increase of almost \$200 billion a year in annual spending, and let us not kid ourselves. Everyone knows the Liberals will spend more than the \$535 billion they are proposing in this budget. If anyone is in doubt of that, I will recall what the finance minister told us in April of last year during her 2023 budget.

In that 2023 budget, the Liberals told us that projected total spending would be \$497 billion in 2023-24. That self-same Liberal budget projected spending would reach \$556 billion in 2027-28. Now, here we are in 2024-25, and already the Liberals are proposing to spend \$535 billion.

Can we all not see the clear pattern here? Every year, what we are told will happen never actually happens. The forecasts, the promises and everything the Liberals promise us end up being completely false. They do not even try to live within the fiscal limits they propose for themselves.

● (1155)

This particular Liberal budget follows the pattern that once again demonstrates that every commitment of a so-called fiscal guardrail made in previous Liberal budgets was a sham. Most offensive of all is that the Prime Minister's Office has the audacity to label this budget as the "Fairness for Every Generation" budget. I am literally aghast by this.

The 2024 "Fairness for Every Generation" budget proposes a \$40-billion deficit for this fiscal year alone. This is noteworthy because the Liberals' previous debt forecast was \$35 billion for 2024-25 and \$27 billion for 2025-26. In the Liberals' mini budget last fall, their fiscal update increased the deficits projected for 2024-25 and 2025-26 to \$38 billion and \$38 billion respectively.

Now, why is this new debt significant? Given the current interest rates, the cost of servicing on the national debt has now exceeded federal spending on health care, and this problem only gets worse. There is an entire generation of young Canadians who are now entirely left out despite all the Liberal spending, and this is today. Literally, this problem is so bad that even the Prime Minister himself now openly admits that young people now feel like they cannot get ahead in the same way their parents or their grandparents could. However, it is much worse than that. The Prime Minister is leaving future generations of Canadians with record levels of debt and no plan whatsoever to return to a balanced budget, ever. The Prime Minister has failed in every single budget to do what he promised he would do in the budget the year previous, and I have established that with several examples in my comments today.

Let us ask the Prime Minister, who thinks he is pretty awesome, if, in the past nine years he has massively and completely failed to even come close to balancing the budget, what is he expecting fu-

ture generations of Canadians to do because they are the ones who will be inheriting all of this Liberal debt?

Government Orders

What Canadians see is a desperate Prime Minister's Office trying to shovel as much money out the door as quickly and as recklessly as they can as they are hoping that something, anything, will stick as they try desperately to buy their way to remain in power because power is the one thing that the Prime Minister and his group of insiders really care about. I would submit that they will and, in fact, they are, willing to spend any amount of money in their quest to retain power. I believe the way they see it in the Prime Minister's Office is that this ends in one of two different ways for them. Either they will be successful and remain in power or, if they are unsuccessful, well, they do not care about the fiscal mess they will leave behind because it will be future generations of Canadians, but more importantly not them, who will have to clean the mess up and pay for it. I submit that this is really what is occurring here.

Members can imagine leaving our kids behind a prepaid Visa, but in reality, that prepaid Visa card has a negative balance of \$10,000 owing on it. The joke is on them. In the real world, no one would actually do that, but the Prime Minister is doing exactly that, and he has the audacity to pretend to call it fairness for every generation.

[Translation]

There is nothing fair about racking up huge debts in an attempt to buy votes and leaving future Canadians to foot the bill. It is the most unfair thing that the government can do to young Canadians, but that is precisely what the Liberal government is doing.

Rather than accept and respect the fact that many Canadians see and oppose what the government is doing, the Prime Minister's Office is doubling down and proposing more of the same.

[English]

This is a budget, yes, but it follows a dangerous pattern. The Liberals continue to say whatever it takes to stay in power. They have no intention of following through on their promises. They do not care. They just care about power. That is not good enough for this chamber. It is definitely not good enough for Canadians, and I will not be going along with this plan to again spend whatever it takes, to throw that money at the wall, to see how long they can stay in power.

● (1200)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those are interesting comments coming from the member across the way, in the sense that, as a government, we do recognize there is a need to be able to spend money, as has Doug Ford.

Government Orders

For example, we talk about the hundreds of millions of dollars of investment, in terms of landing the VW battery plant. It is going to generate thousands of jobs. It is being supported in good part by both the Ontario government and the Canadian government. It will have a long-term positive impact, as it will be one of the reasons why Canada is going to be ranked so high in the world in production of electric batteries. Let us think about it: greener jobs into the future. Why does the Conservative Party not support that particular initiative?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I do not support any initiative of the Liberal government, because the government will do whatever it takes to stay in power.

If the member is so confident that particular deal is going to be so great for every Canadian, why has the government not brought up the business case? Why has it not shown us the contracts?

The latest Liberal budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year proposes to spend \$100 billion more than what the Liberals themselves labelled as a return to fiscal responsibility just a short time ago.

The member and the Liberal government will say whatever they need to say to stay in power. He needs to admit that to himself.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one thing I was reflecting on while we were talking about the budget today is the national school food program that is being implemented in the budget. I was a school board trustee and also worked in the school district. I am a single parent with two children. An issue that came up over and over again was that schools need the support to be able to ensure that all children who arrive at school have the nutritious healthy foods they need to learn and grow.

There are many wins in the budget. There are also areas like the national disability benefit that need to see an increase in the amount.

If the member were in the position of power that he is saying the Liberals are striving to maintain, what would he cut that Canadians need so desperately, at a time when people are struggling to make ends meet?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, there is a synergy between the Liberal Party and the NDP, where they are constantly trying to outbid each other for who can be more relevant. The problem is that they are constantly asking for a new national priority, when the federal government has zero experience in doing something.

In my area of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, when I was the United Way chair, there was a great program called “Success By 6”. It made sure that children who needed those supports at Queen’s Park Elementary got them. Unfortunately, if the member were to read Paul Wells’ Substack on this, she would see that the government actually cannot tell us which children would receive the support. It just says that 400,000 children are going to receive it. The government has no idea who these children are. It has no idea who the different players are in different school districts right across the country.

As I said, it is all about paper. The NDP enables this. It keeps saying, “More, more, more”, and we just get more paper, more

promises and more bureaucracy, not the help that Canadians want or need.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a great speech. I know that the member comes from British Columbia, and I know that in British Columbia addiction has become a huge issue over the last eight years. Could the member give the House a bit of a report on what has changed in his riding and what in the budget would actually address the problem? Can he explain to us why the government is so committed to not fixing the problem?

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, that is a great question.

In many rural parts of my riding, from places such as Merritt, B.C., which we all know is still trying to rebuild from some of the floods that happened a few years ago, to places like Hedley, I continue to get reports about the so-called drug legalization program, where people are allowed to consume hard drugs, crack, heroin, etc. on the streets.

There are drug houses that the RCMP has said it cannot shut down because of the laws. The government can say all sorts of things, like that it is going to work with British Columbia, but the problem is that it is not working with the RCMP. It is not giving the RCMP the tools it needs to make our communities, particularly the rural ones, safer.

The member is correct; the government, again, is always about promises but never about delivering.

• (1205)

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to be here. The member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola gave such a great speech. His comments are surely appreciated in the House. His knowledge and his wisdom are a benefit to all Canadians, and I want to thank him for being here today. He did a wonderful job.

I want to talk about the great riding of Prince Albert. It has been home to three prime ministers, believe it or not. It has a great history and great people. I am from a combination of the agriculture sector, which is strong, vibrant and growing, and the forestry sector, in which we hope to see a rejuvenation and a rebirth, bringing along first nations and first nations involvement. There are some great opportunities that will be happening in and around Prince Albert and in the district itself.

When I look at the budget and look back at the needs and wants, and the questions I get, in my riding, the budget is a failure. It did not listen to what Canadians want. It did not listen to what Canadians require. It talks about a lot of things and throws a lot of things at the wall, but there is not anything to really address affordability. There is nothing really there to address crime, including rural crime. There is nothing there, really, to address the day-to-day costs of living. I am going to talk a little about that today and about what residents are saying to me in the riding of Prince Albert.

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While many of my colleagues have raised various serious problems with the budget today, I am going to focus on a variety of areas that directly impact communities, families, poverty and, of course, crime. I am also going to add addictions and mental health to that list. After nine years, the NDP-Liberal coalition has had every opportunity to address these issues and effect real change for Canadians, yet its policies have done nothing but make things worse. For families, the tax-and-spend approach continues to make life more unaffordable, as they feel the real-life impacts of the Liberal inflationary policies.

According to the Prime Minister, after nine years of his leadership, one in four children goes to school without food every day. Again, I come from a riding with agriculture. We grow food. We raise beef. There is no reason for kids to go to school hungry, but when one's parents cannot afford the basic necessities, when they have to choose between making the rent payment or the mortgage payment and buying good, nourishing meals, that is a shame. That is what the government has created.

After nine years of the Prime Minister, roughly 64% of one's average monthly income is needed to pay the monthly costs associated with housing. When I grew up, housing was a dream that was achievable. We dreamt of owning a house. Actually, I was lucky to own a house relatively young in life and able to own a house right through. I own a house today.

I look at kids and people's grandkids, and that dream has become a fantasy. It is something they actually look at and very realistically say, "If I am going to own a house, I will have nothing else. I will be house poor. The cost of owning a house is so unachievable; it is not an option for me." That dream has left Canadians. It is crazy. There is no reason not to have that dream. There is no reason not to work toward owning a house. There is no reason not to have a house, a safe place to raise one's family, one's kids, especially in Canada. After nine years, this is no longer an option.

After nine years of the Prime Minister, food banks received a record two million visits in a single month last year. Two million Canadians are going to the food bank.

Why is the government not listening when it hears stats like that? These are stats, hard, hard figures, talking about what is actually going on in this country. There are two million Canadians going to the food bank just so they can feed their family. Does the government not think this is a problem? Should it not address it in the budget? Should the government not say, "Wait a minute. Maybe we need to change course. Obviously what we have been trying is not working"? One would think that there would be serious reflection on what has been done, but there is nothing.

The NDP-Liberal coalition talks about caring for families. What it has done is the exact opposite. Under its watch, its failed policies have contributed to the worsening situation we see across our country. The budget is nothing more than a continuation of failed policies. There is no reflection, no second sober thought, just continuing on and barging ahead with the failed policies.

• (1210)

With nearly \$40 billion in new inflationary spending, it is no wonder Canadians cannot get ahead. As Canadians try to take one

step forward, the Liberal government keeps pulling them back two steps at a time. The Liberals are hurting people. They do not understand it, but they really are hurting Canadians.

Let us look at housing, for example. Nine years after the Prime Minister promised to lower the price of housing, of rents and mortgages in Canada, they have doubled, and Canadians are forced to live in tent encampments in nearly every city across Canada. It is cold here. It is -30°C or -40°C in the wintertime and they are stuck living in tents. How shameful that is.

Under the Prime Minister, Canada is building fewer homes than we did in 1970 when we had half the population, and housing is more expensive for everyone. We are not building houses. What policies has the government put in place that have actually disincentivized Canadians to build houses? Liberals should reflect on that and maybe change course.

From speaking to the members of my community, I know that parents are worried about the life that their children will have. Before the current Prime Minister, Canadian households earning the median income could cover the cost of owning a house. Roughly 39% of their pay went to housing. According to RBC, that number has now risen, and Canadians now need to spend 64% to 69% of a median income just put a roof over their head. That does not leave a lot of money to take the kids to soccer. It does not leave a lot of money for buying hockey equipment.

It does not leave a lot of money for kids to take their mothers to a Mother's Day brunch on Sunday. The moms out there should not be mad at their kids if they do not invite them out for brunch this year. They really would like to, but they just cannot afford to because they have spent so much on housing and everything else. Moms are tremendous people. They did not foresee raising kids in a country where they would not be able to fulfill the dream of owning a house. That falls upon the government, the NDP-Liberal coalition.

We need a government and a budget that are focused on addressing the affordability challenges Canadians face. The government has caused those challenges and only gives a facade of caring when it is down 20% in the polls. The Liberals are not doing it for Canadians; they are doing it to maintain power.

Let us look at the crime wave across Canada, an issue that is plaguing our streets and making life less safe for Canadians. Auto theft and violent crime are on the rise under the Prime Minister. Canadians are tired of the Liberals' catch-and-release programs that have led to higher insurance costs, higher security costs and a higher human cost. There is nothing but talk, platitudes and photo ops. There is no real concrete action.

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I recently put forward a private member's bill, Bill C-379, an act to amend the Criminal Code for motor vehicle thefts, which would lock up for three years those who have stolen a third car. It would not include a newcomer or somebody who went for a joyride and did something stupid; it would be for the third offence. If someone has been convicted three times, the individual should at least get three years. It is common sense. It would show action and that we are moving forward.

I also proposed that judges and prosecutors take into consideration that a crime was committed to benefit organized crime. For this, people would receive a stronger sentence. If someone is stealing a vehicle for third time, they are not a petty criminal. However, the NDP-Liberal coalition has indicated that it is going to vote against the bill. This is an example of making photo ops and not taking action, but again they do not listen. They are not reacting to what Canadians need; they are doing what they think their failed policies are filling in, and they are continuing with failed policies.

All the Liberals have done is photo ops and more photo ops. It is real people, whose cars are being stolen and who are victims of violent crime and extortion, who are feeling the impact. The budget fails to treat the crime wave as the epidemic it really is across this country. It is one thing to host a summit, but it is another thing to implement meaningful legislation, which the budget would not.

I would like to talk about the \$61 billion in new inflationary spending that will end up costing every Canadian an extra \$3,687 a year. Both the Bank of Canada and former Liberal finance minister John Manley told the Prime Minister that he was pressing on the inflationary gas pedal with his spending that balloons interest rates, but the Prime Minister did not listen. It is not a surprise. Even the former Liberal governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge, warned the Liberals that their spending is making it harder to bring down interest rates, but again the Prime Minister did not listen. As a result, the Bank of Canada went on the most aggressive interest rate hike campaign in its history.

• (1215)

As the millions of Canadians renewing their mortgages know, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost, and struggling families cannot afford the higher taxes that come with him, so when it comes to this budget, I will not be voting for it. This budget missed the mark in so many ways. The Liberals had a huge opportunity to get things right, and for the ninth time in a row, they failed.

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was listening to the hon. member's speech when he was talking about auto thefts, which was interesting as the hon. member voted against increased penalties for auto theft back in the 42nd Parliament. The member and a lot of Conservatives mention mandatory minimums time after time. It is a very American-style justice.

Can the member point to any jurisdiction in the United States that uses that type of policy? Is that jurisdiction safer than it is here in Canada?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the Liberals seem to be more interested in American-style politics

than in listening to constituents, like the constituents in the riding of Prince Albert.

My constituents tell me that they do not want those repeat offenders back out on the streets. They want to see concrete action. They also say that the judicial system is not doing its job, putting these people behind bars. That is why the constituents are asking for mandatory minimums. That is why they have instructed me to come to Ottawa on their behalf and to put something in place that does something concrete to stop this problem.

What does the Liberal government do? It looks to the U.S. Do not look at the U.S.; Liberal members should talk to their constituents and should ask them what they want. The Liberal members will be surprised. The constituents will say that they do not want their car stolen for the third time. They do not want to be threatened in their homes. They do not want to leave their keys in the ashtray by the door because the current government will do nothing to stop it.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am quite fascinated by the dramatics of the member's intervention and by just how much disinformation is shared in the Conservative interventions I have heard since I have been elected.

What I heard from the MP is about the privilege he has always had in his life and about the privilege he continues to push forward, especially when he was talking about housing. He spoke about how they have always had housing and about how housing was always available to them, compared to what my constituents are forced to endure. For them, housing is very much a privilege, and it is a benefit of employment. It is not something that is very easy to come by.

I think the reality is that everyone in the House has power. The Conservatives saying that only the Liberals or the NDP have power is such disinformation.

Will the member commit to using his power, beyond just slogans, so that the policies we pass in the House actually make a difference for all Canadians?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, that is a good, sincere question. We are privileged to live in Canada. We are. We are privileged to own a house. We are privileged to represent Canadians, in Canada, in a democracy, here in the House, to take advantage of that democracy and to bring their views to the House of Commons. We have the right to choose whether we are going to vote against or for the budget, based on the directions from our constituents.

If the member went back to her riding right now, would her constituents endorse this budget? Would they tell the NDP to vote with the Liberal government, at all costs, to keep it in power? I do not think so. If she were to go back to her riding, with the privilege she has to represent them, and if she were to ask them what she should do, they would say to vote against this budget.

The Liberals have done nothing for housing in the north. They have done nothing to deal with addictions in the north. They have done nothing to deal with the cost of food in the north. What have they delivered to the north? They have delivered nothing, and the member recognizes that.

I would like to help the member see a better way forward, but I cannot do it in opposition. I can only do it under a government led by the Conservative Party of Canada because we have the policies to deal with those issues. If she is really representing her riding, she would break ranks with the NDP and would vote this budget down.

• (1220)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Governor of the Bank of Canada has said that pouring more deficit spending is like pouring more gas on the inflationary fire, but this budget pours another \$40 billion on.

Could the member describe the impacts of that to people across the country?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, that is such a big issue. I will use a very simple example. Interest rates go up. Mortgage rates go up. For their mortgage now, people pay more interest costs. Therefore, instead of paying, let us say, \$3,000 or \$2,000 a month, now they are paying \$3,000 or \$4,000 a month. That is after-tax dollars taken out of their pockets just for interest costs. That is because of the inflation policy.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have the dubious pleasure of addressing Bill C-69 and the implementation of the budget. No one will be surprised to hear that I was quite astonished when I read the budget. I am a member of the Bloc Québécois, a member who believes in Quebec independence, and yet the sheer amount of government interference in provincial areas of jurisdiction managed to exceed even my expectations.

The budget shows how shameless the government is about spending money in areas under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. It is so shameless that I felt ashamed just reading it, because it demonstrated what I have said many times over the years—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Jonquière on a point of order.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I am certainly not ashamed to say that I think the member will be sharing her time with me.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Manicouagan.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, I surely mentioned it at some point, perhaps at the end of my speech. I will be sharing my time with the member for Jonquière. I could have shared it with the member for Winnipeg North, but I decided to go with the member for Jonquière.

I was talking about something that I have mentioned here in the House on many occasions in recent years: The government's lack of vision, which makes the government feel obligated to work in areas that do not fall under its own jurisdiction and to neglect its own duties in favour of other things. That is having an impact on the ground.

As members of Parliament, we talk with people in our ridings. These are often very informal discussions. People ask us questions in good faith, as sometimes happens in the House. They ask us what the legacy of this government, which has been in office for

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three consecutive terms, will be. They often mention 2017 and the Cannabis Act. Apart from that, I want to more formally ask this question: What kind of legacy will the Liberals leave after all those years in office or even with this budget? For me, that is what is still missing from this budget.

Obviously, the budget contains several measures. There are 650 pages of measures. That is a lot of measures. At the same time, as many have said, we get the impression that the budget is all over the place. Let me get back to the thrust of the budget. Is there anything in there that provides direction, some orientation? It talks about the future and vision. The fact is that the future presupposes a vision and vice versa. There is nothing like that in the budget.

There is also the issue of government responsibilities. I would like to point out that it is the same thing when we discuss certain bills in the House, for example defence bills. We do not talk about that often. We could also mention fisheries and oceans and international trade. They too are absent. There is little to no trace of these issues in the speeches and bills in the House. In short, everything under federal jurisdiction is missing.

I said I was surprised, but I was actually shocked. I said that the government went further than it usually goes. The government can spend because it collects more money than it needs to fulfill its responsibilities. If it is not working on its own areas of responsibility, maybe that is because it has too much money. As a result, it spends in Quebec and provincial jurisdictions.

This time there is no unconditional opting out. There are conditions. For example, Quebec will not be able to get money from the federal government to manage its own areas of jurisdiction.

The Prime Minister even criticized the provinces, Quebec and elected municipal officials. He is playing king. The analogy may be shaky, but it is still an analogy. The Prime Minister decides for everyone. He is the only one with sound judgment and good ideas. He can do the job of everyone working at their own level of government. Everyone knows that I would rather have only two levels, the municipal and Quebec. I am truly shocked. Obviously, I will be voting against the budget implementation bill.

I would also like to comment on the budget's title. I mentioned earlier that the budget's measures are all over the place. The budget's title mentions fairness for every generation. That is one way of putting together measures that are neither cohesive nor coherent. It does not stand up.

However, we in the Bloc continue to hammer home that we oppose discrimination against seniors. It would have been easy to include a provision in the budget stipulating that all seniors, even those under the age of 75, would receive the same old age security increase. That is not the case right now. They talk about fairness. I agree, it is a praiseworthy concept.

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• (1225)

To be sure, we want every generation to have pretty much the same opportunities, but this is phony. It is phony because I believe that what seniors in my region want is to no longer be discriminated against. What is being proposed still discriminates against them. Therefore, in my view, the objective of abolishing all intergenerational inequities is not being met. This point is very important for the Bloc Québécois and for seniors. We are speaking up for our people.

The same goes for young people when it comes to fossil fuels. Who will bear the brunt of climate change and rising temperatures? That would be our young people, including those who live in my region. I could speak for my riding, and I know young people well—I have several at home, as a matter of fact. As for climate change, young people think it makes no sense at all to buy a pipeline and spend billions of dollars on a form of energy that we should have replaced yesterday, never mind today.

I do not want to be told about equality of opportunity. The industrial development of the past two centuries has brought us to an absolutely untenable place. What the government is doing makes no sense at all. They are speeding up rather than applying the brakes. There is no equity here.

I would also talk about regional equity. Yes, there is a generational element, but there are disparities throughout the territory. There are some members here, even from other parties, who spoke about it a bit earlier. For example, my colleague from Nunavut spoke about the north. I represent a rural riding rich in natural resources. Most of the time, I am unable to travel home. I have to drive 10, 15, 20 or even 30 hours to get somewhere where I get on a snowmobile or some other form of transportation to get home. It is nearly impossible to get there. These are northern regions and we are not really talking about fishing. I am talking about a resource-rich region, of course. We have the mining sector, which is very rich, but fishery workers are often people who struggle to make ends meet. There are many examples. I mentioned six, I believe.

There is also the issue of nutrition north Canada. There were discussions about food. There were already problems with costs. It is all well and good to talk about inflation or food banks, but when it comes to the Lower North Shore, when it comes to Shefferville, that is a whole different story. That too needs improvement.

I could give many, many examples like that. As for employment insurance, it is the same thing. If we are talking about equity, we should think about what that means for the regions as well.

I heard the parliamentary secretary talk about the whole issue of rural regions, but that is not going to cut it. What the government is offering does not correspond to what the people in my riding want.

I think it is unfortunate when parties decide to govern based not on their duties, but on their interests, particularly their electoral interests. There are several measures in this budget that are not ready to be implemented. These are really measures that will be implemented after 2025, in other words, after the next election.

Again, I will be voting against the bill. Maybe I do have something in common with the government after all, because I too would

like one government to be responsible for every jurisdiction, but I want it to be the government of an independent Quebec.

• (1230)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am increasingly concerned that the Bloc Québécois is continuing to work hand in hand with the government. We are increasingly seeing the Bloc Québécois become more centralized and more willing to prop up the federal government.

My question is this. Will the Bloc Québécois, which is working with the government, respect British Columbia's provincial areas of jurisdiction?

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, obviously, I think I am going to make my colleague happier than he sounded when he was asking the question, because we voted against the budget. We voted against the ways and means motion. I think he will be happy to hear that.

Obviously, we will respect British Columbia's jurisdictions because the Bloc Québécois is not a party that is against common sense. It is a party that works toward Quebec's independence.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, let me start by thanking my colleague for not sharing her time with the member for Winnipeg North. Everyone in the House appreciated that.

I would like to hear what she has to say about a topic that has come up a lot, namely pharmacare.

Quebec already has a pharmacare plan, but it is a hybrid public-private system. It has its shortcomings. It was cutting edge at the time, but now it needs an overhaul. All of the studies say that universal public pharmacare would help control and lower the price of drugs and would generate savings for everyone, including workers, employers and the health care system too.

This budget contains a first step for diabetes medications and contraceptives. That is something that the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux and the Centrale des syndicats du Québec have been asking for.

We are in favour of the right to opt out with compensation for Quebec, but does my colleague not agree that we need a universal public plan, whether at the federal or Quebec level, to control and maintain drug prices?

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, as members know, the Bloc Québécois is not opposed to good ideas. Our party is in favour of equity, if not equality.

However, the merits of this measure were not proven to the National Assembly, which overwhelmingly came out against it. I think that the government can make decisions. I am not sure if I should lump the NPD in with the group, because apparently there are all sorts of coalitions going on here. I am finding this out every day. It is somewhat disorienting. All jokes aside, the government needs to open a dialogue with Quebec and the provinces.

As has already been noted, Quebec already has its own program, so we do not want to be forced to do anything. There need to be discussions. Something certainly can be done, but it must be done with the consent of the National Assembly. This is a step that cannot be skipped.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member is right. There are a lot of problems in this budget with regard to areas of provincial jurisdiction. I am thinking of things like child care, dental care and school food programs.

What is the government thinking? How can it implement these programs in Quebec?

• (1235)

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, I agree, the government should just focus on taking care of the things it is responsible for. I think that would be the most efficient way of proceeding. The Quebec government knows what needs to be done. Maybe it needs more resources. Ottawa is spending money in Quebec's areas of jurisdiction because it may have too much money. That is what we call the fiscal imbalance.

Ottawa should take care of its own responsibilities, and Quebec should take care of its own responsibilities too, with the resources at its disposal. I am not saying this will work, since Quebec would like to be in control of every area of jurisdiction, but the fact remains that we do not want our jurisdiction to be encroached upon.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that ghost fishing gear and marine debris are huge problems in our waterways. When fish ingest them, they carry the plastic with them. It is infecting our whole ecosystem, yet the Liberal government cancelled the ghost gear fund. My colleague supported my motion back in 2018, and all of Parliament supported it, to direct the government to create this fund.

As a coastal member, is she disappointed by the government's withdrawal of the ghost gear fund, despite the fact that plastic pollution is choking our oceans?

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, my colleague's question is a timely one, since an article published yesterday said that the north shore, where I live, is experiencing the consequences of plastic pollution. I am talking about the north shore, but in fact it is in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and its estuary.

Any measure aimed at reducing plastic pollution would be welcome. I cannot say "solving" plastic pollution, because that might be too ambitious, but at the very least, if it helps reduce or end plastic pollution, for both the oceans and—

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

The hon. member for Jonquière.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, there is nothing new in Bill C-69. It is merely an extension of the budget, so it continues to indulge the oil and gas sector and maintains this government's predatory federalism without any consideration for Quebec.

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My colleague from Manicouagan said earlier that we will be voting against the budget. I want to emphasize that. We will be voting against Bill C-69 because the atmosphere in the House has been going downhill for some time. The Conservatives are trying to lump us in with the Liberals in a very populist way. I saw it again this morning on social media, where the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles tried to associate us and the Liberals with pedophiles, telling people to call our constituency offices. I find this shocking, coming from a party that talks so much about law and order. Instead, we should be talking about law and order and bullying. That is the Conservative agenda, but we will let them play that game. My leader often says that no one should ever wrestle with a pig because they will both get dirty and the pig likes it. We will not be doing that.

I was talking about indulging the oil industry. There is nothing new here. With Bill C-69, Canada is behaving like a unitary state and confirming its role as an oil monarchy.

Before moving on to the truly problematic part, which is to say the power grab that is the consumer-driven banking act, I would simply like to point out that on more than one occasion, the Prime Minister has said that people do not care about jurisdictions. However, a Leger survey shows that 84% of Quebecers want Ottawa to respect jurisdictions. Accordingly, the federal government is missing a wonderful opportunity to act with the banking act.

This legislation will federalize the entire financial sector and strip Quebec of its powers in this area. Rather than adopting a collaborative approach in Bill C-69, Ottawa wants to unilaterally lay down the rules that apply to banking services, an area of shared jurisdiction. As is the Liberal government's wont, it will give the big financial institutions in Toronto a significant leg up on their counterparts in Quebec, such as the caisse populaire. Under the proposal, the provinces will be excluded from consumer protection or privacy protection once the financial institutions interact with their clients through a technological platform.

To impose this framework, the federal government will need to act in three stages. It must determine the standard, task a federal agency with maintaining a registry of institutions conforming to this standard and designate a federal agency to serve as regulator, which involves verifying the compliance of the institutions on the registry. It is on this third point that there is a major issue jurisdictional interference. By acting in this manner, the federal government is interfering directly with civil law by regulating institutions coming under Quebec jurisdiction and by subjecting them to federal legislation.

This is evidence of what we have been seeing for a while now, namely the government's desire to behave like a unitary state, as though the federation did not exist, as though Quebec did not have its own powers. This is what we have seen with pharmacare. This is what we have seen with dental insurance. This is what we have seen with multiple instances of interference in Quebec's and the provinces' jurisdiction. It is Groundhog Day for interference.

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● (1240)

The same is true of energy. I said right from the get-go that Canada is confirming its status as an oil monarchy. It is also confirming its very cozy relationship with the oil and gas sector. What do we see in Bill C-69? We see yet another subsidy for the oil companies in the form of the infamous investment tax credit for so-called clean hydrogen.

As we know, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources is no longer interested in talking about hydrogen colours. Previously, there was green hydrogen, made from hydroelectricity, grey hydrogen, made from gas, and another one between the two, called blue hydrogen. The latter is made from gas, but it comes with carbon capture and storage strategies that are as yet unproven. The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources prefers not to talk in these terms anymore.

In Bill C-69, we again see a tailor-made program that would allot tax credits between 15% and 40% for hydrogen production. It is no secret that this is mainly for the gas sector. I went to Berlin with the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and we took part in a meeting with Siemens, a major corporation that told us that the idea of producing green hydrogen from gas was destined to fail. The Siemens people said that the state would need to take on risk, the risk of higher prices. As we are seeing with Bill C-69, the state will have to heavily subsidize the rollout of gas-produced hydrogen. There is also, however, a technological risk, according to Siemens, because the technology needed for this venture is not ready, and it will again take a massive infusion of public money to get there—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to have to interrupt the member, but I would ask the other members to kindly continue their discussions outside because the noise is starting to be a problem.

The hon. member for Jonquière may continue.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I was saying that the tax credit for green hydrogen is a pipe dream, according to a number of analysts who specialize in this area. Members may recall that the government announced its intention to end fossil fuel subsidies in 2023, yet in 2023 alone, it gave \$18 billion to the oil and gas sector. The government also said that a definition of inefficient subsidies was forthcoming, but to my knowledge, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is still unable to provide us with this definition.

Over the past four years, as we know all too well, \$65 billion of our money, and a significant chunk of the money that comes from Quebec, has been given to the greedy fossil fuel industry. Moreover, if we extrapolate the cost of the measures contained in this budget up to 2035, this greedy industry will end up with a cool \$83 billion.

I am a member of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, which met yesterday to study the appropriations. We saw almost nothing for one of Quebec's most promising sectors, the forestry sector. We have been hit hard by forest fires in recent years, but there was almost nothing to support small forestry businesses that will have to deal with situations that are, all in all, quite disruptive.

In closing, I would be remiss if I failed to mention clean electricity and the fact that the federal government wants to meddle in Hydro-Québec's rates. Ottawa is trying to meddle in Hydro-Québec's rates by saying that if it wants the 15% tax credit, it will have to pass this money on in the form of a rate cut, when we know full well that the rates are set by a board in Quebec and that this is therefore completely out of the question. Moreover, Ottawa says that a certain proportion of the people working on Hydro-Québec projects will have to be Red Seal certified tradespeople.

That means that if Hydro-Québec wants the tax credit, it will have to let the federal government select the employees needed to build Hydro-Québec's new infrastructure. This is completely ridiculous, and I do not see why Hydro-Québec should put up with these requirements.

For all these reasons, we will be voting against Bill C-69, and I hope it is clear to my Conservative friends that the Bloc Québécois is not in a marriage of convenience with the Liberals. Practically no one in Quebec is buying this narrative, as far as I can tell. Maybe they should pipe down and stop spinning this line.

● (1245)

[English]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question for the member from the Bloc Québécois is this: How much extra hydro energy does Quebec have, and what does it do with the product?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I did not fully understand my colleague's question. I apologize.

I can simply say that Hydro-Québec has never received support from the federal government to pay for its facilities, unlike the oil and gas companies who, for the past 25 years, have benefited from generous tax credits and completely unbridled support from the federal government.

As I said in my speech, these large oil and gas corporations are possibly the greediest players in Quebec society. In addition to polluting our lives and tarnishing our record on greenhouse gas emissions, they are making record profits while we continue to pay for them. This should concern my colleague far more than Hydro-Québec.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, in Bill C-69, there is, for example, the government's commitment...

Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. I cannot hear myself speak.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I agree. I do not understand what is happening. The noise continues.

We will check to see what is happening.

The hon. member for Montcalm.

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Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, if more members across the way attended the debate instead of lingering in the lobby, that would be better.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member knows that we cannot make mention of members who are present or not. The noise is currently coming from the opposition side.

The hon. member for Montcalm.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, the bill includes a commitment to introduce dental care and pharmacare.

The Quebec nation, speaking unanimously through its national assembly, told Ottawa it did not want this. What we want is the right to opt out with full compensation. We will enhance our own programs ourselves based on our own priorities.

Can my colleague tell me how a member from Quebec could possibly ignore the unanimous voice of the Quebec nation, as expressed by its national assembly, and see what Ottawa is going to do as political progress?

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, my colleague is completely right and he answered his own question.

How can anyone ignore the wishes expressed by the Quebec National Assembly concerning pharmacare?

I heard my colleagues in the NDP say that the unions were on board. I would like to point out to my NDP colleagues that many unions belong to OUI Québec, a sovereignty group. I do not know whether my colleagues are willing to respect the unions' wishes on that issue and support Quebec independence.

I would be glad to hear an answer on this subject.

• (1250)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois recently supported the major federal subsidies to build electric battery plants.

Why is the Bloc Québécois supporting the federal government's expansion in the province of Quebec?

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I do not know what my colleague is referring to, but there is one thing we will never support, and that is Conservative common sense. We will never support populism and overly simplistic thinking.

What I am seeing on social media right now is certain people posting half-truths in the hope that the staff at our riding offices will be flooded with calls from all sorts of cuckoo conspiracy theorists.

In my view, the Conservative Party is making this atmosphere of unbridled polarization even worse. We will never support that. That is for sure.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing is clear to us in the NDP. Access to dental care for everyone is a priority for millions of Quebecers. It is a priority for the four million Quebecers who have no access to dental care right now because they do not have private or public coverage.

We said we were coming to Ottawa to fight for this. We made it happen. We delivered on our promises. It is starting to become a reality, and we are very proud of it.

With regard to the Conservative Party's populism, my colleague reminded me that the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles is posting vicious attacks on social media and lumping members in with dangerous criminals. He is pointing people to the offices of Liberal and Bloc Québécois members. I think that behaviour is despicable, and I would like my colleague to talk about the fact that the Conservative Party is turning into the Canadian wing of Donald Trump's party.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, basically, it is very simple.

What I can tell the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles is that, if people in my riding office receive any threats, I will hold him personally responsible.

[English]

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time.

Three weeks ago today, the government's Minister of Finance delivered Canada's budget for this fiscal year. Today we are debating the budget implementation bill. In the current Parliament, it has been titled Bill C-69. That is a vile title. The last Parliament that lasted long enough to get to 69 government bills was the 42nd Parliament, the Liberal government's first Parliament.

It has been downhill ever since. The Liberal government thrives on divide-and-conquer misinformation narratives in order to keep Canadians unfocused on how much worse this country's prospects have become after nine years of aimless management. I say "aimless" benevolently, as if the Prime Minister and his flock do not actually know the harm they are causing the economy and the country.

However, I worry that it is much worse. I worry that Canada being the first post-nation state means we dismantle all that Canada has stood for, all that Canadians value in their institutions and all that new Canadians strive to be part of as they seek to build a new life in this once great nation.

After nine years, we are far less than we have been. Our economy is the sick child of the G7. Our international standing in the world has suffered greatly. Our friends no longer see us as a dependable ally. Our military is limping along, and we continue to underfund our capabilities in what is clearly becoming a more dangerous, less secure world. The world is now seeing more conflict than it has seen since the end of the Second World War, almost 80 years ago.

The Liberal government remains oblivious to what is on the horizon, because it is content to navel gaze and mislead Canadians about where we actually stand in the world.

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Bill C-69 still has a clang to it that has crystallized what has been misguided about the government from its outset. The last Bill C-69, from six years ago, was successfully challenged all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. There, finally, the constitutionally offensive parts of the legislation were overruled. However, that was a legal journey that took years.

It was as if it could not be foreseen and avoided. We had years of divisiveness in this country, of project delays and of holding back taxpaying sectors of Canada's economy while shovelling money out the door to well-connected insiders. We had years of economic destruction and of watching our closest competitors move forward in a rapidly changing world while Canada's opportunities were held back. We had years of the Liberal government feeding propagandists billions of taxpayer dollars to trumpet its recycled narrative, to no benefit for the country but much benefit to the pockets of connected insiders.

The previous Bill C-69 was a vile affront like no other, and this one can only pale in comparison.

Budget 2024, as delivered, was a 416-page document, with lots of back-patting and nonsensical narratives, plus a 74-page supplement. It was entitled, "Fairness for Every Generation." What a great marketing slogan that is. Was the title because excessive overspending would affect every Canadian equally badly? I would caution that it is particularly bad for young Canadians, those who are being saddled with paying for the cost of \$1.3 trillion of Canadian debt, which is growing with no end in sight.

How do we tell new Canadians or those entering the workforce, "Congratulations, you are now inheriting your share of debt for money thrown away by a spendy government that knew nothing about fiscal management"? It is \$30,000 per head, in addition to the provincial debt that, in many cases, doubles that number; their mortgage debt, if they are lucky enough to own a home; and their student debt, consumer debt and auto debt payments. Is it any wonder that Canadians are considered some of the most indebted people in the world?

Many times, I have clearly stated in the House that the metric the government tries to use, the debt-to-GDP ratio, is neither comparatively useful nor, in fact, honest. It tries to re-collect the amounts that Canadians have had deducted from their paycheques specifically for their retirement, both in the Canada pension plan and the Quebec pension plan. The government pretends that those amounts, over \$800 billion, should be used as collateral for the government.

It does not work that way elsewhere, but the Liberal government is content to mislead Canadians so they can use this in their justification of showing financial prudence. It is dishonest.

• (1255)

If the government's backup plan for maintaining fiscal stability in the future is to take back, and I should say "steal back", the funds Canadians believe belong to them, independently managed for their retirement, then tell that to them directly. The Minister of Finance should directly say, "Canadian workers, all pension earnings are our collateral, used to capitalize our overspending."

This budget implementation act that we are debating takes what was in that nearly 490 pages of budget information and puts it into legislative format, 660 pages of legislative changes to be addressed, debated and voted upon, an omnibus bill. It would be interesting if it had much to do with the budget, but as always, it is a mishmash of legislative changes, much of which have absolutely nothing to do with the 490 pages presented in the House of Commons three weeks ago.

I was really looking for the parts of it that were relevant to young Canadians who are trying to buy a home or who are trying to rent a home in a rising housing market with stagnant salaries, while inflation is making their purchasing power for food, rent, clothing, heat, light, education and the basics more challenging.

The budget was presented with much fanfare. It is called "Fairness for Every Generation". The government seized on the problem being felt most acutely by Canadians, particularly young Canadians, and presented an array of programming to address the real issue of housing, the inability to house Canadians.

The cost of buying a house has doubled under the government's watch. The cost of renting a home has doubled under the government's watch. Has take-home pay doubled? Absolutely not. As a result, the ratio of housing prices and rent to income has doubled in these past nine years. Housing is not just twice as expensive. The ability to fund one's home now takes twice the percentage of one's take-home pay.

Canada's economy has withered in relation to our peers. Nothing gets done in this country unless the government writes someone a cheque to do it: "Please, set up business here with taxpayer money." It will pay \$4 million to \$5 million per job provided, as long as it is in the right area or what it thinks is the right industry, flavour-of-the-day stuff, chasing what everyone else is chasing, risky business, taxpayer-funded corporate welfare and funds that will never be recouped in the economy.

I counted the number of initiatives the government would take to alleviate housing concerns, the most resonant concern to the public. There were 53 measures to address housing: building, financing, mortgaging, targeting, bribing, pontificating. I then went through the 660-page bill, and I found two points that were relevant to housing.

The first is the increase to the homebuyers withdrawal plan limit from \$35,000 to \$60,000. I would like to see the size of that target market, a Canadian who has over \$60,000 in their RSP and does not have a home. That is definitely not the financial makeup of the great majority of Canadians who have found themselves squeezed out of Canada's housing market.

The second measure allows the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to increase its mortgage default insurance limit from \$750 billion to \$800 billion. Remember, that \$750 billion was temporarily increased from \$600 billion in 2020 to deal with the effects of the pandemic, long passed. I suppose some temporary effects last longer than others.

This is \$800 billion of risk that the government bears for mortgages in Canada. That is in addition to the almost \$1.3 trillion in debt the Government of Canada owes money managers around the world or the \$350 billion of liabilities at the Bank of Canada.

Canada's federal government debt payments now total \$54 billion a year. That is more than the government spends on health care. That is more than Canadians pay through the GST.

The issue with housing is a cautionary tale. Housing should be a sound investment, one that holds its value over time, especially if the homeowner provides the proper upkeep, a store of value for years when incomes will be lower. It is a savings plan and it is a contrast to paying rent, where one's payments will always rise with inflation and the value accumulated is paid to someone else. Sometimes that makes sense, but most Canadians benefit from owning a home.

For the sake of young Canadians who hope to one day raise their families in homes like their parents did or like they anticipated when they moved to Canada, let me advise the government to listen to all of the voices that are telling it this, including the Bank of Canada governor: Get the budget balance back. Stop causing inflation. Let the economy grow, and stop punishing sectors that are not its chosen sectors.

• (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, where does one start when one hears a speech of that nature? We can tell it is drafted by the Conservative Party of Canada as it tries to mislead Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Let us compare that speech to reality. One of the things I raised was the fact that Canada is number one in the world in terms of per capita direct investments. That means people around the world, corporations around the world, are looking at Canada as a place to invest.

Let us compare the Liberals to Stephen Harper. In 10 years, the Conservatives created under a million jobs. In less than 10 years, we have created over two million jobs. Trust me and get outside, because it is not as bad as the member tries to portray. Canada is not broken.

Why does the Conservative Party want to try to portray something that is not true? Canada is not broken.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I will start where he finished. I do not think I used those words in my speech at all. However, I am a little offended. The member should know I write my own speeches. That was a speech, and he can come check on my computer, that was, word for word, written by me.

In effect, the Liberal government has destroyed the economy. Let us take a look at what he has put out as stats. There is no investment coming into this country without government assistance,

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which is in my speech. The government will give billions of dollars if one sets up a plant in Canada. How good is that for the Canadian economy? It replaces what used to be private sector money investing in Canada. That is now going elsewhere.

The Minister of Finance misled Canadians and misled this member when she said that Canada is attracting the most investment from around the world. Yes, some is coming in. Much more is leaving. On a net basis, we are doing very badly. I hope the member will look at that.

• (1305)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I only heard the last two minutes of my colleague's speech, but I heard him talking about housing, and that piqued my interest. The Liberals have been investing in housing for the past several years. The problem is that the government is not really investing. It is investing, but in the wrong places. Its plan is not working.

It injected \$82 billion into the major national housing strategy in 2017. In 2024, more than halfway through the strategy, we still need to build 5.8 million housing units. We know that the private sector alone will not do the job. Sooner or later, the government will have to invest or intervene in the market, in particular to build social housing.

All the Conservatives do is say that they will be making budget cuts and more budget cuts, but I have not heard them offer even a hint of a solution to the housing crisis since they started talking about the problem in the House.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about this.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, in the past, the answer to housing was to have a market for people who build homes and for the buyers and sellers of homes. It was not a problem until the current government came to power, but now they are saying that the government needs to do something to adjust house prices in Canada. Why is that?

I am sure that there is not enough social housing in Canada. That is a small problem in Canada. Consultants in Calgary are saying that 20% of the market needs social housing support. That is too much.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, it is great to hear intelligent speeches from the Conservatives. It is great to hear not all Conservatives take a "play bingo" approach to saying as many slogans as they can in their interventions, so I really appreciate that very much.

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In 2022, the RBC, the Royal Bank, invested \$41 billion in fossil fuels. In this time of climate change, would the member not agree it would be better to invest in renewable energies, in projects like the Kivalliq hydro-fibre link project, which would get Nunavut communities off dirty diesel and transitioned to more renewable energies? Would he not agree that what the government can do is make sure companies like the RBC are not subsidizing fossil fuels but transitioning to renewable energies for the betterment of earth, so we can combat climate change in a better way?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, my colleague's question was well stated. The issue with climate change and the issue with energy in Canada is that we need all kinds of energy. The energy sector is projected to grow by 160%, as far as the energy that Canadians are going to consume goes. We are going to need all forms: renewable energy, geothermal, solar and wind. However, we are going to need to continue to have that base load of hydro, nuclear and oil and gas in order to make our economy function and to make sure that Canadians have the basics of life that are required. It is the backbone—

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

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge has the floor.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the constituents in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge. I thank the hon. member from Calgary Centre for his remarks this afternoon as we debate Bill C-69, the budget implementation act, and the measures contained therein.

We have heard a lot of chatter today in the conversation about Canada's growth profile and where our economy is going, so let us talk about that and go down that path for a minute or two. First, in terms of the IMF forecasts that were released in April, about a week or two ago, Canada will be number two in growth in 2024 with a 1.2% growth rate forecast. For 2025, the economic growth forecast for Canada in the G7 is in the top spot, ahead of the United States, ahead of Germany and ahead of the U.K., France, Italy and Japan, at roughly 2.3%.

This is very important, because it means that we have fully recovered from COVID, which we know we have, and that our economy is growing. In terms of global inflation and high rates, I anticipate in the months ahead we will see some rate cuts from the Bank of Canada. That is my personal opinion of course. However, a lot of headwinds are past us. We know we have much work to do, but we are seeing now, from the IMF, from Moody's and even from the Bank of Canada governor, currently, what our prognostications are for the Canadian economy.

When we look at Canada's fiscal position, and I spoke about it in a debate a week or two ago, our fiscal deficit in Canada is just over 1% of GDP. When I compare that to other jurisdictions, including the United States, the United States is at 7%, China is at 6% and many of the European countries are at 4%, 5% or 6%, so at this point where we are in the economic cycle and the growth cycle, a deficit-to-GDP of around 1% is very prudent. It maintains our AAA credit rating, and it allows us to undertake strategic investments in Canadians because, as we know, confident governments invest in

Canadians and invest in Canada. That is what our government has been doing.

I will read very quickly the comment from the Bank of Canada governor on May 2, 2024, to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, it says, “growth in the economy looks to be picking up. We expect GDP growth to be solid this year and to strengthen further in 2025.” He also noted that “Overall, we forecast GDP growth in Canada of 1.5% this year and about 2% in 2025 and 2026. The strengthening economy will gradually absorb excess supply through 2025 and into 2026.”

There are some further comments, in terms of interest rates: “I realize that what most Canadians want to know is when we are going to reduce our policy interest rate. The short answer is we are getting closer. We are seeing what we need to see. We just need to see it for longer to be confident that progress toward price stability will be sustained.”

These are very important remarks from the Bank of Canada governor. As many folks know, I did my graduate degree in economics at the University of Toronto. I worked in the financial markets for 20-plus years in Toronto and in New York City, and I understand this well. I have seen many cycles, including the 2008-09 crash, the real estate boom and the tech boom and bust when I worked in New York City, so I have gone through those experiences, understanding full well macroeconomic cycles and the microeconomic policies that underpin them. I know full well where the economy is going, and the Canadian economy is going in the right direction.

There is always work to do, but we are going in the right direction.

As many may know, for a number of years I spent some time at a rating agency. Moody's on May 2, and I printed off its release, affirmed Canada's AAA credit rating. It says, “Moody's view [is] that Canada's significant credit strengths will continue to preserve its Aaa-rated sovereign credit profile.” We are one of only three or four countries in the world that has a AAA credit rating from two agencies. The United States does not have a AAA credit rating from S&P, I believe. The report says this is “underpinned by its high economic strength and very strong institutions and governance.”

As I read further in the release, it says, “these factors provide Canada with a strong foundation for future growth and a very high degree of economic resiliency to potential shocks, supported by robust monetary, macroeconomic and fiscal policy frameworks”, which is stuff I like to read about a lot.

● (1310)

It further states:

In addition, Canada's credit profile has very limited susceptibility to event risks, supported by stable political institutions, a strong and well-regulated banking system, and reserve currency status which underscores the government's deep and unfettered market access.

The next part is very important, and I know the member for Calgary Centre will appreciate this. It reads, “At the same time, despite an initial sharp deterioration in the government's fiscal position from the pandemic”, and that is when when we were there for Canadians and had their backs and the backs of businesses to ensure we would come out strong and robust, “Canada's debt ratios have since materially improved and the government is pursuing a gradual path of medium-term fiscal consolidation that will mitigate the impact of higher global interest rates on debt affordability and the sovereign's overall fiscal strength.”

The individuals who write these reports and do the analysis know what they are doing. They do it on a relative basis. They know Canada's fiscal position in the world, our relative strength and our economic outlook, and it is robust. Yes, we have work to do. Yes, Canadians are and have felt the pressure of global inflation on their pocketbooks, absolutely, but we continue to make those investments that we know will make a positive impact on the standard of living and on the lives of people not only today but into the future.

Let us just talk about some of those investments.

The Canadian dental care program has over 8,000 dentists signed up from coast to coast to coast, and tens of thousands of Canadians have received benefits. If there was one program that the seniors in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge asked for these last eight years it was to implement a dental care program. When many Canadians retire, they do not carry benefits into their retirement years, such as dental benefits, and they are forced to pay out of pocket for private insurance. However, this program is a game-changer, and we will see the benefits of it for years to come. Dental care is health care.

We can look at the national early learning and child care strategy, a \$30-billion investment over a number of years to bring down the cost child care to an average of \$10 per day in province of Ontario, and I have the privilege to represent one of the ridings in that province. By September 2025, on average, we will see \$10-a-day child care.

My family and I were blessed to have a child later on in our years. I have seen the savings that are being delivered to residents in the riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge and across Ontario. We are saving up to \$8,500 a year in child care expenses, and these are before tax dollars. It is a real savings.

We introduced the Canada child benefit, which is lifting hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. We are no longer sending cheques to millionaires. This benefit is monthly, tax-free to families. In my riding, it is about \$80 million a year the last time I checked.

In terms of growing the economy, ensuring that we see inclusive economic growth so that Canadians from coast to coast to coast benefit from it, we lift all boats in a higher standard of living. We are seeing the investments in the auto sector, with over \$46 billion of announced investments in a key sector of the economy, a key sector in manufacturing, in research and development, and in IP. It is happening.

We are partnering with the provincial government, we are getting it done. I look forward to attending more announcements, much like the Honda announcement, with \$15 billion being announced in

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Ontario's economy for manufacturing plants. Thousands of jobs will be maintained. Thousands of jobs will be created. These are the stories we need to tell, because we know that in Canada the best years are ahead of us.

We know that Canadians need help with global inflation, but I am optimistic. We are on the right path. We are on a path to maintain our standard of living and to raise it, and to ensure that all our kids, including my three daughters, have a bright and prosperous future in this beautiful country we are blessed to call home.

• (1315)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do agree with one thing my colleague said at the end of his speech, which is that Canada's best years are ahead of it. Unfortunately, it has to wait almost two years before it actually gets to that stage when we are going to get a better government and a better country going forward.

However, I will challenge the member, because he talks about how robust the economy is in Canada. CMHC, the government's housing agency, along with the Royal Bank of Canada, has said that less housing is going to be developed next year than this past year and the year before that. In effect, there will be less houses built since 2021-22. The number one problem in Canada right now is getting housing for Canadians, and yet we are not building them.

Could the member tell me why? Despite the fact that the government is shovelling money into the housing sector, we are still not building housing; there are no results. Does the member have any answer for that when he talks about the economy?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I will try not to make this partisan. I want to provide some substantive answers to the member's question.

Our government has stepped forward and is working with municipalities directly. The \$4-billion housing accelerator fund will see 750,000 homes pulled forward in construction. We made a \$50-million investment in the city of Vaughan, which I have the privilege of representing as one of the members. In the coming weeks, I look forward to being with the mayor and council, and breaking ground in infrastructure investments and accelerating building of high-rises, more density along key transportation routes, and our \$6-billion program to assist the cities with direct infrastructure funding.

We do need to make changes on development charges. We see that cities have become very addicted to development charges. It is an impediment to getting things built. We need to change that and we will help change that. We are stepping forward and in the—

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• (1320)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to give other members an opportunity to ask questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague just mentioned the federal housing accelerator fund. It is hilarious that the Liberal government had the gall to call it that. It took two years to make an announcement in Quebec under that program. There is not even a mention of anyone who actually moved into those units.

In the past year, I toured Quebec to talk to people about housing. People talked to me about a lot of things. Right now, municipalities are building housing units, managing zoning and issuing permits. Quebec and the federal government both have housing programs. Everyone told me that there are too many people involved in housing. We need to streamline the process.

The federal government has fiscal capacity. It could quickly sign cheques and send them to Quebec for social housing, but no, it continues to interfere and negotiate. With this budget, we will have housing in four, five, even eight years.

Is my colleague not just a little ashamed to call a program the housing accelerator fund when it is the Liberals who are delaying everything?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, the housing crisis is a problem not just in our country, but in many countries, including the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom.

[English]

The housing supply issue is one that all governments around the world are addressing, because they all face the same pressures. We are working with those provinces that wish to work with collaboratively, in this case, La Belle Province. In other areas where the governments are not as collaborative, we will work directly with municipalities and ensure they get their money in the ground and also build those homes that Canadians want to live in, to create a future for themselves and their family and to create those memories they wish to have.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am going to read a quote from Carla Lewis. She is the chair of the First Peoples' Cultural Council in British Columbia. She cites:

Generations of oppressive and assimilationist federal and provincial policies have aimed to wipe out First Nations languages. Through dedication and hard work, our people have fought for language rights to keep our languages alive. But many of our languages have few speakers left and most fluent speakers are elderly. Our languages hold our culture, history and ways of being. We can't over-emphasize the urgency of the situation...

She is referring to the fact that last year the FPCC received \$43.3 million in federal funding. This year in the budget, it is expected to receive only half of the funding. This is putting language learning at risk, despite the fact that we have seen a 20% increase in the number of people who are learning their language. It is also following the federal Indigenous Languages Act, Bill C-91, which Tla-o-qui-aht—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I need to give the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodridge an opportunity to answer the question.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni for raising very important this issue. We know the heritage and language of any cultural group is at the grassroots of maintaining it and we need to ensure it is flourishing. We know the relationship with indigenous peoples is the most important relationship we have as a government. We need to continue to put in place policies that continue down the path of reconciliation, one of them being supporting indigenous peoples' language and culture the best that we can.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I will be splitting my time with the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Before I start my speech, I would like to send happy birthday wishes to my best friend, Christa Kunuk in Iqaluit. I miss her dearly. I cannot wait to see her when I get home for the riding week.

I rise on behalf of Nunavut with what feels like the weight of the world on my shoulders. This weight significantly increased when, on April 16 in her budget speech, the Minister of Finance did not mention any of the following terms: Inuit, first nations, Métis, indigenous peoples. Not evening the word “reconciliation” was in the budget speech. I think of the number of indigenous peoples who must have felt invisible on April 16.

I remind all indigenous peoples what they voted for when they voted Liberal. According to the Liberal website, these are the promises that were made by the Liberals to indigenous people:

Let's keep moving forward on real reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Let's come together to fight systemic racism. Let's find the real solutions to the real problems we face. Let's build a better future that gives everyone a real and fair chance at success.

On reconciliation, the Liberals promised the following: to confront the legacy of residential schools; to continue to work to eliminate all clean long-term drinking water advisories; action to confront systemic racism against indigenous peoples, especially in the justice system and health care system; to launch an urban, rural and northern housing strategy; and to protect the well-being of indigenous children and families.

The budget proposes more than \$52.9 billion in new spending over the next five years. How much of the new funding will go toward the invisible? This is not entirely clear, as the budget repeated many of the commitments that were made in the past. Much of what was in budget 2024 for indigenous peoples was a recommitment of past promises.

For example, the Kivalliq hydro-fibre link project announced in the 2024 budget was not new funding. I was corrected by Nukik Corporation when I mentioned in the media that I was happy to see the new investment in Nunavut. Nukik Corporation told me that those funds were announced back in 2019. The Liberal government has been making promises for five years. For five years, the Kivalliq have been given lip service.

During this time of severe climate change, the Liberals were provided a viable solution that could work in parts of Nunavut. During this time of climate change, the Liberals were given a chance to have Nunavut communities transition off of dirty diesel. On this solvable issue, what did the Liberals do? They made promises.

When will the Liberal government finally listen to Inuit, to first nations and, indeed, to the Premier of Manitoba, Wab Kinew, who supports this project? When will the Liberal government go from lip service to acting on its promises?

I take this opportunity to remind Canadians that if there is any party that is fighting for indigenous peoples, it is the NDP, not the Liberals and certainly not the Conservatives. The Conservatives would make cuts. I know this because when Nunavut had a Conservative MP, when Nunavut had the same MP serve as a minister in the Conservative cabinet, that government cut the much-needed Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

● (1325)

I strongly believe that making this cut resulted in ongoing mental health issues and substance abuse, which are pervasive in indigenous communities. Former residential school students who were progressing in their healing were suddenly abandoned when the funding to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation was cut. The cuts resulted in intergenerational trauma continuing to be a part of our lives today.

Too many Inuit, first nations and Métis experience hurdles to achieving the same quality of life as the rest of Canadians. Neither Conservatives nor Liberals are committed enough to ensure that indigenous peoples can heal. They are not committed enough to ensuring that indigenous peoples can progress in their healing so that talk of intergenerational trauma could be a thing of the past.

It is the NDP who is willing to make the passing on of intergenerational trauma a conversation of the past. It is because of our work, as the NDP, that this budget will make a difference for indigenous peoples. We started out with 25 MPs, and now we have 24 great MPs who are fighting for indigenous peoples. It is the NDP who hears, listens and amplifies the priorities and solutions that indigenous peoples offer to Canada. It is indigenous peoples who tell us their realities, and it is the NDP who fights for them.

We have been told by the Assembly of First Nations that the housing and infrastructure gap is huge. For 2024-25 alone, it is estimated that \$15.197 billion is needed for housing, \$1.4 billion for education and \$6.6 billion for infrastructure. We were told by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami that the infrastructure gap has reached \$75 billion across Inuit Nunangat.

I take this opportunity to thank my colleague and friend Daniel Blaikie, who was the member for Elmwood—Transcona. It was

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through his leadership and efforts as the finance critic that he showed great leadership. He collaborated with our NDP caucus. He pushed the liberals to ensure that the supply and confidence agreement would mean more results for indigenous peoples and Canadians.

New Democrats fought for indigenous people and secured funding for a red dress alert and for searching the Prairie Green Landfill, which the NDP MP for Winnipeg Centre has been calling for, and increased investments in the harvesters support program, which the Liberal government was going to sunset, despite its success. I will remind members that this program is run through the nutrition north program, which gives millions in subsidies to for-profit companies such as the North West Company.

We also fought for and secured \$145 million to develop greater climate resiliency and to deploy mitigation strategies that protect communities, and we secured support for indigenous policing projects and a commitment to introduce first nations policing legislation. It was the NDP who extended Jordan's principle.

It will be the NDP who ensures that indigenous peoples have the investments they need to thrive.

● (1330)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always interesting to hear the struggles of the people in the north. I wonder if my colleague could expand on what the need for housing is there and how this budget misses the mark.

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqagittitji, I will talk about the urban, rural and northern housing initiative because that is something the NDP worked really hard for. That funding would help make sure indigenous peoples have a say in what housing will be for first nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

Without that \$4 billion, which we were able to fight for, indigenous children will be going to school tired because they are sleeping in overcrowded housing situations. They will be going to school with more health issues because of the mouldy conditions in their houses. Overcrowded housing results in increases in tuberculosis and other respiratory health issues. Therefore, making sure that we secure that \$4 billion over seven years is very important.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government is making us—

● (1335)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the same amount of time for questions and answers, if possible.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

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Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, at the NDP's instigation, the Liberals have often overstepped jurisdictional bounds. Now it looks like excess tax revenue will once again be used to overstep those bounds, including in areas such as housing.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that. Would it not be better for the federal government to fulfill its own responsibilities in its own jurisdictions and send the provinces the money they are entitled to so they can tackle the housing crisis efficiently and effectively?

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I think that Canada and the provinces are all settlers on indigenous peoples' lands, and all provinces and territories should always be working with indigenous nations.

I know that the housing crisis in Nunavik and northern Quebec is as severe as it is in Nunavut, and I hope that provinces, like Quebec, will work better to ensure that indigenous peoples are getting the housing they deserve.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, when my hon. colleague and friend from Nunavut speaks, she shames us all.

My partisan instinct might be to jump up and say, but I am from the Green Party. I want to be a good ally more than I want to make empty claims. I want to be there, as we all do, along with my colleague from Kitchener Centre, to stand up when it matters, to insist that we do more than use "land back" hashtags and that we actually pursue land back as a key step in reconciliation. We have to recognize that decolonializing this country is the project that would save settler culture people.

We have to fight together to create a fair country, and it is an honour to work in the same place as the hon. member for Nunavut.

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I thank the member for her allyship. I always appreciate it very much.

Because there are too few indigenous members of Parliament, we are always first to ensure that we can work with any ally who is willing to advance indigenous peoples' rights.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member can give her thoughts regarding the NDP's position on the price of pollution. Does the member feel that the NDP is still in favour of having the carbon tax and rebate system that we currently have?

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, the kinds of questions I get sometimes, from either the Conservatives or the Liberals, on partisan issues like that are really quite unfortunate.

I know that, for example, subsidizing major for-profit corporations is not something the Liberal government should continue to proceed with when there are too many indigenous peoples living in poverty and too many Canadians experiencing homelessness because of the opioid crisis. There are much better ways to make sure we are all doing better to address a lot of these issues.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, it turns out that budgets do not balance themselves. After nine years of the Prime Minister and the NDP-Liberal government, they are zero for nine, as they are not even coming close to balancing the books here in Ottawa. Not only has the government not balanced the budget at all, but it has also doubled our national debt to \$1.3 trillion and counting, with \$43 billion alone being added in the deficit to our national debt this year. That is in just one fiscal year.

The budget is big, a document that is a couple of inches thick. One can go back to look at the charts to see if the Liberals ever plan to balance the budget. The answer is no. There is no date, no year and no circumstance that the Liberals and NDP have proposed to balance the budget. The worst part is that there are tons of broken promises that they have made, which they have yet to fulfill, that will only result in more spending, driving our deficit up even further in this country.

This is important in talking about the budget because balanced budgets have been a part of the common-sense Canadian consensus in this country for generations, for nearly the entire history of our country. There has been an idea that deficits are the exception, not the norm. Deficits were timely, targeted and temporary. Previous Liberal and Conservative governments, for the most part, over the years, followed that line of thought. Instead, we now have permanent and painful deficits hurting our country year after year, with no end in sight. Back in the day, when I was a mayor in rural eastern Ontario, the same principle and expression applied. It was easy to tell people what we would spend money on. The hard part was how to pay for it.

What we see here are never-ending deficits, with budgets that do not balance, along with endless tax hikes, whether it is the carbon tax, being the main point, the excise tax or numerous other examples of the Liberals and NDP being more than happy to add to the tax burden, particularly at a time when Canadians can least afford it. After nine years, they still use the same tired lines when it comes to their budgets. They say the wealthy will pay, that the rich will pay for all these new things. After nine years, they are still not getting that average Canadians are moderate to low-income families that are struggling to get by. They are seeing the carbon tax and the excise tax being added for them, for example, and they are seeing the value of their paycheques becoming less and less powerful the longer and longer the Prime Minister remains.

Deficits matter as well because they require money printing. This is half a trillion dollars by the Bank of Canada. The Prime Minister, in his nine years, has doubled our national debt, more than every other prime minister combined in our country's history. They are still not even close, being \$40 billion off from getting the budget to be balanced. There is now more money being printed, and it is chasing fewer goods, which is resulting in record inflation that has not been seen in at least 40 years.

The Prime Minister has said not to worry as interest rates are low and it is not a big deal. Again, all that extra money printing has led to inflation. Canadian households have been hurt very badly by this with skyrocketing mortgages and rents. Interest rates have been driven up by this out-of-control inflationary spending. Food prices are increasing continually at levels that are unsustainable.

For the average Canadian in this country, at a time when the benchmark is that people should not be spending more than 30% of their household income on shelter, people are spending over double that. Over 60% of Canadian household income is now going just to putting a roof over their heads, before they buy food, put gas in their car or do anything else, just to make ends meet. Not only has all of this inflationary spending and the interest rates and mortgage rates that have increased hurt Canadian households, they have done a bad number on the finances of the federal government as well this year. Despite the financing of all this massive new debt with interest and mortgage rates all going up, the Prime Minister did not seem to think it was a big deal. The government planned to borrow the money when interest rates were low.

Since rates have gone up, as all this borrowed money and refinancing has renewed, we have seen an astronomical increase in the interest on debt-servicing costs alone. We spent \$54 billion, not to pay down the national debt in any way, but just to pay the interest on the \$1.2 trillion to \$1.3 trillion in national debt that we have. We spend more now on those interest payments than we do on health care transfers. We are giving money to bankers and bondholders, as opposed to more money to doctors, nurses, hospitals and long-term care.

• (1340)

The solution is simple, and it is common sense. It is a dollar-for-dollar rule. Conservatives have said that for every new dollar of spending in a Conservative government, we would find a dollar of savings. That is not some wild, radical idea. Look no further than to the U.S. It was Bill Clinton, a Democrat, then president of the United States, and Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the House of Representatives, who negotiated that deal. As a matter of fact, that same dollar-for-dollar rule was the last time the budget in the United States was balanced. It shows that it can be done here and, more important than anything, that we have to get our finances under control.

After nine years of the Prime Minister, the more he spends, the worse it gets. The more he spends, the higher our debt, our deficits, our interest payments and the burden, not only today but also on future generations.

I want to talk about the carbon tax. The carbon tax is the number one issue I hear in my travels throughout Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry and Cornwall. In this budget, the Liberals and the NDP keep their plan to be completely out of touch, extreme when it comes to their approach on the carbon tax. They are happy with where it is right now, which is about 18¢ a litre on the price of gas and 21¢ a litre on the price of diesel, and they want to quadruple it in the coming years, as part of their plan.

Here is the quick summary of exactly how they are going to do that. They never come out and tell Canadians the way that it is going to be and that it is going to be 61¢. We have to piece it together

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as they try to do the shell game and hide all of it. There is carbon tax number one, and again, as we all know, farmers will be paying \$1 billion on their natural gas and propane in the coming years, just on that, with no rebates. Trucking companies that ship food, goods and services get no rebates. Small businesses get no rebates.

There is no confidence whatsoever. The Liberals have been talking for years about offering rebates, and they will continue. There is no detail and no plan to actually do that.

At the end of the day, those rebates are phony, because the Parliamentary Budget Officer says that just on that first carbon tax, eight out of 10 families are going to be, or are, paying more in carbon tax. For example, an Ontario family is going to pay hundreds of dollars, \$478, by the time we look at everything, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

That is the first carbon tax.

The second carbon tax is a fuel standard that the Parliamentary Budget Officer says is going to add 17¢ a litre in the coming years. There are zero rebates for anyone, anywhere on that.

If it is not out of touch enough to have carbon tax one at 37¢ and carbon tax two at 17¢, coming in, then how out of touch, tax hungry and tax-increase obsessed are the Liberals and the NDP if they are going to tax the tax? They are going to tax the tax by continuing to put the HST on all those other carbon tax increases to get to 61¢ a litre.

I got a letter recently from the Army, Navy and Air Force Club in Cornwall. Do members know who also does not get a rebate? Community halls and community centres. They sent me their natural gas bill for just one month this winter. The carbon tax and the HST on it was \$275 of an \$1,100 bill, just to service that. Those are halls, community centres and legions that are paying a carbon tax with zero rebates, further driving up their costs, for just a simple not-for-profit cause in our community.

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I want to address the NDP, as we always do, and the budget. If there was only something they could do about it. We hear them in question period. We hear them in the budget debate. They complain about all the terrible things the Liberals are not doing, saying that they promised something in the budget and that they never delivered. They talk tough. The leader of the NDP made a speech a couple of weeks ago, saying that he was not in favour of the carbon tax anymore. Then, he flip-flopped and said that he was again. He flip-flopped on his flip-flop, if members are keeping track. The NDP talk tough in question period. When the first vote on the budget was called here within the last week, once again, the NDP propped up the Liberals. There were no questions asked. It is just the way it is.

It is time to call a carbon tax election so that Canadians can have their say on the future of this country. I have zero confidence, after nine years, in the Prime Minister to manage our country.

• (1345)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the member a question about the unbelievable fiscal management the Conservative Party thinks it has. He talked about nine years a few times, with nine years this and nine years that. The party in power before us, for nine straight years, ran a deficit. That is a fact. The Conservatives ran a deficit. Yes, they balanced the budget in the 10th year because they put some GM stocks and an EI rainy day fund in the pot to balance the budget, but they ran a deficit for nine straight years. That is a fact.

How can the member opposite justify saying that the Liberals are so bad running deficits through COVID, and other things, when the party that was in power before us ran one for nine straight years?

• (1350)

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, after nine years, it does matter. The member passively mentioned they have only been in office for the last nine years, as if suddenly now there is something the Liberals can do about fixing the mess our country is in. As a matter of fact, they are the ones who caused the mess in the first place. In that casual little nine years he talked about, they have doubled our national debt. They have doubled housing prices, and they have sent millions more Canadians to food banks each and every year. They have been taking more of people's paycheques, when they have been trying to stretch it out. Inflation has been at a 40-year high. Everything the Liberals have touched in that nine years has been a disaster. They try to forget about their record, but trust me; we are going to hold them to it.

Conservatives did balance the budget. We had a plan to balance the budget, and that has been the common-sense Canadian consensus for years. We are going to keep doing the same to bring down inflation, to control spending and to stop the out of touch and just reckless financial approach the Liberals have had for far too long.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, my Conservative colleague indeed is correct. We are going to support the budget. However, it is in the context of the fact that we forced the Liberals to live up to some long fought for policy positions, like a national school food nutrition program, funding for dental care and funding for pharmacare. We have accomplished a lot in this Parliament, including anti-scab legislation. I am prepared to go on that record.

What have the Conservatives done in this Parliament, except rage farming, sowing division and complaining all the time? They have zero to talk about when they go to the next election. I am well prepared to hold up our record as the fourth party in this place, compared to the official opposition.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, that is a perfect example of the NDP talking a big tough game. I cannot wait for the next election. Stop propping the Liberals up and call the election. Let Canadians decide then about the direction of this country, but no, NDP members are going to prop the Liberals up. The NDP and that member from Vancouver Island know that the idea of quadrupling the carbon tax in the coming years and that the chaos, the drugs and the disorder from their failed legalization of hard drugs in public spaces have been abject failures.

The NDP members talk about all the things they deliver, and then in their budget speeches, they complain about the Liberals never following through. Let us just dissolve Parliament, have a carbon tax election, and let us see if that member will even come back.

[Translation]

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on April 16, we tabled budget 2024. The budget promotes a fair and inclusive economy, an economy for every generation.

[English]

Pierrefonds—Dollard is a diverse riding, and as parliamentary secretary for diversity, inclusion and persons with disabilities, I am committed to advancing initiatives that promote inclusivity for all Canadians.

[Translation]

Today I will talk about the impact of the budget on my riding.

[English]

I will present how the budget promotes diversity and inclusion, how it addresses housing shortages and how it upholds international and humanitarian economic development.

[Translation]

The budget contributes to lowering the cost of living. Canada has a housing shortage. Our young people are also having a hard time buying a home. We are taking significant measures to address that. We are making housing more affordable for everyone. Budget 2024 seeks to use public lands.

[English]

We would create over three million new homes by 2031, and 250,000 of them would be on public property. In my own riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard, our government recently announced that we are building 393 homes or apartments by having a low-cost loan of \$165 million. Those 393 homes represent a 1% increase in housing to the riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard. That is very important to address the housing crisis.

I want to say that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Whitby.

Economists suggest that Canadians should not spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. We are tackling this housing crisis. Since 2015, nearly two million Canadians have found homes through federal initiatives. This is important. Our government is addressing this issue.

Also, on inclusive mortgages, the well-being of Canadians is important. It is critical to our government. We are doing two key initiatives to this effect.

The first is an inclusive and interest-free mortgage program. This program would allow Canadians of all backgrounds to enter the housing market. In particular, those of Muslim faith would have the chance to enter the market, whereas some did not in the past. This initiative would be open to all Canadians, regardless of background. It does look at the way in which mortgages are constructed to make it more inclusive. It is an important initiative in budget 2024.

We are also dealing with the security infrastructure program, also known as SIP. Our country has *vivre-ensemble*. We live well together. We have people from all backgrounds and from all faiths. However, unfortunately, there is hate and discrimination, which sometimes leads to violence toward property. That is why our government has the security infrastructure program, which protects synagogues, mosques and different community centres, including churches and other institutions.

This is, again, being financed within budget 2024 and would help to promote *vivre-ensemble*, to promote togetherness and to protect the security of all Canadians.

Budget 2024 also addresses diversity and inclusion. In particular, we have \$273 million, over six years, which would go to Canada's action plan to combat hate. This would directly support community outreach. It would address discrimination also. These investments are important to social cohesion. They promote equity within society. This new legislation would dismantle barriers and would promote togetherness.

• (1355)

Budget 2024 also announces a national food program. Over \$1 billion, during five years, would help families in need. It would put food on the table. I remember, as a young person going to elementary school, I would receive a small milk carton. That was an aspect of a food program. We are committed to ensuring that all children, regardless of income, have food in their bellies so that they can learn well.

Statements by Members

This program, the national food program, would help 400,000 children to have food in their stomachs. It would help a family with two children to get groceries, which represents \$800 per year.

We also have the pharmacare initiative in budget 2024, which is critical. It would allocate \$1.5 billion over the next five years to help people with diabetes pay for that medication and to help women who choose to use contraceptives to be able to have them. Those are important initiatives that our government is introducing.

Flooding also impacts my riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard. In 2017, we had devastating floods that ravaged our communities and that harmed families, and people lost their life savings.

Again, in 2019, we had flooding, unfortunately. This budget would help to address those concerns. In particular, we are offering a low-cost national flood insurance program. This would help 1.5 million homeowners be insured into the future. This is important, not only for my riding, but also for many communities that face flooding across the country.

I would like to give a shout-out to the mayor of L'Île-Bizard—Sainte-Geneviève, Doug Hurley, and also to the mayor of Pierrefonds-Roxboro, Jim Beis, for the important work they do to protect residents from flooding.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

WINDSOR LABOUR LEADER

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I recognize the accomplishments of esteemed retired labour leader Gary Parent. In 2009, Gary retired from the Windsor and District Labour Council, where he served 25 years as president, and from the CAW, where he was a financial secretary during his years of service at Chrysler.

In his retirement, Gary remained active, sitting on the Unifor local retirees chapter and giving a voice to the vulnerable. In his career, Gary elevated positive labour relations, earning many awards and accolades. The Windsor and District Labour Council continues to host the annual Gary L. Parent Labour Activist Awards in honour of his name and his legacy. In Gary's own words, "activism really in our community is beyond the four walls of a workplace and it means that people go out of their way to do a tremendous lot of work and trying to attain a better community for everybody".

I was saddened to learn that Gary is dealing with serious health conditions. For my 25 years of working with Gary, I want to thank him as he is a mentor and continues to inspire. Without Gary's advice and guidance, I would not be standing here, as his strong leadership and significant contributions to the labour movement, United Way and other causes in Windsor-Essex are iconic.

Statements by Members

I ask Gary to please know how much love and support he has from our community. As always, I stand in solidarity, brother Gary.

* * *

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a joy for me to be able to celebrate the great career and send best wishes on the upcoming retirement of a renowned educator from my community, Principal Francis Poole. Mr. Poole was actually my principal when I was in elementary school, and it will not surprise members to hear that I spent a lot of time in the principal's office. However, in those days, going to the principal's office was always a pleasure. Mr. Poole's warm and gregarious personality lit up the whole school environment.

When running for office and since being elected, I have had occasion to return to the principal's office, and I have always appreciated Mr. Poole's warmth and his sharp, candid advice. Thousands of families in my community have been positively impacted by Mr. Poole's career. As the principal of Strathcona Christian Academy, Mr. Poole's life and career are defined by his faith in Jesus Christ and the joyful way that he shares that faith with everyone he meets. As Mr. Poole would say it, "Blessings on you, my friend." May he enjoy retirement.

* * *

TAMIL GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to solemnly mark the 15th anniversary of the Mullivaikkal genocide, a day that also signifies the second Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day recognized by the Canadian Parliament.

As we remember the horrific atrocities inflicted upon the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, we honour the memory of the thousands of lives lost and the families forever impacted by this tragedy. The recognition of this day by the Canadian Parliament reaffirms our commitment to truth, justice and accountability. It underscores our solidarity with the Tamil community and our unwavering support for their quest for justice and reconciliation.

Together, let us strive to create a world where every community, regardless of ethnicity, religion or background, can live in dignity, peace and freedom. To my friends in the Tamil community in Vimy and throughout Canada, they can always count on my support to be a strong voice and advocate for them.

* * *

[Translation]

BERNARD PIVOT

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is a sad day for all lovers of the French language, because celebrated author and television host Bernard Pivot passed away yesterday.

As host of the TV show *Apostrophes* and its later iteration *Bouillon de culture*, he was a enlivening force in French cultural life for decades and helped cement French as the literary language of choice.

His all-encompassing curiosity made him the ultimate embodiment of a cultural, global and pluralistic francophonie. At home, his enthusiastic support for Quebec authors did not go unnoticed.

Bernard Pivot also succeeded in taking dictation exercises, often considered as popular as a trip to the dentist, and turning them into a social phenomenon. He taught us to love French in all its complexity and complications. Year after year, he would seek out hard-to-spell words like "sot-l'y-laisse" and "anacoluthie" to create an obstacle course that was as fun and playful as Bernard Pivot himself.

Mr. Pivot, on behalf of the French language, thank you. What a tragic loss for us.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is Mental Health Week, a reminder that taking care of our mental health is just as important as taking care of our physical health.

● (1405)

[English]

This year's theme, "A call to be kind because compassion connects us all", is an opportunity to have those important conversations with our friends, neighbours, loved ones and communities.

[Translation]

We all have a role to play in ending the stigma that continues to surround mental health and in setting an example by showing care, compassion and understanding.

[English]

From the new youth mental health fund to supporting Kids Help Phone and making sure mental health is a full and equal part of our health care system, we are making sure no one falls through the cracks.

[Translation]

Today and every day, we must support one another, choose kindness and put our mental health first.

[English]

ST. JEAN BAPTISTE CHURCH

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people of Morinville, Sturgeon County and Alexander First Nation suffered a devastating loss when the St. Jean Baptiste church was destroyed in an act of hate. This church stood at the heart of the community for over a century and was where generations gathered to worship, get married and pay respects to the dearly departed. Built in 1907, the church was a symbol of our proud Franco-Albertan heritage and was the place of worship for many first nations and Métis peoples.

Sadly, this destruction has become common across our country. Hundreds of churches have been put to the flame by ignorance and hate. While our Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantee freedom of religion, there are many in power who remain silent in the face of these acts of terror.

Our community will not be intimidated by hatred and violence. We will persevere and we will thrive. On May 31, the people of St. Jean Baptiste will come together and dedicate the land in advance of the rebuilding of our beloved church. May this sanctuary, which stood for over a century, rise from the ashes and once again take its place at the heart of our beloved community.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA

Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May 17 is the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

In 2003, Montreal's Fondation Émergence created the very first national day against homophobia. This day is now observed in over a hundred countries, including Canada.

We often hear that progress is being made when it comes to LGBTQ+ rights. While this is true, we also know that the rise of anti-LGBTQ+ hate has become more apparent in every region of the world. It is more important than ever to speak out against attempts to roll back the rights of LGBTQ+ people.

This is why recognizing May 17, both here and abroad, is as important and relevant as ever. We must continue to educate and inform the public and raise their awareness of the realities that sexual- and gender-diverse people face so that LGBTQ+ rights are promoted, not rolled back.

* * *

[English]

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for over 28 years, Niagara residents have had the pleasure of starting our days with Tim Denis at 610 CKTB.

Not all of us like being awake at 6 a.m., but Tim's friendly voice and passion for Niagara always kept us tuning in. From his humble beginnings in a room with just a telephone and a mic to becoming a

Statements by Members

pillar of the community today, Tim has shown unwavering dedication. Whether it was staying on air for 48 hours after 9/11 or broadcasting alone through the pandemic, Tim's commitment to keeping us informed and engaged has never faltered. He did not just talk about the news; he became part of the fabric of our lives, highlighting what matters and involving himself in many local charities over the last three decades. His show was a town hall where every voice could be heard, even the occasional lowly member of Parliament.

We are saying goodbye to a beloved voice on our radios and thank him for his years of service. Mornings will not be the same without Tim. We thank him for being our voice, our friend and our morning companion. I hope he enjoys every moment of his well-deserved retirement.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, #CompassionConnects is CMHA's hashtag and theme of this year's Mental Health Week. While empathy is about understanding another's experience, compassion is about action. Actually, 92% of Canadians claim to be compassionate, but only 38% take action.

Canada has one of the highest rates of adolescent suicide. The federal government's role should be action. One of the best actionable items we can and should do as parliamentarians is make life affordable. When the economy is weak, social services suffer and wait times skyrocket. Teens are waiting up to 18 months to see a mental health professional. That is a lifetime for a teen. Frontline workers are burnt out. The helpers need help. It is important to meet people where they are at, but it is not compassionate to leave them there.

Conservatives are committed to action, including investing in healing, treatment and recovery centres across this country and restoring trust and purpose to the Canadian people. Our mental health depends on it.

* * *

● (1410)

NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Benjamin Storm for being selected to join the National Youth Orchestra for its 2024 Horizons Tour.

Statements by Members

Each year, the orchestra auditions 500 young musicians aged 16 to 28 for this prestigious opportunity. Those selected are provided with professional mentorship, a scholarship and the chance to share their music across the country. Benjamin will showcase his talent on the trombone in eight Canadian cities. His hard work and dedication serve as an inspiration to young people and musicians right across this country.

On behalf of our community, I want to extend warm congratulations to Benjamin on this opportunity. I wish all my best to all the other young musicians who are joining in this adventure.

I invite all Canadians to come out and see the National Youth Orchestra, which will be playing in Toronto on July 19 at Koerner Hall.

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CARBON TAX

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, we continue to see the carbon tax increases escalate the cost of food. Over two million Canadians are now using food banks, and this is expected to rise by a million.

Throughout southeast Saskatchewan, the level of use is exponentially increasing. While the Salvation Army continues to do tremendous work, on the radio, it repeatedly requests assistance for food drives to fill and replenish its stock. I thank the Salvation Army and Canadians for stepping up and assisting.

A new report by Canada's food professor finds that nearly 60% of Canadians are eating expired food so they can cut back on their grocery bills. This spoiled food is dangerous and putting Canadians at risk of illness. Unfortunately, until the NDP-Liberal government is out of office, Canadians will continue to pay the price of the Prime Minister's lack of leadership and broken promises.

It is time for a change. It is time to axe the tax and work for those who do the work. It is time for a common-sense Conservative government.

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[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as July 1 approaches, the housing crisis in Quebec and Canada is reaching alarming levels. Many people are no longer able to put a roof over their heads. After nine years of this Prime Minister, the crisis is worse than it has ever been. Many people will be unable to find a place to live in two months, particularly in Quebec, where, as members know, everyone moves on the same date, July 1.

Let us remember that, nine years ago, the cost of rent, mortgages and down payments were half of what they are today. We also know that the Prime Minister promised to lower the cost of rent while building more houses. After the more than \$500 billion in reckless spending he has added to the debt over the past nine years, with the support of the Bloc Québécois of course, Canadians and Quebecers just cannot take any more.

Men and women are going to be forced to live in their vans because they have nowhere to go and cannot support themselves. Is that the kind of country that we want? Of course not. We desperately need an election to get rid of this Prime Minister, because he is the worst one that Canada has ever known. He is not worth the cost.

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ARTS AND CULTURE

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Saint-Léonard-Saint-Michel is fortunate to be located on the island of Montreal, a city known worldwide for its spectacular festivals and vibrant cultural scene.

[English]

Our government understands the value of arts and culture; therefore, it is committed to making the necessary investments to see them grow and flourish. Budget 2024 will provide \$31 million in funding over two years in order to support festivals and performing arts series.

[Translation]

TOHU, known the world over for its high-quality circus shows and training programs, will benefit from these investments to organize its famous circus festival in Montreal.

[English]

Events such as these not only create a multitude of economic benefits but also strengthen our communities and contribute to the social value of art. I am proud to be part of a government that sees the importance of investing in our arts and culture and, more importantly, in our people and communities.

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DR. AMBEDKAR EQUALITY DAY

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to bring to the House's attention that May 6 was Dr. Ambedkar Equality Day. We are celebrating this wonderful event in our nation's capital with a historic gathering of citizens from across Canada.

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was a towering figure, both in his native India and around the world. From humble beginnings, suffering the abuse of caste discrimination, he rose to achieve the highest distinctions as a scholar, a lawyer, an author, a social reformer and a political leader of global stature.

Dr. Ambedkar played a major role in the formation of India; he was the prime author of India's Constitution and served in the first cabinet of Prime Minister Nehru. Throughout, he relentlessly fought against the caste system and untouchability, courageously advocating for equality and dignity for everyone.

Dr. Ambedkar left a lasting legacy of humanity that inspires us all to educate, agitate and organize for a better world. I send a special thanks to my friends from Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha on Gilley Avenue.

Jai Bhim.

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• (1415)

[Translation]

CANADA'S SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to be even more rigorous in their interventions because the scientific community is watching. Researchers from all over have come to Parliament Hill for the 4th edition of Science Meets Parliament. At the invitation of the Canadian Science Policy Centre, these rising stars in science and innovation have come to build closer relationships with policy-makers.

It goes without saying that gaining a better understanding of our respective realities will lead to collaboration, which is crucial, because science must clearly be at the centre of all the policies debated in the House. Today, I had the opportunity to discuss French-language science as well as research funding in the regions with Simon Girard, a professor at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi and research chair in genetics and genealogy.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to thank the delegates. I want them to know that Parliament is their home and that the door of Bloc Québécois MPs is always open.

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[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Prime Minister is not worth the crime, chaos, drugs and disorder. After the failures in British Columbia, he must put a full stop to the legalization of hard drugs, including fentanyl, meth and crack, in other cities, such as Toronto.

The Liberals can accuse us of politicizing, but they are the ones treating Canadians as pawns in a wacko drug experiment with their lives. The most vulnerable Canadians deserve hope and treatment, not more taxpayer-funded hard drugs. Canadians have two choices: They can side with Conservatives in the fight to ban hard drugs and offer recovery to those battling addiction or legalize smoking meth and fentanyl in parks around kids with the NDP-Liberal government.

Only common-sense Conservatives will end this wacko and deadly experiment. Let us bring our loved ones home.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOUNG LAVAL ATHLETES

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to an exceptional group of young athletes from Laval who outscored the competition to win gold at the 2024 Copa Surf New England tournament on March 10.

Congratulations to Alessio, Alexandre, Alexis, Ahmed, Adriano, Damian, Gianni, Ghilas, Jacob, Juliano, Ken, Kevin, Kouasseu, London, Lucas, Mohamed and Nicholas.

Under the guidance of their coaches, Michael and Santino De Seta and Anita Rinaldi, these young people demonstrated that perseverance and teamwork are the key to success. Their exemplary commitment and discipline are life lessons that will prepare them to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Congratulations once again to the AS Laval U11 team for this amazing achievement. They made Laval proud and did a fantastic job of embodying the values that we hold dear. Bravo to the whole team on this outstanding victory.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Montreal's mayor and city council have called for the legalization of hard drugs in their community.

Will the Prime Minister openly acknowledge the grave mistake of legalizing hard drugs in British Columbia, or will he try to repeat it in Montreal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when British Columbia asked for a pilot project, we worked with it and recently agreed to modify the pilot project agreement to better meet its needs.

We will always be there to work on a science-based and respectful approach with our partners, but we will not move forward on any project without the support of the provinces involved.

The Leader of the Opposition knows this very well, but he continues down his ideological path, the same one as the Harper government. That path was rejected by one of his own advisers as immoral and obsolete.

Oral Questions

● (1420)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister believe in the decriminalization of using crack in children's parks, smoking meth in hospitals or using other hard drugs on public transit, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe in working with British Columbia and with any province that wants us to work with them on this, which is why we accepted its request to modify its pilot project on exactly those issues. This is something we will continue to do, to work in a basis of science, around compassion and a medical approach, a health approach, not a criminal justice approach to deal with the toxic drug supply and addictions.

At the same time, we will not be taking lessons from the Conservatives, who continue to chase after a Harper-era policy that their own adviser said was obsolete—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an important question, because we need to know what the Prime Minister is going to do next. I just gave him a chance to indicate whether he believes people should be allowed to smoke crack on children's soccer fields or meth in the faces of nurses in hospital rooms. He refused to answer, which begs the question of whether he will try to impose the same radical and extremist policy elsewhere.

Once again, does he believe that people should be allowed to smoke meth or crack on children's soccer fields?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously no one in the House does, which is why we agreed with the British Columbia government to modify its pilot project to better suit its concerns.

At the same time, we have seen the extent to which the Leader of the Opposition will continue to try to use tragedies and ongoing challenges that Canadians and vulnerable people are facing to try to score political points. It is the same reason he has said that he will suspend people's fundamental rights and freedoms: to score cheap political points. That is not something Canadians want to see.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister legalized the use of hard drugs, such as meth, crack and heroin, in children's parks and in hospitals, and he will not rule out doing it again. This is not an academic question.

The City of Toronto submitted a 153-page application seeking “an exemption under section 56(1) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act that would decriminalize personal possession of illicit substances within Toronto's boundaries.”

The Prime Minister's government has been working secretly with Toronto on that plan ever since. Will he, yes or no, rule out decriminalization in Canada's biggest city?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we see the Leader of the Opposition trying to score cheap political points on the backs of vulnerable people to promote an ideology that does not work.

We will continue to be there with a thoughtful, compassion-based public health approach on the toxic drug supply. That means working with jurisdictions. When Vancouver asked us for an exemption, we said no, that we would only work with the province. That is what we did; we worked with B.C. The same thing goes when it comes to Ontario or Quebec: We will only work with the provinces to ensure that any projects they have go forward.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister refuses to rule out repeating the disastrous experiment that killed 2,500 British Columbians, because he strongly supports decriminalization, and if he got a chance he would do it all over again in Toronto, in Montreal and anywhere else.

The final question, therefore, is this: Even the radical NDP government in B.C. asked for the Prime Minister to reverse his decriminalization. Why did it take him 10 days and 66 more deaths to do it?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see the extent to which the Leader of the Opposition will make political attacks on the backs of the most vulnerable people in this country. We actually received the completed request from British Columbia only on Friday last week, and we approved it the following Monday, three days later.

We will always respond quickly in a science-based way when people's lives are on the line. The Leader of the Opposition is continuing to spread falsehoods instead of actually following the facts and caring for Canadians.

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*[Translation]***OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are having a hard enough time as it is convincing people that they are committed to the French language. I will spare them the trouble of claiming it is part of their culture. At the very least, the Prime Minister should take responsibility for one of his members uttering such a vulgar slur about our national language.

Will the Prime Minister at least suggest that the member step down as president of the Canadian branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, defending our two official languages is a fundamental pillar of the Liberal Party of Canada. We were the first government to recognize that the federal government also has a special responsibility to protect the French language, including in Quebec. We will always be there to defend the French language. We will always be there to defend Canada's linguistic minorities.

I realize that the Bloc Québécois is trying to pick a fight. Sometimes it succeeds, but we will continue to fight every day for official language minority communities.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is so oblivious to the political cost of his last response. Failing to ensure that the member resigns as chair of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, or APF, when he refuses to apologize for his remarks and when he thinks that protecting French is an extremist position, is a personal endorsement from the Prime Minister himself of the contempt voiced.

Will he demand that the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell resign from the APF?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a proud partner of the Francophonie. Unlike the Bloc Québécois, we continually show that we are here to protect the French language across the country. We do not want to isolate Quebec. We recognize that the French language needs support and protection across the country and, yes, at times with too much enthusiasm.

We are not trying to pick a fight. We will always be there to defend official language minorities. We will share our leadership everywhere in the world as a proud member of the Francophonie.

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PHARMACARE

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals delay, and the Conservatives block. Everything is expensive for people. Thanks to the NDP, diabetes medication will be free, which will help lower costs for millions of Canadians. It is appalling that the Conservative leader wants to take that away from people. The Conservatives want more money in the pockets of big pharma and less in the pockets of Canadians.

Will the government work with us to thwart the Conservatives' cruel attempt to block access to free diabetes medication?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very happy to work with anyone in the House to ensure that Canadians no longer have to choose between paying for groceries and paying for their medication. Yes, we are moving forward with free diabetes medication.

Perhaps we learned today why the Conservatives are so vehemently opposed to it. It is because their anti-choice leader allows his anti-choice MPs to argue against abortion and contraception.

We need to be unequivocal when it comes to defending women's rights, and that includes pharmacare.

• (1430)

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will not have free diabetes medication and birth control if it is up to the Conservative leader, and the Liberals keep delaying protecting women's rights. Reproductive rights are human rights, which include barrier-free access to birth control. Unfortunately the Conservative leader once again is attacking reproductive rights by blocking access to free contraception.

Will the Liberals help us stop the Conservative leader, his anti-choice agenda and the efforts to deny free birth control?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are happy to work with everyone in the House to stand against the Leader of the Opposition's anti-choice position and his anti-choice party. Yet again, today we heard one of his anti-choice members putting forward an anti-abortion narrative.

The reality is that we are delivering prescription contraceptives for Canadians right across the country. We will deliver diabetes medication for Canadians right across the country for free.

We are happy to work with the NDP and anyone in the House who wants to stand up for Canadians and for women's rights, unequivocally.

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FINANCE

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if one is under 30 in Canada, it is nothing but doom and gloom, according to Nanos-Bloomberg. Gen Z's confidence in their pocketbook is at the same level that it was in the first months of the pandemic. That is a 16-year low.

The budget the Liberals said was about generational fairness has turned out to be a monumental failure. Instead, young Canadians keep getting higher spending, higher inflation and higher interest rates, and they get nothing for it.

The Prime Minister was voted in by young Canadians. Why will he not admit that he has destroyed their future, step aside and let Conservatives fix everything he broke?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our budget is about generational fairness and investing in young Canadians: investing in the housing, the affordability and the economic growth that they urgently need.

Oral Questions

Do members know what else young Canadians need, especially young Canadian women? It is control over their bodies. They get that control with free prescription contraceptives. The Conservatives are voting against our budget because they do not believe that a young woman should control her life and her body. We will not let the Conservatives do that.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, cherry-picking data, spreading misinformation and lecturing Canadians, telling them that they are wrong, is a choice.

Millennials are telling the Liberal government that they cannot pay their rent, that they cannot pay for groceries and that they cannot get to work. Even the bank governor confirmed that \$61 billion in new spending is “not helpful” when it comes to bringing down inflation and interest rates.

When will the Deputy Prime Minister stop her inflationary spending so that young people stand a chance in this country?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the deputy leader of the Conservative Party did not clarify her own position on a woman's right to choose. Canadian women deserve to know.

Canadians cannot trust any of the Conservatives to actually tell the truth, because the Governor of the Bank of Canada in fact said that our budget was helpful because we stuck to our fiscal guardrails. That is what he said, despite Conservative attempts to portray it otherwise.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, interest on our national debt is more than we spend on health care. The Prime Minister is spending more money lining the pockets of wealthy bankers and bondholders than making sure Canadians get the health care they need.

On Thursday, the bank governor told the finance committee that government spending was “not helpful” in bringing down inflation and interest rates. When will the Prime Minister finally start listening and get spending under control to bring down inflation and interest rates?

• (1435)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yet again, this is just basic disinformation from the Conservatives.

What the Governor of the Bank of Canada said to the finance committee last week, speaking about our budget, was “I don't expect that it's going to have a significant macro impact relative to our previous [fiscal] forecast.” He said that meeting the fiscal guardrails is helpful. Moody's has reaffirmed our AAA rating. These are not partisans.

Our budget is fiscally responsible. Conservatives are simply not telling the truth.

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HOUSING

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is just not

worth the cost of housing. On Thursday, the bank governor also told the finance committee that housing will continue to be unaffordable into the future.

After nine years, the Prime Minister has destroyed the dream of home ownership in this country. Sure, they talk a big game, spending billions, but the results are double trouble. Housing prices are double. Mortgage payments are double and rents are double.

Can the Liberals not just get out of the way before things double again?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to accept criticisms from the Conservative Party when it comes to housing, when both its record and its plan demonstrate it has no interest in solving the housing crisis.

Its members are now campaigning on a commitment to cut funding for the programs that actually support home construction. They are campaigning on a commitment to raise taxes on new apartment construction that is going to help make sure apartments are available at prices people can actually afford. If we look at the record of the Conservative leader while he had the responsibility for the housing portfolio, we see that he got a total of six affordable housing units built across the entire country.

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[Translation]

FINANCE

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Liberal government, Canadians can no longer make ends meet.

The Governor of the Bank of Canada has said that this Prime Minister's reckless spending is making it hard to lower interest rates. Canadians are struggling to put a roof over their heads and food on the table, and the Bloc Québécois is continuing to encourage the Prime Minister by agreeing to let him spend \$500 billion.

When will this Prime Minister, who is supported by the Bloc Québécois, stop impoverishing Canadians with its inflationary policies and devastating spending?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear my colleague from Lévis talk about housing.

The right answer is that the Conservative leader built six affordable housing units during his entire term as minister responsible for housing.

The good news that needs to be said is that, thanks to the work of the Canadian government and its partnership, 205 affordable housing units were built in the member's own riding in recent months.

That is excellent news for the member, but bad news for the Conservative leader as the former minister responsible for housing.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is sad to see how disconnected they are.

Quebeckers are facing humiliating choices. Food or housing? Toilet paper or toothpaste? Soap or deodorant? How is that possible in Canada in 2024?

Quebeckers and Canadians deserve better. The Bloc Québécois and the Prime Minister are not worth the cost. Can this Prime Minister, supported by the Bloc Québécois, show a bit of humanity toward Quebeckers and end all this hunger, homelessness and misery?

The Liberals think this is funny. I think it is awful. They are laughing across the way. It is terrible.

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite incredible to listen to my colleague across the way who cannot even support our budget.

It is not complicated. Their plan is to make cuts: cuts in dental care; cuts in help for children and families; cuts in investments for seniors. Chop, chop, chop is all they know how to do.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a leopard cannot change its spots.

Yesterday, in committee, the Liberals revealed what they really think about protecting French. According to the Liberals, people who are worried about the anglicization of Montreal are extremists who deserve to be disparaged with vulgar insults, which I will not repeat. That is how the Liberals treated witnesses yesterday because they were talking about the future of French.

Is that the government's position, or did the member say aloud what a lot of Liberals are secretly thinking?

• (1440)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows full well, French is in decline across Canada, including in Quebec. It is an issue that we take very seriously.

Our government was the first federal government to recognize the decline of French both within Quebec and across Canada.

As a proud Franco-Albertan, I am here to promote the French fact across the country and in Quebec, period.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's insults send a very clear message to Quebeckers.

As far as the Liberals are concerned, anyone who cares about the future of French in Quebec is an extremist who deserves to have the worst insults hurled at them. However, yesterday's discussion was about Statistics Canada data. Those folks are not extremists, but their numbers are extremely worrisome for the future of our national language. People who are worried about French in Quebec are full of something, all right: They are full of common sense.

What is the Liberals' problem with the future of French?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will not be drawn into a fight about the French language.

We in the Liberal government have been clear for a very long time. We will be there to protect the French fact in Quebec and across the country. Not only will we do so here in Canada in the context of our duties as a government, contrary to what the Conservatives will say, but we are also doing this around the world. We can be very proud that the president of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie is Canadian.

I thank my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for his work.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time the Liberals have gone off the rails.

Let us not forget the member for Saint-Laurent, who claimed that Bill 96 would prevent anglophones from receiving medical care in Quebec; the West Island members, who threatened to vote against their own reform of the Official Languages Act if it better protected French in Quebec; or the Liberals taking pride in all their unilingual English appointments. These are the same Liberals who appointed a Governor General who still does not speak French.

Why are the Liberals showing such disregard for protecting French?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where the member was going with this, but our colleague here is a proud francophone outside Quebec who stands up for francophones. He stands up for French not only in Quebec, but also across the country, while the Bloc Québécois could not care less about that.

If we look at everything the Government of Canada has done in terms of funding for French, the Bloc Québécois should be ashamed because they voted against it almost every time. While they cave in, while they vote against what we are doing, we are standing up like our colleague who stands up for all francophones in Canada.

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HOUSING

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Prime Minister and the Bloc Québécois are not worth the cost. The more the government spends, with support from the Bloc Québécois, the harder life becomes for Quebeckers. The housing crisis will soon force Canadians, against their wishes, to move into their vans as a last resort, not as a retirement dream.

When will the Prime Minister, who is being propped up by the Bloc Québécois, which voted for \$500 billion in budget allocations, stop wasting money so that Quebeckers can start living decently again, in a real home, not a van?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Once again, I encourage all members to remain silent when an hon. member is asking a question and when an hon. member is answering the question.

The hon. Minister of Innovation.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are not going to take any advice from the Conservatives, who are flirting with extremist groups in this country.

Canadians know that the Conservatives are a party with no vision, no ambition and no plan for the country.

On this side of the House, we are aware that we need to help families and young people and that we need to invest in housing. Let me remind the people of Saint-Nicolas who are watching us that the members opposite voted against help for children, against housing assistance and against investments in Quebec. It is shameful.

On this side of the House, we will always fight to improve Canadians' quality of life.

• (1445)

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is not building housing, it is building bureaucracy with its \$500 billion in centralizing, inflationary spending that created the cost of living crisis and the housing crisis we are currently experiencing. Thousands of Canadians are in dire poverty.

Will the Prime Minister start building housing, fast? When things get so bad that people have to start sleeping in their van or car, it is because the Prime Minister is asleep at the wheel.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while my colleague is hooting and hollering as practice for his next appearance on *Infoman*, we are putting real programs in place for young people.

I have the 2023 figures for the FHSA, which helps young people save for their down payment. More than 645,000 young people have signed up, and they have saved \$2.6 billion.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this government, the housing crisis in Canada keeps getting worse. The dream of buying a home is dead for future generations. It is proof that the Bloc Québécois and this Prime Minister are not worth the cost. In Beauce, families who are lucky enough to have affordable housing still have to use a food bank to feed themselves. There has been a 20% increase in the use of these banks since the beginning of 2024.

When will this Prime Minister, supported by the Bloc Québécois, stop his wasteful ways so that Quebecers can afford food and housing?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, has the House heard about the six affordable housing units? That is the number of affordable housing

units the Conservative leader built when he was minister responsible for housing, during his entire mandate and across the country.

I am glad that the member for Beauce asked that question because he is a former mayor of a municipality in Quebec. Does he agree with the opposition leader, the Conservative leader, who thinks every municipality in Quebec is incompetent even though they are the ones building 8,000 affordable housing units with support from the Canadian government?

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HOUSING

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would invite my colleague across the way to come to Beauce next weekend and explain that to people and see how things work out.

The more the government spends, the more Quebecers are struggling. We are talking about \$500 billion in centralizing, inflationary spending that is only worsening the housing crisis. While Quebecers are struggling to survive, the Bloc Québécois has chosen to vote in favour of \$500 billion in Liberal spending. In other words, it is voting for bureaucracy and wasteful spending.

When will this government get out of the way and let the Conservatives fix the budget and build the homes?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party is using the most vulnerable people as political pawns. It is unacceptable.

The truth is that we are building 150,000 affordable housing units under the national housing strategy. In contrast, when the Conservative leader was minister responsible for housing, only six affordable housing units were built across the country. That is unacceptable. We are making investments to build affordable housing, in Quebec and all across the country.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Once again, I will ask the members for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier and Mégantic—L'Érable not to speak until they are recognized by the Chair to ask a question.

The hon. member for Vancouver East.

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[English]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during the inquiry, concerns around the participation of busloads of Chinese foreign students and falsified documents for the Don Valley North nomination came to light. The commissioner noted that Chinese foreign interference activities could have made a difference as to who was nominated in Don Valley North. The Chinese media reported that the nomination was won by 14 votes.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister cannot continue to pretend there is nothing to see here. Based on the damning findings, what action will the Prime Minister take now?

• (1450)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, far from not taking this matter seriously, our government has done the exact opposite. Our colleague knows well that we have put in place a series of measures now, over a number of years, to deal with the very real threat that she identified of the Chinese government seeking to interfere in the democratic process in Canada. All political parties, and not just at the federal level, face this threat. That is why yesterday, for example, we introduced important legislation in the House. We look forward to working with colleagues to hopefully pass it quickly.

* * *

NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, people in Nunavut pay hundreds more dollars in shipping fees than those in the rest of Canada. Amazon charged a Pangnirtung resident over \$700 in shipping fees. This is unacceptable. The Liberals are catering to ultrarich corporations by allowing this.

Nunavut needs a government that fights to take on Amazon's corporate greed. Why is the government okay with Nunavummiut paying hundreds of dollars more in shipping fees to get basic goods?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. We realize that the price of food is too expensive in Nunavut. That is why we have invested close to \$150 million in the nutrition north program, including \$124 million for the harvesters support grant and \$15 million for the community food program. We have \$1 billion for the school food program, which will benefit northerners and Nunavut.

We are committed to working with the member and with the Nunavut government to make sure that we make progress on this very important issue.

* * *

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has made his position clear: If he is prime minister, he will pick and choose which rights and freedoms Canadians can have. That is a slippery slope. There was the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in the United States.

[Translation]

Do Canadian women have to worry about being denied their right to choose? Could the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth remind the House of our commitment to defend women's rights?

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our position is unwavering. We will always vigorously support a woman's right to choose and her right to have autonomy over her own body. Conservatives say they will use any tools necessary when it comes to a matter of criminal justice. It was not long ago that abortion itself was a crime. We will not go back, even though, just this morning, a Conservative MP reminded us of the future the Conservatives want for women in this country. On this side of the House, a woman's right to choose will never be up for debate.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the crime, chaos, cost or disorder. Sixty-six people died, on average, while we waited for the Prime Minister to make a decision on B.C.'s request. The government dithered and people died. The government did not even go as far as it could have in getting rid of its aggressive, radical and wacko legalization of hard drugs.

Why did it take the government so long to reverse its course on legalization? Will it promise never to do it again?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, the Prime Minister dealt with that thoroughly, earlier in this question period, and we have amended our arrangement with British Columbia.

That member needs to answer a very important question. The Leader of the Opposition has now vowed to have an à la carte Charter of Rights where, today, he would decide what rights to have and what rights to not have. What would it be tomorrow? Would it be women's reproductive rights? Would it be the right to a fair trial? Would it be the right to freedom of expression? The notwithstanding charter-ripping policies of the current Conservative Party need an answer.

• (1455)

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister is not worth the crime, chaos, drugs and disorder. Across British Columbia, there are people strung out on drugs, often comatose or dying. The legalization of fentanyl, meth and crack has led to a tragic wave of death. The Liberals and New Democrats are panicking as their poll numbers drop. The public is fed up. Deadly hard drugs will still be able to be used with today's announcement.

Oral Questions

When will the Prime Minister stop tinkering and completely end his wacko drug experiment?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must remind the hon. member that the question was already answered. On this side of the House, what we want to emphasize is that a woman's right to choose and charter rights generally are non-negotiable. On this side of the House, we will always protect the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We will always stand up for a woman's right to choose, and we ask everybody in the House to vote in favour of contraception for women so they have autonomy over their own bodies.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the crime, chaos, drugs and disorder.

The Liberal minister responsible for the legislation of hard drugs, like fentanyl, meth and crack in British Columbia, is still clinging to parts of the Liberal's wacko hard drug legislation experiment. Public open drug use is rampant in our streets. People are even afraid to take their dogs out to walk around their own neighbourhoods.

On what day will the Prime Minister completely end this failed radical drug policy?

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. Today, we said yes to B.C.'s request for an amendment to its pilot project, the pilot program that B.C. asked the federal government to work with it with compassion, conviction, science and health expertise.

B.C. knows perfectly well, as do the advocates and families that are part of this project, that we need to have a public health and public safety approach to this to save lives.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that minister is still supporting hard drug legalization.

Here is how it is playing out in our communities. A resident from my community just told me about an incident she witnessed at a local clothing store, where a man threatened the two ladies working there, screaming, stomping and overturning displays.

I was on the phone the other day with another resident, who works at a street front office, and I could barely hear her due to the screaming just outside her window, and yet the minister clings to parts of her wacko legalization policy of fentanyl, meth and crack.

Again, on what day will the Prime Minister completely end this failed drug policy experiment?

The Speaker: Before we continue with the answer from the government House leader, I am going to ask the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby to please not comment while members are asking the questions. He does not have the floor at this time.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, the minister and the Prime Minister have dealt with that question. What is important is to review the past couple of weeks, a very disturbing trend in the country, where the Leader of the Opposition has re-

fused to disavow, to say that it is unwelcome to have the support of white supremacists. Then he goes and winks and says that he will make the laws and that he will decide what rights exist in the country.

What rights is he going to take away? What rights does he intend to take away? Is it women's reproductive rights? Is it the right to freedom of expression? He should stand up and tell us what rights he will take away.

The Speaker: Colleagues, the amount of time that the Speaker has to spend getting up to ask members who do not have the floor to please not take the floor is almost equivalent to a question.

I would like members to please make sure that we can have our question period move along quickly, that members please refrain from speaking when the members are asking questions and that members refrain from speaking when members are answering questions.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Drummond.

* * *

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when CBC/Radio-Canada CEO Catherine Tait decided to cut 600 jobs last fall, she wanted to cut as many on the French side as on the English side, without taking into account their respective performance or workforce.

Now, she is talking about bringing the programming and management of the CBC and Radio-Canada closer together because she wants to use Radio-Canada as a shield against possible Conservative cuts. They always look after the best interest of the CBC, not Radio-Canada.

Is the minister also prepared to sacrifice Radio-Canada's independence to protect the CBC?

● (1500)

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I have been saying since last week, since this story came out: French programming and content will never be connected to the CBC. It will always remain separate and independent. That is very important for the vitality of French in Quebec and across the country.

On this side of the House, we will defend the public broadcaster, whether in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada, because we know that it is important, particularly at a time when many media outlets are making cuts and we are losing journalists. The CBC is an essential service across Canada, and so is Radio-Canada.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the only immediate threat to Radio-Canada is not the Conservatives being elected, it is the president of CBC/Radio-Canada, Catherine Tate, being appointed and given an extension by the Liberals. She is prepared to sacrifice the independence of the French sector as a way to protect against a potential government.

If we say that this is a slippery slope and we need to protect Radio-Canada's independence, then the minister says that we are attacking the CBC like the Conservatives. It is ridiculous.

Whose side is the minister on, Catherine Tate's or Radio-Canada's?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why my Bloc Québécois colleague is trying to pick a fight about something that almost every party in the House, except the Conservatives, agrees on. Everyone here, except the Conservatives, stands up for a strong and financially healthy Radio-Canada. Everyone stands up for a strong and financially healthy CBC across the country.

We will keep working on this file while the Conservatives promise to destroy our public broadcaster and prevent Canadians from having access to information and quality Canadian content. It is disgusting.

* * *

[English]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, does the Prime Minister care that 42,000 Canadians have died from a drug overdose? The taxpayer-funded supply of hard drugs has destroyed lives. Addiction workers confirm that most users of so-called safe supply are diverting these drugs into the hands of organized crime. Criminals are selling these drugs to children. Overdose is the number one cause of death in 10 to 17-year-olds in B.C.

When will the Prime Minister end this dangerous drug trafficking experiment that profits big pharma and kills children?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that question has been asked and answered, but I will tell members what has not been answered that deeply concerns Canadians. It is that over the past few weeks we have seen the leader of the Conservative Party openly associate with white supremacists and refuse multiple opportunities to disavow their views. Then we saw him advocate an à la carte charter of rights and say that he would pick which rights people have. Today, we learned one right they do not support: a woman's right to choose.

This is deeply concerning. Canadians have a right to know.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have the right to know, when the RCMP is sounding the alarm, why organized crime is getting its hands on the so-called safe supply drugs and diverting them.

Thousands of these big pharma government pills have been seized. Organized crime is profiting from selling taxpayer-funded drugs to children, and, no, this has not been answered yet today, but the NDP-Liberal government is refusing to release the contracts that distribute these drugs.

Canadians deserve to know how and why their money is being used. When will the Prime Minister release the big pharma contracts? I would like just the date, please.

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that question has been asked and answered, but I will tell members what the Conservatives really do not want to answer. They do not want to answer why their leader openly flirts with white supremacists and refuses several opportunities to disavow them. They do not want to answer why their leader openly talks about an à la carte charter of rights. Today was the big reveal. One of the rights they are going to take away is the woman's right to choose, but we will not let them.

● (1505)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the use of hard drugs has become a common occurrence on the Montreal metro. Assaults, drug use and homelessness are a scourge. Metro riders do not feel safe. It is as though everything happening up above, the housing crisis, inflation and the opioid crisis, is having an impact underground in Montreal.

Can the Prime Minister assure us that he will ignore the calls from the Bloc Québécois and not legalize hard drugs in Quebec?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleagues have asked this question a number of times and it has been answered.

What we can say, however, is that the Leader of the Opposition won his leadership race by ensuring that he had the votes of Maxime Bernier and his far-right element, as well as the support of members of the anti-abortion movement.

The reality now is that he is delivering for them. He refuses to denounce the comments of white supremacists. He is here, ensuring that one of his members is very much at ease spouting his anti-abortion rhetoric here on the floor of the House of Commons.

[English]

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is Mental Health Week, and in a rapidly changing world, strong mental supports for youth are essential. By working with my youth council and stakeholders, I know of the mental health challenges faced by young people. There are many organizations doing incredible work to make sure that youth do not fall through the cracks.

Can the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions tell us what we are doing to support community organizations across the country in delivering more mental health care options for youth?

Oral Questions

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, youth are facing real challenges right now at home, in school and as they start their careers. Their mental health can suffer and community organizations, like the South Asian Canadians Health and Social Services in the member's riding, are such a lifeline for support.

We are creating a first-of-its kind youth mental health fund to deliver more mental health supports and care choices for youth in communities across this country. We know that they need it, and we will be there for them. We are investing in Kids Help Phone and the mental health of Black Canadians fund, because we know that we need to meet people where they are. Mental health is health.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at committee, the Minister of Employment claimed that he had been cleared by the Ethics Commissioner to receive payments from Navis Group, a firm owned by his business partner who was lobbying his own department, except that is not true. The Office of the Ethics Commissioner has indicated that it was unaware of the minister's connection to Navis Group.

Why did the minister claim that he was cleared when clearly he had not been cleared? Why did the minister mislead committee?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has answered these questions many times. The minister, of course, complies with all of the very stringent requirements of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

What that member needs to answer is how he will approach this new à la carte rights campaign by the Leader of the Opposition. Which of the rights in the Charter of Rights, 42 years old, is this member intending to take away? We know that the Conservatives have always hated the Charter of Rights. Which rights will they be taking away?

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister actively concealed his connection to Navis Group, hiding behind a numbered company. As a result, the Ethics Commissioner could not have known that the minister's business partner was lobbying his own department.

If there are no ethical issues with the minister's connection to Navis Group, as the minister claims, then why did he hide it from the Ethics Commissioner?

• (1510)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are quite understandably taking this red herring to try to distract from a very bad couple of weeks. What they have done is refuse—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I will ask hon. members to please allow the hon. minister to finish his answer. He has about 24 seconds left on the clock.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are quite understandably trying to distract from the fact that they refuse to tell white supremacists that their support is unwelcome in the Conservative Party. They are trying to distract from the fact that they have always hated the Charter of Rights, they have always hated a woman's right to choose and they have always hated the right to free expression in this country. They need to stand up and explain themselves.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, behold, the ghost of Paul Martin is back. When a government is drowning, it will grasp onto anything, but it continues to sink nonetheless.

Six years ago, the House and the government voted to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization and, therefore, prevent it from fundraising, converting or operating in Canada. Six years later, this terrorist group continues to operate here with impunity. Tomorrow, the House will vote again.

Will this NDP-Liberal government finally do what it failed to do six years ago and vote to shut down IRGC operations in Canada?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows very well, decisions to list certain entities on the terrorist listing under Canada's Criminal Code are made based on the advice of security and intelligence services. We do acknowledge, and I think all Canadians understand, that the Iranian regime is one of the worst state sponsors of terrorism. We have taken a number of measures to deal with leaders in the Iranian regime and are always looking at what further steps we can take to protect Canadians.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have launched and improved immigration pathways for Hong Kongers to make it easier for them to stay and work in Canada. However, applicants are at risk of falling out of status as they await a decision on their PR application.

Canada has always stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of Hong Kong. What is our government doing to help them get out of precarious situations?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for her tireless advocacy on this matter.

The Hong Kongers who are here are safe, and we have absolutely no intention of sending them back.

I am pleased to announce today that we will be announcing, as of May 22, that the Hong Kongers who are here and have a valid status will be able to apply for a three-year open work permit while they wait for their permanent residency. This is an important measure. We will continue to stand with the people of Hong Kong.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite Liberal promises to get open-net fish farms full of Atlantic salmon out of west coast waters, the minister sits idly by. To make matters worse, consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments have been muzzling scientists, whose findings show the extent of the damages. It is not surprising to learn that the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner is now investigating more gross allegations.

Will the Liberals co-operate, publish the findings of scientists and finally put coastal communities ahead of corporate profits?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to developing a responsible transition plan for open-net aquaculture. We continue to work on a transition plan to protect Pacific salmon while providing support to workers in their communities and advancing reconciliation.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada, along with my office, continue to have constructive conversations with stakeholders regarding next steps.

* * *

SPORT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the current government is always ready to take a dive for big cities but refuses to pass the ball to indigenous and northern youth. It gave \$104 million for six games of the FIFA World Cup in Toronto but will not make room for soccer in indigenous and northern communities; that is offside.

In regions such as ours, soccer is more than a game; it is a life-saving pass for kids. Canada has a responsibility to include all our youth in the lead-up to the 2026 World Cup, or it will get a red card. When will the government stop dribbling the ball in circles and find a way to include indigenous and northern youth as we all host soccer on the world stage?

• (1515)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, our government announced an investment of \$220 million to host the FIFA World Cup games in Vancouver and Toronto. This will generate an economic impact of \$2 billion for our country. That is the return on that investment.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the finalists for the 2024 Shaughnessy

Government Orders

Cohen Prize for Political Writing: Rob Goodman, Benjamin Perrin and John Vaillant.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Montcalm is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles knows full well that he is deliberately misleading the House by saying that the Bloc Québécois is calling for the legalization of hard drugs in Montreal. Let him prove it by tabling—

The Speaker: That is a point of debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

PHARMACARE ACT

The House resumed from May 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-64, An Act respecting pharmacare, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3:17 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester to the motion for second reading of Bill C-64.

Call in the members.

• (1530)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 752)

YEAS

Members

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

Government Orders

Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jeneroux
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Maguire
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Soroka
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Kramp-Neuman
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Liepert
Lobb
Majumdar
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seebach
Shipley
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Damoff
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gazan
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Sousa
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Wilkinson
Zahid

Davies
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garrison
Gerretsen
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sara
Schieffe
Sgro
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Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
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NAYS**Members**

Aldag
Ali
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Collins (Victoria)
Coteau

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Battiste
Bibeau
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Carr
Chagger
Champagne
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin

PAIRED

Members

Sinclair-Desgagné

Virani— 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[English]

The next question is on the main motion.

[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. Mark Gerretsen: I request a recorded vote, please.

• (1540)

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

(Division No. 753)

YEAS

Members

Aldag

Ali

Anandasangaree

Arseneault

Ashton

Bachrach

Bains

Barron

Beech

Bittle

Blaney

Boissonnault

Bradford

Carr

Chagger

Champagne

Chen

Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)

Cormier

Dabrusin

Davies

Dhaliwal

Diab

Drouin

Duclos

Dzerowicz

El-Khoury

Fillmore

Fortier

Fraser

Fry

Gainey

Gazan

Gould

Guilbeault

Hanley

Hepfner

Housefather

Hussen

Iacono

Ien

Johns

Jones

Alghabra

Anand

Angus

Arya

Atwin

Badawey

Baker

Battiste

Bibeau

Blair

Blois

Boulerice

Brière

Casey

Chahal

Chatel

Chiang

Collins (Victoria)

Coteau

Damoff

Desjarlais

Dhillon

Dong

Dubourg

Duguid

Ehsassi

Erskine-Smith

Fisher

Fragiskatos

Freeland

Gaheer

Garrison

Gerretsen

Green

Hajdu

Hardie

Holland

Hughes

Hutchings

Idlout

Jaczek

Joly

Jowhari

Julian

Kelloway

Khera

Kusmierczyk

Lalonde

Lamoureux

Lattanzio

LeBlanc

Lightbound

Longfield

MacAulay (Cardigan)

MacGregor

Maloney

Masse

May (Cambridge)

McDonald (Avalon)

McKay

McLeod

Mendès

Miao

Morrice

Murray

Ng

O'Connell

O'Regan

Powlowski

Robillard

Rogers

Rota

Sajjan

Samson

Scarpaleggia

Serré

Shanahan

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Singh

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Kram	Kramp-Neuman
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Maguire	Majumdar
Martel	Mazier
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Moore	Morantz
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The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

*[Translation]***The Speaker:** The hon. member for Joliette is rising on a point of order.**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I ask for the consent of the House to have my vote on the amendment be counted as a yes.**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 24 minutes.

* * *

● (1545)

*[English]***POINTS OF ORDER**

DECORUM IN THE HOUSE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on a point of order first raised on April 18, 2024, by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby concerning the use of false titles.

In his intervention, the member objected to the frequent use by the official opposition of the term “NDP-Liberal government” to characterize the current government. He qualified the term as disinformation. He emphasized that there is no coalition in place between the Liberal Party of Canada and the New Democratic Party. He asserted that it should be common practice in the House that members provide only accurate information.

[Translation]

For his part, the House leader of the official opposition stated that the choice of the term used by different members to describe the government is a matter of debate. In a subsequent intervention on May 2, 2024, the House leader referred, in support of this contention, to a ruling by the Deputy Speaker on March 29, 2022. He also suggested that the issue at hand does not pertain to the use of false titles, which are employed to identify individual members, usually in a derogatory fashion. He reminded the House that the Chair has also ruled that the use of false titles is out of order.

[English]

As pointed out in the interventions, the issue of the labelling of the Liberal-New Democratic Party agreement has been raised with the Chair before. On March 29, 2022, at page 3689 of the Debates, the Chair settled this matter, which the House leader of the official opposition rightfully flagged. The Chair stated:

As members know, the Chair deals with procedural issues, not political ones. Fundamentally, the agreement in question is a political one. It is not the Chair's role to interpret or give meaning to such agreements between parties.

Further down, it says:

...it is not for the Chair to determine if this agreement between the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party is a coalition.

However, this agreement does not equate to the creation of a new government party or a new political caucus.

On November 20, 2023, at pages 18730 to 18732 of the Debates, the Chair reiterated this same point in a different ruling.

● (1550)

[Translation]

While the Chair agrees that the House is best served with accurate information, it declines the offer to enter the debate as to how the political arrangement between the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party should or should not be characterized. This is a matter of political discourse between the parties.

*Government Orders**[English]*

As to parliamentary procedure, it remains the view of the Chair that the NDP is still an opposition party for the purposes of our rules and organization of the House and its committees.

I thank all members for their attention.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2024, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to lend my voice today in support of Bill C-69, the budget implementation act, 2024. This budget is about what kind of country we want to live in and what kind of country we want to build together.

For generations, Canada has been a place where everyone could secure a better future for themselves and their children, and where a growing economy created opportunities for everyone to succeed. However, to ensure every Canadian succeeds in the 21st century, we know that we must grow our economy to make it more innovative, productive and sustainable. We must build an economy where every Canadian can reach their full potential, where every entrepreneur has the tools needed to grow their business and where hard work pays off.

Building the economy of the future is about creating jobs in the knowledge economy, in manufacturing, in mining and forestry, in the trades, in clean energy and across the economy in all regions of the country. To do this, our government's economic plan is investing in the technologies, incentives and supports critical to increasing productivity, fostering innovation and attracting more private investment to Canada. This is how we will build an economy that unlocks new pathways for every generation to earn their fair share. Bill C-69 is a crucial step in opening up these new pathways.

Bill C-69 takes us forward on the understanding that, in the 21st century, a competitive economy is a clean economy. There is no greater proof than the 2.4 trillion dollars' worth of investment made around the world last year alone in the transition to net-zero economies. Experts say we are at a global inflection point, with clean energy investments surpassing investments in conventional energy, with the cost of renewable technology dropping significantly, including wind, solar and heat pumps, as technology advancements are made and deployed at scale, and with companies that outperform their peers in decarbonizing more competitive and yielding higher returns for stakeholders.

As the big anchor investment decisions around the globe are being made to secure the global supply chains for the emerging clean economy, we need to ensure Canada is best positioned to compete and lead the way by seizing the massive opportunities to attract investment and generate economic growth that will bring decades of prosperity. That is why our government is putting Canada at the

forefront of the global race to attract investment and seize the opportunities of the clean economy with a net-zero economic plan that will invest over \$160 billion to maintain and extend our lead in this global race.

The cornerstone of our plan is an unprecedented suite of major economic investment tax credits, which will help attract investment through \$93 billion in incentives by the year 2034-35. That includes carbon capture, utilization and storage, the clean technology investment tax credit, the clean hydrogen investment tax credit, the clean technology manufacturing investment tax credit, clean electricity and, added in budget 2024, an EV supply chain investment tax credit. These investment tax credits will provide businesses and other investors with the certainty they need to invest and build here in Canada. They are already attracting major job-creating projects, ensuring we remain globally competitive.

For example, just a couple of weeks ago, I attended the announcement in Alliston, Ontario, where Honda made the largest investment in Canadian automotive history, investing over \$15 billion. This is a huge vote of confidence in our economy. Out of all the countries in the world, Honda chose Canada to build its comprehensive, end-to-end EV supply chain, which will mean thousands of good-paying jobs for decades to come. The federal investment tax credits were essential in remaining competitive and securing that generational investment. From new clean electricity projects that will provide clean and affordable energy to Canadian homes and businesses to carbon capture projects that will decarbonize heavy industry, our major economic investment tax credits are moving Canada forward on its track to achieve a net-zero economy by 2050.

In November 2023, our government introduced Bill C-59 to deliver the first two investment tax credits and provide businesses with the certainty they need to make investment decisions in Canada today. That bill also included labour requirements to ensure workers are paid prevailing union wages and apprentices have opportunities to gain experience and succeed in the workforce.

• (1555)

With Bill C-69, the budget implementation act, 2024, we would be making two more of these major economic investment tax credits a reality to attract more private investment, create more well-paying jobs and grow the economy.

Government Orders

First, it would implement the 30% clean technology manufacturing investment tax credit, which would be available as of January 1, 2024. This is a refundable investment tax credit for clean technology manufacturing and processing, and extraction and processing of key critical minerals equal to 30% of the capital cost of eligible property associated with eligible activities.

Investments by corporations in certain depreciable property that is used for eligible activities would qualify for the credit. Eligible property would generally include machinery and equipment used in manufacturing, processing or critical mineral extraction, as well as related control systems.

Eligible investments would cover activities that will be key to securing our future, including things like the manufacture of certain renewable energy equipment like solar, wind, water or geothermal. It would cover the manufacturing of nuclear energy equipment and electrical energy storage equipment used to provide grid-scale storage. It would cover the manufacturing of equipment for air and ground storage heat pump systems; the manufacturing of zero-emission vehicles, including the conversion of on-road vehicles; as well as the manufacturing of batteries, fuel cells, recharging systems and hydrogen refuelling stations for zero-emission vehicles, not to mention the manufacturing of equipment used to produce hydrogen from electrolysis. These are the technologies that will power our future.

Bill C-69's clean technology manufacturing investment tax credit would power the investment that is needed to build them today and build them here at home.

The bill would also make the clean hydrogen investment tax credit a reality, which would exclusively support investments in projects that produce clean hydrogen through eligible production pathways. This refundable tax credit would be available as of March 28, 2023, and could be claimed when eligible equipment becomes available for use at an applicable credit rate that is based on the carbon intensity of the hydrogen that is produced.

Eligible equipment could include, but is not limited to, the equipment required to produce hydrogen from electrolysis of water, including electrolyzers, rectifiers and other ancillary electrical equipment; water treatment and conditioning equipment; and certain equipment used for hydrogen compression and storage. Certain equipment required to produce hydrogen from natural gas or other eligible hydrocarbons, with emissions abated using carbon capture, utilization and storage, would also be eligible. Property that is required to convert clean hydrogen to clean ammonia may also be eligible for the credit, subject to certain conditions, at a credit rate of 15%.

It is important to realize that these clean economy investment tax credits work to incentivize investment and remain competitive but also do not stand alone. They are just part of the tool box that also includes legislation like the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act; the Canadian sustainable jobs act and amendments to CEPA, which is the Canadian Environmental Protection Act; regulations like the clean fuel regulations, the carbon pricing and oil and gas emissions cap; programs like the strategic innovation fund and many others; and the blended finance utilities that the government has launched, including the Canada growth fund and

the Canada Infrastructure Bank. These all work together, and that is why we are seeing the results we are seeing.

Bill C-69's support for these investments comes at a pivotal moment when we can choose to renew and redouble our investments in the economy of the future, to build an economy that is more productive and more competitive, or risk leaving an entire generation behind.

With Bill C-69, we would not make that mistake. Our major economic investment tax credits are moving Canada forward on its track to achieve a net-zero economy by 2050. I could not be more proud of our work in this area.

• (1600)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, if one were to listen to the hon. member, one could not help but think that Canadians have never had it so good, but what we are seeing, and one just has to scan the headlines to see it, is that Canada's productivity is lagging. It has reached crisis levels. Productivity will take years to remedy. Weak productivity is threatening Canada's postpandemic recovery, and this has a direct impact.

Lagging productivity is a threat to Canadian living standards. There is a lack of investment, a lack of capital, fleeing capital and fleeing investment. Wages are not keeping up. Just last week the finance minister announced the government would increase the debt ceiling by another \$295 billion, adding to the interest that needs to be paid on the debt for future generations. That is going to have an impact.

I do not know how that member can stand there to say that the Liberals are doing everything right, when all of the indicators are that they are doing everything wrong.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, obviously, I disagree wholeheartedly with the member's characterization of what the government is currently doing. We have landed massive investments in the EV supply chain. We are number three in the world in foreign direct investment. We have maintained a AAA credit rating.

The Bank of Canada governor was at the finance committee recently and said that the government's current budget has stuck to the fiscal guardrails that we have set out and will not be adding any fuel to the fire of inflation, which is good news for Canadians. These investment tax credits and other measures within the budget, including \$2.4 billion for artificial intelligence, would help to bring in investment and increase productivity.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, when it comes to supporting seniors, the government is nowhere to be found. I am still getting emails from seniors who do not understand why nothing was announced in the last budget. No, there was nothing for seniors.

This is about more than just dental care or pharmacare. That is not the answer I am looking for. Seniors also need more money in their pockets to get through this period of inflation, which affects them directly because they are on fixed incomes.

Why do the Liberals continue to insist on creating two classes of seniors? Why did they not use the budget as an opportunity to announce a 10% increase for seniors aged 65 to 74 as well?

[English]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, of course our government has a track record of supporting seniors right from day one, which was when we moved the age of retirement back from the Conservatives' 67 to 65. We made the largest contribution to the Canada pension plan. We have increased old age security for seniors over 75. We boosted the guaranteed income supplement.

This budget has measures that directly impact seniors. I was talking to a senior in my riding yesterday who was quite happy to hear about our housing plan, which will build more rental housing units. That was her main concern, and she was very happy to also hear that dental coverage would be offered to her and many of her friends, who do not currently have dental coverage. This will save seniors thousands of dollars in their denture costs and in oral health care in general.

• (1605)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know my friend across the way is a strong advocate for sustainable finance. A few days ago, reporter John Woodside of the National Observer tweeted, "An open-secret on the hill right now is that a key climate policy - the sustainable finance taxonomy - has been long delayed because of a feud between experts and [the Minister of Finance's] office. She wants fossil fuels included, experts want a credible taxonomy."

Can the member confirm this rumour, and if so, can he explain to the House why the Minister of Finance is standing in the way of credible climate policy?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I have great respect for the member opposite and have worked with him on sustainable finance. I believe in a climate-aligned financial system. That is what our government has committed to. I mentioned many measures in my speech. There are many more to come.

The Sustainable Finance Action Council did exceptional work on developing a green transition taxonomy. Our government has clearly committed, both in this budget and in the fall economic statement, to assessing options and moving forward. I expect next steps will be forthcoming.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is indeed an honour to rise today to speak to such an important piece of legislation, a piece of legislation that comes out of the concept of fairness and about creating opportunities for younger generations.

I am of generation X. The opportunities that I have had, quite honestly and quite frankly, are becoming more and more difficult for the generations after me, such as generation Z and millennials, to have. What members are seeing in this budget bill is about creat-

ing opportunities and creating fairness for those future generations. How do we do that?

There are different ways to approach government's responsibility to society. The approach that conservative, small-c conservative, governments typically tend to take is more of a libertarian-style approach of stepping away, letting the market run things, letting every person fend for themselves, letting every person either make it or not based strictly on their own capabilities, their own merits. However, there is also an opportunity for the government to be part of creating fairness, ensuring that systemic biases that exist in our systems, scenarios or environmental changes do not have a significant negative effect on future generations.

Quite frankly, that is the reality of where we are. I know that Conservatives will get up to say that this is all the fault of the government, that it is the government that brought in all of the policies that have created the circumstances of today, but nothing could be further from the truth.

We are seeing these circumstance throughout the world. Conservatives never talk about what is going on in the United States, in Europe or in other G7 countries because, if they were to do that, they would have to acknowledge the fact that Canada is positioned much better than some of our counterparts. It is small comfort to those who are going through particular hardships right now, but in terms of positioning ourselves, I would suggest that we are actually putting ourselves in a better position. We have a lower inflation rate than the United States, for example, which is our closest ally. By all measures, by all indications, it would appear that we are in a better position for the monetary policy of Canada, which is run by the Bank of Canada, to start using the tools that it has to lower interest rates.

I would argue that we are on the right course in getting our affairs in order to be able to provide fairness and opportunity for future generations. That is extremely important because I think there will be a lot of people out there who ask, "What about me? I worked hard. I did all of these things throughout my life. I did not get handouts. I did not get opportunities." In particular, a lot of businesses or business owners would say that.

My reaction to that would be to not forget that, when one's economy does well, when one's middle class does well, when people are prosperous and, in particular, those who are coming up in age, such as millennials and gen Z, are doing well, everybody does better. The economy does better as a result. Businesses and wealthy people certainly do better when economies are in full gear and are significantly making an impact, realizing the opportunities that all generations participating in an economy have to benefit.

The next part I want to touch on is specifically with respect to providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities, to give them more opportunities to be in a better position to be able to contribute to our economy.

Government Orders

One of the really interesting things that I learned during my time as a municipal politician, when I sat on the accessibility committee for the City of Kingston, was that, when we talk about accessibility and about providing opportunities, I think a lot of people default to thinking of physical accessibility. They think about bringing down barriers to allow accessibility from a perspective of getting into a store, having the right-sized doorway, having a ramp for wheelchairs, etc.

● (1610)

However, accessibility quite often talks to economic accessibility. The reality is that, when we start to empower people and give them opportunities, we are unlocking new economic opportunity. For the disabled community in particular, not only are supports to be provided intended for the purpose of supporting individuals but also for giving them opportunities to participate in our economy so our economy can continue to grow and to flourish as a result.

I note there is, I would say, some somewhat valid criticism out there about the supports, particularly when it comes to the disability benefit, but I would counter that by saying that this is a starting point. This is the very first time in our nation's history that we have a program that is aimed specifically, from the federal level, at supporting disabled individuals throughout our country. We can build on it from this point. We can make it better. We can continue to strive for more and for better.

One of the things we are really worried about in this over \$6-billion program throughout the country is making sure provinces do not take the opportunity with the disability benefit to say that the feds are giving \$200 so they can claw back \$200. It would never be as direct as that. Doug Ford in Ontario is not going to say that the feds are giving \$200, so they are going to claw back. The way they would most likely do it is that they would freeze the supports and then they would let inflation slowly creep up and replace that \$200.

We want to make sure provinces do not look at this as an opportunity to say that the feds are going to take care of this, so they can get out of the way and reduce their contribution, whether that is directly or, as I suggested, through inflation. There is work to be done there. I certainly will be an advocate to continue pushing because I believe, as I stated earlier, this is not just about providing for individuals who require supports more than others. It is also about unlocking economic opportunity as individuals have more opportunity to enter into our economy and to participate in our economy.

One of the programs in particular I was really glad to see in this piece of legislation, this budget bill, was a national school food program. I want to thank the countless number of schools throughout my community that put together petitions, individual petitions from each school, that called on the Minister of Finance to do this.

I want to give special kudos to Brenda in my community. I will not use her last name because I did not get approval to mention her full name, but I want to give special congratulations to Brenda for her work, for doing this and for going around to the schools.

When I called her to tell her about this, Brenda told me a story. When the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister made that announcement, I immediately called Brenda and, "Brenda, you now know your advocacy was worth something and it mattered." She

said that she was so glad to have the opportunity to talk to me about this because she would go to schools and some of the schools would ask her why she was even doing this. They would say that this was never going to matter and these petitions were not going to matter. However, they do. The voices in our communities matter.

I want to thank Brenda for the advocacy she did, going around to every school in the Kingston area to get these petitions together so I could then come here to present them. I know in one small way people using their voices to be heard affected the outcome of this. I send Brenda congratulations for all the incredible work she did in making sure our community's voices, when it came to developing a national school food program, were being heard. As a result, we are now presenting this program, which I know we would be able to build on in the years to come that will genuinely help kids get the best possible start every single day they go to school.

I told this story before in the House, and I will tell it again. In Kingston, we have the Food Sharing Project, and this is Andy Mills and a bunch of other people who have been doing this on a volunteer, not-for-profit basis. There are a lot of volunteers with a very low budget. They have been finding deals on food and bringing all the food together in a small warehouse in an old industrial part of Kingston, organizing all the packages and sending them out to the schools on a daily basis, literally on a shoestring budget. They have been doing this for decades.

● (1615)

I went to the warehouse with my family. We were invited on a tour. I said that I would bring my family one morning, and we could help pack all the boxes of food that would be sent out. Andy said, "Absolutely". We went there, and it dawned on me when my seven-year-old said, "So this is where that food comes from". From my seven-year-old's perspective, it was not free food for poor kids, or it was not food that was specially set aside in a classroom. It was there for everybody.

This program is about giving kids nutritious food to eat to start their day, and throughout the day, but it also does an incredible job of breaking down stereotypes that exist. They are stereotypes that, quite frankly, I am sure I witnessed and was influenced by when I was growing up, when I saw kids who did not have a full lunch when they came to school.

When my seven-year-old made that comment and said, "So this is where that food comes from", and he connected all the dots, then it dawned on me that he had no idea. He just thought this was food at the school for kids to eat. That, in my opinion, is why a national school food program is so important. It is just a basic, fundamental opportunity to have nutritious food while in school. I am extremely proud to have been in the House to see this come forward in a budget.

Government Orders

I was very perplexed when Conservatives would not even vote for the program before there was even any money allocated to it. I find it even more concerning how Conservatives will continually stand up and talk about food bank usage and talk about the suffering and pain that Canadians are going through, yet they will not vote in favour of a national school food program, nor will they vote in favour, as they have indicated they will not, of putting money behind it.

It is quite rich and very hypocritical to stand up in the House and say that the government is not doing enough to support and to give families the food they need. Literally, we are talking about giving kids food in schools, and the Conservatives are against it. I find it to be very concerning.

I want to pivot to something else that we have seen coming from the Conservative benches in the last couple of weeks. In particular, we heard a speech the Leader of the Opposition was giving about legislation and criminal legislation. He made a point of saying that he would use every tool and resource to impose his laws, as if he were the supreme leader and as if he were the end of all. He could use the notwithstanding clause and could bring in whatever laws he wants; it is as easy as that. That is something that has never been done by the federal government since we have had our Charter of Rights.

It is very alarming when the Leader of the Opposition starts making these claims. He is basically saying that he has an idea, that he has a law, that this is the way the law is going to be and that he is going to impose it. If someone has a problem with it, they can vote him out a number of years later, regardless of the fact that it may not be constitutional. What is the point in even having a Constitution if someone does not believe in protecting minority rights? A Constitution is about protecting minority rights.

I have an answer to why Conservatives are acting like this. In my opinion, Conservatives do not care about the Constitution because they are just a reincarnation of the old Reform Party. The Brian Mulroney Conservatives are gone. Flora MacDonald, who came from my riding, a Progressive Conservative, would not even recognize what one sees over there right now. That is the former Reform Party of Canada, and as we know, it was never in favour of the Constitution. Stephen Harper—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Hear, hear! Good. They are being honest.

Madam Speaker, this is the first time that I have accused a Conservative Party of being the former Reform Party. I have said this many times in the House, but now the Conservatives are actually applauding it. In all honesty, I respect their honesty on the matter. I respect where Conservatives are coming from. I respect that they are being honest about it, and I mean that genuinely.

• (1620)

They are the Reform Party. They do not believe in the Constitution. That is just the way it is. We have the Leader of the Opposition, who routinely suggests that he would use the notwithstanding clause, as he sees fit, to ensure that all the laws that he thinks should be subject to the law of the land shall be there. We have a

Constitution for a reason, and that is to protect minorities and to protect the rights of minorities. That was the whole intent of it.

In fairness, I respect the fact that the Conservatives are so open about this. The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, on Friday, said that, to be clear, they would only use the notwithstanding clause when it comes to using it for the purposes of criminal justice. That is interesting. That sounds reasonable, at least to the layperson, does it not? Let us just think about what he is saying. He is saying, as it relates to criminal matters, that they are open and willing to use the notwithstanding clause. If the Reform Party had that same approach in the 1990s, it could have used that notwithstanding clause when the Supreme Court overturned the criminal offence of performing an abortion. What we are talking about here is the Conservative Party of Canada literally starting to talk about restricting and removing rights of Canadians.

This issue matters to me. I have a five-year-old daughter, and I want to make sure that my daughter grows up in the world with the same rights that her mother had. I cannot believe that we are even having this discussion about rolling back a woman's right to choose.

The member for Peace River—Westlock today, presenting on behalf of his constituents, said that he wanted to roll back the charter decision and ask the government to bring in more restrictive measures for individuals, in particular women, who are trying to exercise their rights to choose. We are entering very dangerous territory with that rhetoric. I know where their political angle is. They think the average person will not know what the notwithstanding clause is, what it means or what the implications are, so it really does not matter. They will just sound good in what they are saying, and people will believe them.

Do members know what? I am not going to weigh in on whether I believe that to be right or wrong, but I will say that even just using that language and going down that road, being willing to treat people in a manner in which they can make sure that they can do things because people are not going to be paying attention, is extremely dangerous. That is what we are seeing.

It cannot be a coincidence, literally almost a year ago to the day in the United States of America, when *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, that suddenly, Conservatives are feeling empowered and emboldened to start having these discussions now. We would not have heard that come from Conservatives a year ago or five years ago. Stephen Harper intentionally avoided talking about it because he did not want to go anywhere near the matter, even though he may have had his own personal opinions on the Constitution. He never went near it because he knew it was not smart to do so.

The Leader of the Opposition is looking at the opportunities in the States, parroting the alt-right MAGA Republican politics of the States and trying to utilize those exact same talking points and those exact same ways of operating in Canada.

Government Orders

I will commit to any and every Canadian who is watching this and, indeed, who is in Canada, that I will do everything I personally can to ensure that the Constitution and the Charter of Rights continue to mean something and continue to be something that they can rely on to protect the rights of minorities in this country.

● (1625)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know that my colleague was filling the time because he did not have that much to say, so he went on about a whole bunch of things that had nothing to do with the budget implementation act. It was just rhetoric about defending the Constitution. Was he defending the Constitution when the Emergencies Act came out and Canadians' bank accounts were frozen? I would ask him that question.

I would also ask him about this. He was very proud of somebody in his riding who went and got a bunch of petitions to present to Parliament to actually start food banks as a national program—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: It was not food banks.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, he is right. I misspoke there. Actually, it was for a program to have food in schools because that is something that has to be done nationally, not locally and not provincially. It is done nationally.

In Calgary, food bank usage is up significantly, and their carbon tax is up significantly. Does my colleague draw any connection here to the pain the Liberal government has caused Canadians?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I have a very good memory. The member asked me a question the last time I talked about the budget, only a couple of weeks ago, and he did the exact same thing that he did this time. He did not listen to what I said, but he chose to listen to certain parts of it.

Had the member listened, he would have known that I talked about the fact that this is a local program in my community, where I went with my family to help them put together boxes of food to distribute to schools. I specifically talked about food banks and about how I find it ironic that Conservatives sit here and talk about food banks and talk about the hardships of Canadians, yet the member, while he stands there trying to preach to me about Canadians' use of food banks, will not even support a national school food program to put food in the bellies of children while they start their day at school.

With all due respect, I take a lot from Conservatives, but I will not be lectured on food programs, in particular, school food programs, from a Conservative member.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, for three years now, the Liberals have been saying that they recognize the decline of French in Quebec, that they will take steps to promote French in Quebec. However, we have yet to see them take any action. There were no measures in the latest budget either.

What does my colleague think? Do they want to protect French in Quebec or do they want it to continue to decline?

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am extremely proud to live in a country that recognizes that we have two official lan-

guages, English and French. I am very proud to spend a lot of time in Quebec, as my cottage is in Quebec. I am very proud of the amount of time that I have spent personally going to Logibec in Quebec City to learn French.

The member might find some shortfalls in this particular budget, as it relates to new opportunities for what he is suggesting, but certainly, it is my view that we are a better country as a result of everything that has come from having two official languages. It makes us better, more diverse, more robust, and it makes us a better country. That is why, even though the Bloc Québécois is a political party whose members wish that they were not even sitting in the House of Commons and that they were not even a part of Canada, I know that my part of Canada, where I live in Ontario, is in a better country because of Quebec and Quebec's participation in our country.

● (1630)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, we just had a vote in the House of Commons, where the Conservatives and members of the Bloc blocked the pharmacare bill. What we see now is the Conservatives again speaking out against school lunches.

We saw Conservatives attack and try to destroy the dental care program, which, thankfully, has been a huge success already with 15,000 seniors in the first 72 hours being able to access dental care, sometimes for the very first time. Many of them are in Conservative-held ridings, yet Conservatives have blocked the programs that would make a difference for people. They blocked affordable housing, and we saw, of course, during the 10 dismal, horrible years of the Harper regime, how they were willing to destroy services for veterans, force seniors to work longer and rip away supports for families. It was the worst 10 years in Canadian history, under the Harper regime.

I think the Liberal government can do more, there is no doubt, but we cannot go back to the dismal years of Conservative rule. I want to ask my colleague what he thinks motivates Conservatives when they block all the things that would actually make a difference for people living through an affordability crisis. Why are Conservative MPs blocking things that would help their own constituents?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, for starters, we call them "Conservatives". They have the same colour of blue, and they use the same name, but I would argue that this is actually the Reform Party. I think that it is entirely appropriate to question whether or not they are even Conservatives because, quite frankly, although she is no longer with us, I am sure that Flora MacDonald, who was from Kingston and the Islands, would look at the Conservative Party and would say that it really is not what she represented when she was in this place.

However, the member brought up the Conservatives' position on pharmacare. I was here to listen to that debate on pharmacare. Do members know how many Conservatives got up and said that only one in five Canadians want this? It is as though one in five Canadians needing something does not qualify us to actually do something about it.

To answer the member's question about the motivation of the Conservatives, they know that those one in five Canadians are not who they are banking on to vote for them. They know that those one in five Canadians are some of the most vulnerable in our communities who actually really need access to pharmacare, and they are willing to brush them aside because they know that they are not contained within the four out of five who they actually do rely on for their votes.

An hon. member: Holy smokes, four out of five are voting in Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, division 38 of Bill C-69 is where the Liberals have put in some amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act with respect to sending detained immigrants to federal penitentiaries. Not only are jails the most expensive way to house a person in this country, but human rights groups like Amnesty International have been sounding the alarm about this. At a time when all 10 provinces have already committed to ending their immigration detention agreements, instead of following the provinces' lead and working to end immigration detention, why is the federal government planning to use federal prisons for immigration detention?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I will admit to the member that I do not have the exact details on his question, but I will say this. If human rights activists and others are pushing because they do not believe that charter rights are being upheld, I can guarantee one thing: This Liberal government will not use the notwithstanding clause to impose its rules upon them.

This is exactly the rhetoric we are hearing from the Conservative leader. He is basically saying that if he does not like the way the courts want to treat his policies or laws because they are unconstitutional, he will just use the notwithstanding clause and will still get his law.

I can guarantee the member that I would never sit in a political party that uses the notwithstanding clause in such a way as to be so precarious about how and when to use it just to impose the supreme leader's decisions, that being the leader of the Conservative Party.

• (1635)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the last year, during the formulation of the budget, we saw the Prime Minister come to Winnipeg three times: once to talk at Stanley Knowles School about child care; then to have meetings with the premier of the province to talk about health care; and then, more recently, to talk about housing. These are really important issues.

The leader of the Conservative Party, on the other hand, goes out and talks to groups such as Diagonol. When the member makes reference to the extreme right and the Reform Party seated across the

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way, I wonder if he could provide his thoughts as to who the Conservatives are actually listening to.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister and our cabinet are willing to work directly with municipalities to do the important work they need to do. The Prime Minister is engaged in communicating with premiers, even those with whom he quite often does not see eye to eye politically.

On the other hand, we have the Leader of the Opposition, who is literally going out and insulting mayors of major cities in this country, hanging out with Diagonol and far-right extremists who support some radical views.

That is the reality of what we are dealing with here. We are set up to have a choice, just like the United States, between a far-right person like Donald Trump and Joe Biden. We are going to have the exact same thing here, and people can make their choice.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Calgary Centre, Carbon Pricing.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague, the member for Barrie-Innisfil.

After nine years, the Prime Minister still does not get it. There are many things he does not understand. He does not understand that budgets do not balance themselves. He does not understand that Canadians cannot live on their credit cards forever. He does not understand that leading a country means much more than just smiling for the cameras.

After nine years, he clearly does not understand that Canadians are tired of paying for his and his government's incompetence. I say incompetence because, after nine years, too many families have seen their quality of life go down as a result of his inflationary policies. Everything costs more, including food, rent, gas, taxes, mortgage payments, everything people have to buy on credit, restaurant meals and recreational activities. The list goes on. Absolutely everything costs more.

The Liberal Prime Minister has made the public service so big it is literally bursting at the seams, which leads me to say that the government, too, costs a lot more after nine years of this Prime Minister.

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The Liberal government hired no less than an additional 100,000 public servants. With so many new government employees, one would expect services to improve, at least proportionately. One might think that waiting for a passport was a thing of the past, that immigrants who are waiting for a family member are now all very happy with the family reunification and immigration processes, and that it is now easy to talk to a CRA or an EI agent. One hundred thousand more public servants means 200,000 more hands to work on finding solutions to people's problems. That would make sense, but no. That is not what happened, despite the additional billions of dollars that this government spent on expanding the public service.

The Prime Minister and this government's ministers created so much chaos that even 100,000 more public servants have been unable to correct nine years of complacency. Take, for example, passports, the people who are waiting for EI payments and the thousands of Canadians who have to pay back billions of dollars to the government because the Liberals' pandemic measures were a failure.

Let us talk about immigration and the former immigration minister, who not only created the worst management crisis ever at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, but also lost track of one million people. That minister is now in charge of fixing the country's housing crisis. I wonder what that minister has to say to Cédric Dussault, the spokesperson for the Regroupement des comités logement et associations de locataires du Québec, a renters' rights group, who said, "We hear from tenants who intend to commit suicide. This is more than just despair. They do not see a way out, and they want it to be over. That is what it has come to". That is what it has come to in Canada after nine years of this Prime Minister.

This is just a glimpse of Liberal incompetence. In addition to hiring tens of thousands of public servants, this Liberal government has literally doubled the cost of hiring outside consultants. Many of those expenses were unjustified. Here is just one example: ArriveCAN. The government spent \$60 million of taxpayers' money on an app developed in a basement by two people with no computer skills. That app was supposed to cost \$80,000. Let us do the math. The cost ballooned from \$80,000 to \$60 million. That is how this government manages public finances.

As I said earlier, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost of his government, which has skyrocketed over the past nine years. Let us look back at 2015, when this same Prime Minister promised Canadians that he would run small deficits of \$10 billion and balance the budget in four years. Since then, he has not only failed to keep his promise, but he has also become the spendiest prime minister in Canadian history. He single-handedly put Canada further into debt than all previous prime ministers.

• (1640)

I am not talking about him spending more than any previous prime minister. I am talking about the debts of all prime ministers combined. This Prime Minister has managed to spend more than all the previous prime ministers combined. He has increased Canadians' debt from \$700 billion to \$1.3 trillion in just nine years. I never

thought I would use the word "trillion" in the House, but that just shows how out of control this government's spending is.

That means that today, just to pay the interest on this massive debt, Canadians have to fork over more than \$57 billion a year. How much is \$57 billion? People wonder, because it is impossible to grasp the scale of a number that big. It is more than what the federal government transfers to the provinces for health care every year. It is the equivalent of all the goods and services tax, or GST, that is collected when people buy goods and services. In other words, every time we pay GST somewhere, it does not go toward improving the environment, national defence or social housing; it goes to pay the interest on this Prime Minister's debt.

This Prime Minister has inflated the debt to the point that he no longer sees what effect this spending is having on Canadians. It is contributing to inflation, driving up the price of everything and forcing the Bank of Canada to keep interest rates high. That is what nine budgets from this Prime Minister has done. This ninth budget is no exception. Time and again, we see new spending, stagnating services, rising prices and daily revelations of corruption. This is the perfect example of an incompetent Prime Minister who is not worth the cost.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to talk about something that has been a concern of mine for the 25 years that I have been in politics. This theme has only reinforced my decision to be a Conservative in Quebec over the years. I want to talk about the mindset that, no matter what the Liberals do, no matter what the left proposes, whether it is the NDP, the Bloc Québécois or the Liberal Party, just one group suffers as a result of all their good ideas. That group is average Canadians. It is the Quebecker who works hard to support his family. It is the Quebecker who struggles to pay rent, to give her children a decent education, to be a good citizen by volunteering to help those in need. That is a fact. I talk to people in their homes. The only people paying for all this spending are not the Prime Minister, nor his ministers, nor the Liberal government, but the hard-working people at home.

Who pays more for gas when someone decides one day that it would be a good idea for gas to be more expensive so that people will use less? Who pays more for electricity because it is bad to waste electricity and because, if the price is raised, people will realize that it is too expensive and then use less? If they need it, they will have to pay either way. The Prime Minister said so himself when he was invited to comment on the rising price of gas before the carbon tax even came into effect. He said that that was exactly what they wanted, for Canadians to pay more. Worse yet, left-wing parties like the Bloc Québécois are not shy about saying that it is not enough. The Bloc says that the carbon tax — they probably also want to talk about the carbon pricing that applies in Quebec — should be radically increased. It is the public that pays every time these people say that they have a good idea.

Who pays for these taxes, these bags, these services, these user fees, this big government that is supposed to solve all the problems? It is Canadians. It was Canadians before, it is Canadians now, and it will be Canadians as long as we have a Liberal government. That is why the Conservatives have a common-sense plan to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. The “Liberal Bloc” does not want us to keep saying it, but it is a common-sense plan that will ensure that we can give Canadians back a little pride, so that Canadians realize that things were not like this before the Liberals took office and that it will certainly not be like this once they are no longer in power.

• (1645)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have heard Conservative or Reform members, or however one might want to address members opposite, say that the federal government does not have a role to play in health care. We heard them say that they do not support a pharmacare program, yet a vast majority of Canadians want a Canada health system that reflects the Canada Health Act and see the value of a pharmacare program.

Can the member clearly indicate why he and the Reform Party or the Conservative Party do not believe that the federal government has a role to play when it comes to a national health care system?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, that is the leftist party or, pardon me, the Liberal Party of Canada.

[Translation]

I will take no lessons from the Liberal Party. Why? It is because every day when we pick up the newspapers and turn on the television, we see moving accounts of mothers who cannot find housing for July 1. In Quebec, July 1 is an extremely important date. Those mothers will have to find a place to live and are resigned to the idea of having to live in their minivans.

Business owners are going bankrupt because the cost of paying down their debt and input costs is now more than they can afford. Quebec has seen a 130% increase in small business bankruptcies over the past three years. That is unacceptable.

I always wonder why the Liberals avoid talking about these issues that affect Canadians and Quebecers every day.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to know that Quebecers are suffering because of with the costly Conservative-Liberal coalition that panders to the Canadian oil monarchy.

Some \$47 million is being spent on the Governor General every year. What do the Conservatives do? They sing *God Save the King*. By 2035, it is going to cost us a collective \$83 billion to prop up the greedy oil industry. That cost is \$18 billion for 2023 alone. In the last four years, \$65 billion has gone to rich oil and gas tycoons. The Conservatives are being taken for fools. They applaud. They want more.

It is pretty simple: What is costing the people of Quebec so dearly is voting Conservative.

• (1650)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, hypocrisy abounds. It was the Bloc Québécois that voted for this government's \$500 billion in additional spending. As a result, everything costs more now. It was the Bloc Québécois that voted for additional funding to build a pipeline. They are not about to shout it from the rooftops, but they voted in favour of additional funds to build the pipeline. The Bloc Québécois members are the ones telling Canadians and Quebecers who use their cars to get around every day that they still do not pay enough taxes. The Bloc Québécois would like to see gasoline taxes radically increased in order to encourage people to use less gas, since it costs more. Once again, they are making citizens pay for ideologies.

That is what I call the hypocrisy of the Bloc Québécois.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing that I admit I have concerns about in the budget is the lack of funding for first nations languages. We have heard clearly from the First Peoples' Cultural Council that this is a significant concern. For me, I think about the many communities that are working with North Island College in my region to set up classes to teach language. I think about 'Namgis, which has a facility where they nest young people to learn the language, and Tla'amin, which is doing something very similar. Does the member share my concern around first nations languages in the budget?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I share my colleague's concerns regarding the first nations. Even though my riding does not have all that many first nations representatives, I am very proud to see that Chief Billy Morin has just joined the Conservative Party. He will be a candidate for us in the next election. We are very proud to have people of that calibre working with us to improve everyday life for first nations across Canada.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to stand up on behalf of the people of Barrie—Innisfil in the House of Commons and, in this case, in particular, to discuss the budget implementation act.

If one listens to the Liberals, and I have been in the House for most of today, one would almost get the sense that Canadians have never had it so good as what they have right now.

The member for Ajax stood up before, and I recall asking him a question about Canada's productivity. We are seeing declines in productivity, investment and capital investment, other than government investment; it is at a point where our productivity is heading into developing nation status right now.

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It is obvious that the ability of Canadians to have some sort of lifestyle or provide for a quality of life for themselves is clearly diminishing after nine years of the current NDP-Liberal government. There is not one day that I am in my Barrie—Innisfil office, not one phone call and not one email that is telling me that their life is better after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government. In fact, I would say that we spend most of our time, and my staff's time, in my Barrie—Innisfil office walking people in off the ledge, because they are so concerned about their economic future.

I recall that, a couple of months ago, I had a senior come into my office. Fortunately, he had a mortgage, but he had to renew it. With the new interest rates, mortgage renewal rates, the way they are, he was only going to be left with \$600 at the end of the month to pay his property taxes, to pay his heat, to pay his hydro and to buy groceries. That is an indictment of nine years of failed economic policy, and it is having a severe impact on Canadians right across the country.

The budget does nothing to address that. In fact, I will subscribe to the idea that it actually makes things worse for Canadians, especially in the younger generation. In 2015, younger Canadians voted for the Prime Minister; he was talking about providing them with hope over fear and all the other things he was talking about. He said that things were going to be better for the next generation; in fact, things have gotten worse.

Young people right now do not just feel as though they have been lied to and let down. Rather, they feel as though they have been left behind after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government.

I will go one step further. Any young person whom I talk to right now does not just feel that. Young people are despondent right now, because they do not feel as though they are going to have the same opportunities as their parents had.

They have done everything right. They have gone to university. They have gotten educated. In some cases, some of them are working three or four jobs just to get by. However, because of the economic policies of the government, they still cannot afford to come up with the down payment to buy a home.

Those who have bought a home are now facing a mortgage renewal crisis that this country has not seen in generations. Moms are being kept up at night, trying to figure out how they are going to pay for their mortgages, because mortgage rates have tripled as a result of the failed economic policies of the Liberal government.

When one listens to the Liberal government, it is almost as though Liberals do not realize that they have been in government for nine years and that they have created the mess we are in right now through failed economic policies. When one injects as much liquidity into the system and one creates as much debt and deficit as we are dealing with right now, what does one think is going to happen?

The Leader of the Opposition was predicting three or four years ago that we were going to see interest rates increase as a result. The only lever that the Bank of Canada has to curb inflation is to raise interest rates.

We have heard from former Liberal finance ministers and from former Bank of Canada governors, who keep saying the same thing: It is almost as if the Bank of Canada is pressing on the brakes while the Liberal government is pouring more fuel on the inflationary fires.

● (1655)

There is no greater example of that than what is within the budget: There is \$40 billion in additional spending and \$56.1 in interest costs, just to service the debt. The debt has been doubled by the Prime Minister; his insatiable appetite to spend is putting at risk the economic prosperity of millions of young Canadians, including my kids. That \$56.1 billion is more than we spend in health care transfers to the provinces, and it is almost an equal amount to what we take in on the GST.

It was the former NDP leader, Thomas Mulcair, who said just shortly after the budget that the GST is designed to pay for many of the services Canadians rely on. Every time somebody goes out and fills up their car with gas, goes out for dinner or buys a ticket to something, they pay the GST. They pay it knowing that it is designed to go towards providing for the social safety net that Canadians rely on in this country. However, right now, almost every single penny of the GST is going toward servicing the cost of the debt accumulated by the Prime Minister and the failed NDP-Liberal experiment.

As Tom Mulcair said, "It is no longer the GST. It is the DST, the debt service tax". He could not have been more correct.

The government is hiding behind generational fairness, but the generational mess it has created for younger Canadians is not going to be fixed by the budget. It is going to be fixed by a government that lives within its means and that focuses on the revenue side of the ledger rather than solely the expense side. By that, I mean not attacking income-producing sectors of our economy that have historically created great wealth for our nation, such as our natural resource sector and agriculture sectors. Those sectors have contributed greatly to not just providing for that social safety net but also to being able to provide for Canadians.

In the natural resource sector, we have a big role to play in providing clean Canadian energy to the rest of the world, and there is no greater example of that than when the President of Germany came to Canada, begging for LNG. Energy security is the number one issue that Europe is facing right now. He came to Canada, and our Prime Minister shooed him away as though there was no business case for that. Two weeks later, the same German president signed a \$27-billion deal with Qatar, which has fewer environmental, labour and human rights standards. That \$27 billion could have come to Canada to be used to improve health care, education and the quality of life of not just the next generation but also future generations to come.

We have seen an increase in housing costs. We have seen rent and house prices double. We have seen mortgage rates that, in some cases, have tripled. Hundreds of thousands of homes are now due for mortgage renewal, and these next couple of months and the budget would do nothing to allay the fears that moms have when they go to renew their mortgage, already facing an increasing affordability crisis and a housing attainability crisis.

The last thing I want to focus on is the fact that the government has raised the carbon tax again by 23%, and that is not the end of it. We are at \$80 a tonne right now, and we are heading up to \$170. After the 2019 election, the government said the price would never go up past \$50 a tonne. We are already past that point, and it is expected to double, which is going to increase the cost of everything, such as the necessities of life, as well as housing costs, the cost of groceries and the cost of transporting goods. Everything will become more expensive in this country, and as our productivity continues to decline, so too will the quality of life of Canadians.

I am going to vote against the budget because it would do nothing to improve the quality of life for future generations or this generation today.

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us think of the improvement in the quality of life for the thousands of young people who are going to have the opportunity to gain employment through companies like the VW plant, Canada's largest manufacturing plant; 200 football fields could fit into it. That is not to mention the Honda plant. We are not alone. Not only does the Liberal government see that, but so does the Progressive Conservative Government of Ontario, because it is also supporting these two initiatives.

We are supporting industries, and, yes, it does cost money. Can the member from the Reform Party tell us why it is that they oppose this type of investment, when we see Progressive Conservatives getting behind it?

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I thought I made a pretty substantive argument as to why, in some cases, the budget was not going to work for Canadians. If the hon. member wants to sit here and hurl insults, it is his prerogative to do so.

The fact is that we do not know. In the absence of seeing any of the contracts that have been signed, either through Stellantis or Volkswagen, the only thing we know is that there are billions of dollars' worth of government subsidies being applied to these plants, on the credit card, by the way, because, again, we are at \$1.4 trillion in debt. Just last week, the finance minister announced that she wanted to increase that debt ceiling by another \$295 billion to \$2.1 trillion.

Why does the government not provide confidence for Canadians and show just where the work is going to come from? All we are hearing right now is that there are a lot of temporary foreign workers, non-Canadians, who are going to be working in the plants. Show us the proof; that is all we ask.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limouilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, there was a time when people who voted Conservative in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada could be sure that the autonomy of their government would be respected and that the interference would stop. However, the Conservative Party voted against our motion calling for an end to interference and for the right to opt out with compensation for the provinces that did not want to implement certain programs that they already manage. It is a matter of not duplicating bills.

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Can my colleague explain this disconnect? In future, what will they do to avoid this?

• (1705)

[English]

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I fundamentally believe that here in Ottawa, the federal government has a role to play in assisting the provinces.

However, provincial jurisdiction must be respected. Our leader respects provincial jurisdiction and will work with the premiers of every province in order to ensure that we have a confederation that is functioning and united, not divided. The Prime Minister has a tendency to divide us along regional lines, race lines, faith lines, gender lines and the house status of our neighbour, and now, by creating a new class war, he has another reason to divide people.

I believe that if we are going to have a functioning confederacy, we need a prime minister who not only respects provincial jurisdiction but also works with the provinces and provincial leaders.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, the federal budget includes a commitment to start a procurement process to replace Via Rail's long-distance fleet, some of the oldest rolling stock used by passenger trains in the whole world, built in the 1960s and sorely in need of replacement.

I wonder what the Conservative Party's position is on replacing the long-distance passenger trains that are used by Via Rail.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, clearly the country is in desperate need of infrastructure replacement, and not just from a rail standpoint.

The difficulty I have with the budget, frankly, is that it does not necessarily focus all of its attention on that. I see a lot of debt and a lot of deficit. I see problems for future generations that are going to be caught up in many of the issues that the budget faces, not the least of which is the ability for young people to have hope for their future. They are being weighed down in mountains of debt and deficit as well. We need to control spending.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the budget implementation act and how budget 2024 impacts the good people of Charlottetown, whom I am proud to represent.

I would like to start by congratulating the Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister for her hard work in judiciously addressing the most pressing priorities of Canadians while being mindful of spending. We have heard lots of discourse in recent weeks on the budget deficit, but not nearly enough on the importance of investing to meet the needs of those people who need it most.

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Canadians deserve a government that can invest in the supports they need to live safe, healthy lives, while managing spending over the longer term. Far and away the most important issue for Islanders is, consistently, health care. The budget reaffirms the government's commitment to allocate \$200 billion over 10 years to strengthen universal public health care. Through bilateral agreements signed by the federal government with all provinces and territories, the budget continues to work collaboratively to deliver good-quality public health care for all Canadians.

Budget 2024 also commits \$1.5 billion over five years into the first national pharmacare plan. This includes free contraception, which allows every woman to choose the method of contraception that works for her and covers diabetes medication, improving the lives of 3.7 million Canadians living with diabetes. In Prince Edward Island, the 2023 pilot program improving access to affordable prescription drugs had previously reduced copays to five dollars for eligible medications used for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and mental health. The program also substantially grew the size of the formulary in Prince Edward Island to bring it on par with the other Atlantic provinces.

The national pharmacare program further expands on increasing accessibility of life-saving drugs for Canadians. In my home province of Prince Edward Island, one in three Islanders lives with diabetes or prediabetes. This investment will go a long way toward supporting them and preventing further complications by reducing the cost barrier to finding appropriate medication.

Finally, budget 2024 introduces the Canadian dental care program. Over the next year, more than nine million Canadians who are currently without health insurance will have access to the dental health care they need. I would like to underline here that I understand the apprehensions of dentists and other oral care providers in signing on to the program. The Minister of Health has been remarkably proactive in hearing these concerns and working to address them. We are already seeing progress. I am confident that providers will do the right thing and work with the federal government to address their concerns and to work in the interest of 400,000 seniors who have already signed up to the program from coast to coast.

I had the opportunity to meet in my office with a group of dentists, including the president of the Dental Association of Prince Edward Island. They went through the list of preoccupations they had with the program, but they ended on a very positive note, which is that, to a person, every single dentist and oral health care provider is there for their patients, acting in their best interests. The demand and the need for the program have been manifest by the number of people who have signed up. I am confident that health care providers will, at the end of the day, act in the best interests of their patients to help ensure the success of the program. I firmly believe that, and I have faith in them to do that. I also have faith in the minister to ensure that their concerns will be met.

The second priority I would like to talk about is housing. There are several commendable measures in the budget, too many to list, but I would like to touch on a few of them. The first is the additional \$400-million investment in the housing accelerator fund, which has been fast-tracking the construction of 750,000 new homes over the next decade, since its launch.

• (1710)

In my province, the housing accelerator fund agreements with municipalities will lead to 895 new homes over the next three years across the province, 300 of which will be in the capital city of Charlottetown. It is a program that works. It is a program that is sought after by municipalities. It is a program that is exceptionally popular. It is a program that will continue to deliver the affordable, sustainable housing that Canadians need.

Another initiative I would like to speak to is the removal of GST on student residences in post-secondary institutions. Prince Edward Island is home to over 8,000 students. The initiative will help institutions provide safe housing for students on campus. It is something that is a preoccupation of university presidents. I have had conversations with them. It is a welcome initiative from the government, recognizing an important need both on P.E.I. and across the country.

The budget, in fact, significantly invests in post-secondary education and in the future of millennial and gen Z youth as they navigate the educational landscape. Indeed, with investments in new strategic research infrastructure and federal research support, core research grants, and increases to the Canada student grants and Canada student loans, budget 2024 sets students up for success by ensuring that anyone can have access to world-class post-secondary education without cost barriers. This will also ensure that Canada remains at the forefront of innovative research and technology in a rapidly changing global environment.

Not only does the budget work for post-secondary students, but it also establishes a national school food program, providing nutritious meals to 400,000 children from K to 12 every year. While schools remain under provincial jurisdiction, the \$10-a-day child care bilateral agreements from coast to coast show that our government is more than capable of collaborating with progressive provinces and territories to support those people who need it most.

Much like the Quebec early learning and child care infrastructure informed \$10-a-day child care, the Prince Edward Island school food program can serve as a successful template on which to model a national program. I was pleased to have the minister responsible tour and see the Prince Edward Island program in broad light in the last three or four months.

The program launched in 2020. It served 600,000 meals in 2023 and will serve an estimated 800,000 meals this year. There is much to learn from the structure and impacts of the program, and it can certainly be scaled up to meet national needs. The government has worked hard to lift children out of poverty, and the school food program will continue to do so, ensuring that they have access to the nutrition they need now to prepare them for tomorrow.

I would like to speak about some measures that will positively impact Prince Edward Island in particular. In budget 2024, the government proposes extending five more weeks of employment insurance payouts to seasonal workers for another two years. While this does fall short of returning Prince Edward Island to one EI zone, it does extend much-needed relief to the almost 3,000 seasonal workers on P.E.I.

Another measure in the budget is freezing the Confederation Bridge tolls and maintaining ferry fees to Nova Scotia until 2026. These measures are important in keeping travel from P.E.I. to the rest of the country affordable. It will benefit Islanders who regularly travel for work, to see their loved ones, or to access health care.

I was also pleased to see the establishment of the new Pituamkek national park reserve on the north coast of Prince Edward Island. Not only does this area have ecological significance due to its low contact with humans, but it is also important in understanding and preserving Mi'kmaq culture and settlement patterns. It is thus an important initiative that will help us interpret the past, while protecting biodiversity into the future.

Through these measures and more, budget 2024 delivers a sound plan for Canadians that I am proud to support. It solidifies the economy, supports the middle class and those working hard to join it, and truly delivers fairness for every generation.

• (1715)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague is the chair at the Standing Committee on Health, and I really want to commend him for the important work he does there. It is a difficult committee to be running these days, especially with the toxic drug crisis study we are doing.

My colleague is also a coastal MP and he knows how important the ghost gear fund is to coastal people for removing polystyrene or plastic pollution. Ghost gear is about 70% of the plastics we find in our oceans. We have the longest coastline in the world. We just hosted the INC-4 and what do we do in this budget? The government removed the funding for the ghost gear fund.

Will my colleague be going back to the minister and demanding that the government reinstate this world-class program?

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, I can assure my colleague that the health committee is more manageable in part because of his presence.

With regard to his question on ghost gear, this problem has dramatically increased in our part of the world thanks to hurricane Fiona, so the short answer to his question is yes. This is not the time to be cutting funding for programs to retrieve ghost gear, certainly not on the east coast. The fact he is raising it means that is probably also the case on the west coast. I would be happy to work

Government Orders

with him to advocate for the reinstatement or an increase in funding on this issue.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the chair of the health committee, someone who should have their finger on the pulse of the health care crisis we are facing in just about every province and territory across this country, how can he possibly go back to his constituents or any Canadian and explain that, as a result of this budget, we are paying \$54.1 billion in taxpayer money just to manage the debt the Liberal government is placing on Canadians? That is more than the funding the government is transferring to the provinces and territories to cover health care.

How does he go back to his constituents and explain the government is spending more on managing the debt than it actually is helping provinces with health care?

• (1720)

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, I will go back to my constituents with immense pride with the investments a confident country makes in its people and the investments a confident country makes in the most pressing challenges of the day. When I go back to my riding and talk about this budget, what people are going to want to know about is health care. That is job one. The answer to that is \$200 billion, and I am proud to tell them this government is investing in health care.

I have absolutely no qualms about the fact that Canada has a AAA credit rating, which is something only two of the G7 countries can boast, that the debt-to-GDP ratio is among the top in the world, that the OECD has indicated we will be in that same category with respect to productivity by the end of 2025 and that we are investing massively in clean energy and the industries of tomorrow. Yes, with great pride I will be happy to talk to my constituents about this budget.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about how progressive Quebec is and what great strides they have made, and he is right about that. The Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms came into force in 1976. Labour Code reforms to protect workers from scabs date back to 1977. Child care dates back to the late 1990s.

We have proven on more than one occasion that, when our tax dollars come back to us, we use them wisely for the good of the people. Why the ongoing interference in this budget?

Government Orders

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, I am from Prince Edward Island, and we always welcome federal investment. I understand Quebec's concern. Her story is very different from mine. I am convinced that the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec have a good relationship. We need to have some tough conversations. I expect the conversation to be ongoing. I hope that the provincial and federal governments will always act in the best interests of their citizens.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is good to be here to speak on behalf of the amazing people of North Island—Powell River on the budget bill.

I want to acknowledge that it is really hard times. Not only in Canada but in many countries across the planet, we are seeing massive challenges during this time. I feel fundamentally that we have to raise the bar of dignity in this country so that people can live with dignity and respect, and we know that is not happening enough.

I will talk a little bit about the things I am supportive of in this budget and also share some of my concerns.

The first thing I want to bring up is the launching of the new national school food program. My colleague, the member for Courtenay—Alberni, and I were with our leader in Comox Valley. We were standing with representatives of Lush Valley, which does tremendous work in our region providing safe, local food and works with a lot of schools in the region to make sure there is healthy food provided. What they were very clear about was that they were grateful for how much the provincial government in B.C. had stood up and given funding, but they needed to see that funding matched because the need is increasing so much.

We know that young people across Canada are faced with challenges, and it is very hard to learn when one has not had breakfast. One of the things about this program that I fundamentally believe in is that it has to be accessible for everyone. When we talk about dignity, it means making sure that what one person gets the other person gets, and that there is no feeling of “you go off and eat because we know you are poor”, which is so destructive. I am really proud of the work that is being done here. I know that Lush Valley and many organizations across my riding will be grateful for this money because it will provide food in a way that is open and friendly and make sure that nobody, even these young children, lose their dignity in that sense.

I was also happy to see the health transfer grow. It is not as much as I would necessarily like it to be, but in my riding, health care is, in some cases, at a pretty significant crisis point. The provincial government has stood up and done a lot of profound and important work, but there is still so much more that needs to be done and that needs revenue.

I think of the folks in Port Hardy. I was there not too long ago, and we were talking a lot about the fact that their emergency room is closed for several hours in the night and how hard it is when people have an emergency and they have to go to Port McNeill. From Alert Bay, they have to take a ferry now instead of going to their hospital to get the help that they need.

In my riding, there are a lot of people aging, and they want to age in place. They want to age in their communities because they know one another and they support one another. That is really important, so I am glad to see this increase. I really hope it supports these people in a meaningful way. We need to see health care being taken of. We need emergency rooms open, and we need health care to be accessible. We need to make sure that it helps people stay in their communities of choice. We have a large country, which is something unique about Canada, but we need to make sure that this increase really helps.

I appreciate as well the expanding of the Canada student loan forgiveness program to pharmacists, dentists, dental hygienists, midwives, early childhood educators, teachers, social workers, personal support workers, physiotherapists and psychologists who choose to work for rural and remote regions. This is really important, because it creates an attraction strategy to show people the beautiful places to live all across Canada. However, the one thing that concerns me about this is that I do not see anything here that would maximize retention.

We know that a lot of people go to smaller communities, they live there for a few years and all too often they will leave once their student loans are paid off, in this example specifically. We need to see support in terms of retention. When I talk to health care providers, sometimes the concerns are things like not enough child care or not enough resources for them to do some of the things they really need to do. We need those services in rural and remote communities. We know that once people settle in those communities, often their lives are so much stronger because of the close connection of the community. It is unfortunate right now because what we are seeing is this constant spinning door of people coming into the community and leaving. We really need to look at retention. I am happy this was done, but I want to see more retention.

● (1725)

In terms of affordability, I was happy to see some of the work done around cracking down on predatory lending. We need to make sure that there is a higher level of accountability because too many people are low-income and they are going to these lending places and are having to pay such a high level of interest that they can never catch up.

I am actually hearing this about people who are providing care for seniors. They are making so little money that they are continuing to have to borrow just to make ends meet and that creates a system that we do not want. It does concern me because the other thing we know is that, in the previous budget, we saw a commitment to making sure that the people who were providing those services would get \$25, at the very least. We know that the provinces and territories have not signed on to this, so something is not working to make it attractive enough.

Government Orders

We need to see the wages improve for people who do that care work, who go into people's homes and help them and who go into long-term care facilities and into assisted living facilities and do that important care work. We know it is largely women and unfortunately they are not being paid enough. Therefore, I am glad that there is some accountability for these lending organizations that are very predatory, because the harms can be fundamentally bad and it really leaves people grasping.

I want to thank the member for Courtenay—Alberni for his incredible work. We saw the doubling of the volunteer firefighters tax credit and the search and rescue volunteers tax credit, from \$3,000 to \$6,000. This is incredible. What we need to understand is that, in rural communities, they would not be able to get insurance on their homes if it were not for the amazing people volunteering as firefighters, because that creates some safety. Therefore, we have to make sure that those amazing volunteers get more. This got us to \$6,000, and we want to see it even higher because we know that people who look after our communities and keep us safe need the recognition.

I am excited about the fact that we see some money going into indigenous loan guarantee programs. We need to see indigenous communities getting the supports they need to build their businesses. We know that our legislative agenda, both provincially and federally, has been to isolate indigenous communities from participating in our economy for far too long. We are still trying to overcome some of those systemic problems, so it is good to see some movement.

I was also pleased to see a bit more tax for those who are making a ton of money off of the labour of everyday Canadians. We know that there is the implementation of a 15% global minimum tax to ensure that large multinational corporations start to pay close to their fair share, wherever they do business. That is really important because it is about time that we see that.

There are some things that did concern me about this budget. I was glad that we came along and made sure that Indigenous Services did not see the big cut in funding that was predicted and being forecast. We worked really hard to make sure that funding was not removed.

I am also very concerned about the first nations funding for languages. We have heard very clearly from the First Peoples' Cultural Council that this is a big concern. For my riding, North Island College has worked with several indigenous communities across our riding to build courses so that people can come in and learn the language. That is for everybody, and it is quite profound to see both indigenous people and non-indigenous people coming to learn the language of the first people of the territory that they live on. I think of the 'Namgis First Nation, which is creating a whole cultural revolution in its region and really helping children, often who are exposed mostly, if not 100%, to their own language first for a period of time so that the language will be strong in them. I know that Tla'amin Nation near Powell River is doing a lot of tremendous work in this area as well. Therefore, it is too bad not to see that language funding there because we know that is a key part.

I look forward to answering any questions.

• (1730)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the next sitting be 12 midnight, pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, February 28.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, February 28, the minister's request to extend the sitting is deemed adopted.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2024, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the member's approach to taking us through this budget legislation and highlighting the work that is being done in a constructive way, as well as pushing the government to do more in areas that are of concern.

I, too, hear from many constituents within my riding of Waterloo. There are a diversity of perspectives and concerns. Something I want to ask about is the importance of national programming, of different political parties working together to deliver for Canadians, and finding a way, a collaborative approach, to push each other to do better and to do more.

I think about the national food program, which was referred to. A young constituent in my riding named Scarlett could not understand why some people had access to that food and others did not. To see this as part of our budget is something that she and her grandma were really excited about.

I would like to hear from the member as to the importance of finding a way forward to deliver for our constituents. Are these programs we are hearing about programs that we can take for granted, or should we be concerned with ensuring that there are protections in place to ensure that more Canadians benefit from these types of programs?

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have worked with the member for a long time at committee, and I really appreciate her work ethic.

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My response is something that I hear a lot from my constituents. Sometimes we see the province doing a lot of work. In B.C. there are a lot of supports being put into place to provide food and housing, but there is not as much with the federal government pitching in as a partner to deal with these big issues, which are the result of underfunding from multiple governments, not only the Liberal government, but also Conservative governments. They are too big to have just started recently and are a cumulative reaction to being underfunded for a long time.

Therefore, I am glad this funding would be here, but we definitely need to see more resources on the ground. It just comes back to our bar of dignity and how low we are going to let people sink below it in our country.

• (1735)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member something. Veterans' issues are noticeably absent in this budget. However, the one issue I have been seized with, and I know the member has been seized with it as well, is having the Persian Gulf War veterans deemed as having wartime status. Only two times in our nation's history have we done that, both for the Korean War veterans and the merchant mariners, all of which was 30 years after service. In this case, we are 30 years after the Persian Gulf War.

The Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Veterans Affairs have it within their power, with one fell swoop of a pen, to deem it as wartime service. I wonder if the member is as disappointed as I am that we did not see any of that in this budget.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the member and I have a shared passion for the people who have served our country.

I am disappointed to see not very much for veterans. We have definitely seen Persian Gulf veterans coming forward. I know at committee, which I sit on, there have been multiple motions trying to get to that study to showcase the reality and to acknowledge that these veterans are not receiving the amount of resources they need to make due in a way that is respectful. We have to acknowledge their service and the detriment of that service, regardless of whether it was called a war or not.

I hope to get this done quickly. I hope the government will work with us, but I know collectively that we will be pushing this forward because it is about time that the Persian Gulf veterans are treated the right way. My grandfather was a Korean vet, and it took those veterans a long time to get acknowledged as well. Service is service, and we need to acknowledge that sacrifice.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked at length about the importance of helping the people who really need help. Does my colleague think that the oil companies need help?

This budget clearly contains a new subsidy for oil companies in the form of a tax credit, supposedly for "clean" hydrogen. The amount of the tax credit varies from 15% to 40%, depending on the carbon intensity of the hydrogen produced.

Does she think that oil companies need a new subsidy? Do they really need help?

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the member has a really important question. I do not think the oil patch needs more support right now. We know for a fact that the industry is making more money than it has in the last 30 years. The cost at the pump is directly linked to profits going to people in those companies and their shareholders. Working people are not getting the benefit.

The government needs to take accountability for that and make sure that the people who are working hard to get the resources get the money, instead of our money, as taxpayers, going to make the lives of the shareholders easier.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in today's debate in support of Bill C-69, the budget implementation act.

Today, too many young Canadians feel as though the deck is stacked against them. They can get a good job and work hard, but far too often the reward of a middle-class life, a life that is secure, comfortable and prosperous, remains out of reach.

[Translation]

That is why we are taking action today to ensure fairness for every generation, and why we are stimulating the kind of economic growth that will allow every generation of Canadians to reach their full potential.

[English]

To ensure every Canadian succeeds in the 21st century, we must grow our economy to be more innovative and more productive. To do this, the government's economic plan is investing in the technologies, incentives and supports that are critical to increasing productivity, fostering innovation and attracting more private investments in Canada. This is how we will build an economy that unlocks new pathways for every generation to earn their fair share.

• (1740)

[Translation]

A competitive economy is a clean economy. What better proof could there be than the \$2.4-trillion in net-zero investments made around the world last year? Canada is at the forefront of the global race to attract investment and seize the opportunities that come with a clean economy.

That is also why our government announced an economic plan to achieve net-zero emissions that includes investments of more than \$160 billion. The plan includes an unprecedented package of investment tax credits to help attract investment with incentives totalling \$93 billion by 2034-35.

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In budget 2024, the government announced the next steps in its plan to attract major investment to Canada to create well-paying jobs and to develop and deploy clean energy and technology faster.

[English]

The important piece of legislation that I am here to discuss today delivers two investment tax credits: the clean hydrogen and the clean technology manufacturing investment tax credits. Passing these two tax credits into law will secure a cleaner, more prosperous future for Canadians today and tomorrow.

The clean hydrogen investment tax credit would support investments in projects that produce clean hydrogen through eligible production pathways. This refundable tax credit, which would be available as of March 28, 2023, could be claimed when eligible equipment becomes available for use, at a credit rate that is based on the carbon intensity of the hydrogen that is produced.

The clean technology manufacturing investment tax credit would be available as of January 1, 2024. This is a refundable investment tax credit equal to 30% of the cost of investments in machinery and equipment used to manufacture or process key clean technologies, and extract, process or recycle certain critical minerals essential to clean technology supply chains.

Now we are coming to one of my favourite subjects, which is the mineral exploration tax credit and critical minerals. Another piece of important legislation in this bill includes the one-year extension of the mineral exploration tax credit. The mineral exploration tax credit provides important support to junior mineral exploration companies working to unlock Canada's incredible mineral wealth, creating jobs and growing our economy. This extension is expected to provide \$65 million to support mineral exploration investment.

[Translation]

Our country's abundant minerals and metals play a key role in the Canadian economy. Canada has the talented workforce, the infrastructure, the innovation and the environmental management capacity to develop these natural resources sustainably. As a result, Canada can create well-paying jobs that contribute to economic growth.

By investing in mining and exploration, the government, through its economic plan, is helping to promote sustainable resource development, create good jobs, grow the economy and foster indigenous economic participation.

[English]

We also plan on further advancing indigenous economic participation through the indigenous loan guarantee program. An economy that is fair for everyone is one where everyone is able to fully participate.

With budget 2024, we are taking action to ensure indigenous communities are able to share in Canada's prosperity and benefit from the new opportunities ahead. Bill C-69 would help launch the indigenous loan guarantee program, with up to \$5 billion in loan guarantees to unlock the access to capital for indigenous communities, create economic opportunities and support their economic development priorities.

[Translation]

Under this program, successful applicants will be able to obtain loans from financial institutions at lower interest rates.

The budget also provides for an investment of \$16.5 million over two years to Natural Resources Canada, including \$3.5 million over two years to provide funding for capacity building in indigenous communities. This investment will help indigenous communities apply for the program and support its implementation.

Establishing the indigenous loan guarantee program is a very important step towards indigenous self-determination as well as reconciliation between Canada and indigenous peoples.

• (1745)

[English]

The measures I touched on today will support our efforts to attract investment, increase productivity, boost innovation and create good-paying, meaningful jobs.

[Translation]

We are at a pivotal moment: We can choose to renew and double down on our investment in the economy of the future, choose to develop a more productive and competitive economy, or risk leaving an entire generation behind.

[English]

Let us not take that risk. We owe it to our businesses, to our innovators and, most of all, to the upcoming generations of workers to make sure that the Canadian economy is positioned to thrive in a changing world.

I urge all members to support the speedy passage of this bill so we can implement these important measures to support Canadians. I am thankful for the opportunity to make this case today.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the almost nine years that the government has been in power, we have seen that it has not reinstated co-op housing and scaled it up to the 25,000 units a year we were building in the seventies and eighties. The Conservatives built none.

Government Orders

We were able to get the Liberals to come gradually on, with a small amount in the last budget, but we are still not seeing that built. Now we have a pile of money in housing, but they have not told us how many units they are going to build of co-op housing. We are short almost 700,000 units. One just needs to go outside to see what this looks like; there are homeless people everywhere. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives have a free market approach to an affordable housing crisis. There is nowhere in the world where the free market has solved an affordable housing problem. It is a myth and a falsity, and it will not happen.

Will my colleague please tell us when the government is going to get back into non-market housing, because it is going to be required instead of these free market trinkets, and actually build some non-market housing to solve this affordable housing crisis?

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, in this budget, we have rolled out the most ambitious and, I would say, one of the boldest housing plans we have seen in our country. That plan will see us unlock almost four million homes by 2031. What I find very important about our plan is that it is being done in consultation with municipalities and provinces in determining what their needs are. Municipalities are best positioned to tell us what they need in their communities. With that, the planning and the programs my colleague asked about will be unfolding as those conversations and those important consultations get under way.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sticking with the theme of housing, which has been such an important part of this supposed budget but was nowhere in the budget implementation act, if we are really working toward housing solutions here, why has every organization, including the government's organization, the CMHC, or Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, indicated there are going to be fewer and fewer homes built in the future because of the government's policies? We are not solving anything.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, when the housing plan was rolled out a few weeks ago, we received a lot of feedback from key stakeholders and people who are very much involved in and knowledgeable of the housing sector. This plan was endorsed by and received positive reinforcement from many of those stakeholder groups. The many consultations we had with those key groups involved in the housing sector allowed us to come up with these measures.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the Official Languages Act was first enacted, the Canadian government has been saying that it wants to protect the French language in Canada. However, in Quebec, home to 90% of francophones, it has used its official languages legislation to support only English. For two years, the Liberals have been saying that they now want to protect French, even in Quebec. However, we see nothing in the budget on that front. We saw no changes in previous budgets either, or in the action plan for official languages.

What does my colleague think about that?

• (1750)

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, as a proud Franco-Ontarian, I understand the importance of the French language. This gov-

ernment's dedication to protecting the French language, in Canada, in Quebec and outside Quebec, is very important. We have introduced bills and we continue to work towards achieving that objective.

[English]

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the budget implementation act, budget 2024. In its budget, the Liberal government makes the audacious claim that its ongoing investments are “making life more affordable for Canadians and improving access to housing.” I thought I would compare that to what is actually happening on the ground in communities across Canada and in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove.

What has happened in the last nine years under the Liberal government? Instead of making life more affordable, two million Canadians are regularly using food banks, and that demand is growing. The demand is growing to the point that some food banks are starting to ration what they can give, even turning some people away. That is hardly making life more affordable.

How about improving access to housing? The average house price in Canada has doubled in the last nine years. In my riding, in Langley, the Fraser Valley and part of metro Vancouver, the increases have been even more dramatic. The average price in Canada for a house nine years ago was \$400,000. Today, it is double that at \$800,000. When we add to that the tripling of interest rates, making mortgage payments has become very difficult for some Canadians.

I was talking to someone in my community just the other day who told me that he bought a house with his brother and parents a couple of years ago. At that time, with the relatively lower interest rates, their payment was \$4,000 a month. They renewed it just a little while ago. Interest rates have gone up dramatically, and their payment has doubled to \$8,000 a month. So much for helping the middle class and making housing more accessible.

The people in Langley, and certainly this family I talked to, say they are not looking for government handouts. They want lower interest rates so they can make their payments and eventually pay off their houses. I am speaking of one family, but I have heard this from many others. Canadians do not believe that whatever the Liberal government is trying to do is making life more affordable for Canadians or improving access to housing. It is quite the opposite.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

STOPPING INTERNET SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ACT

The House resumed from April 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-270, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (pornographic material), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Shefford and the Bloc Qu  b  cois critic for the status of women, I want to say that we support Bill C-270 in principle. We would like to examine this bill in committee. The Bloc Qu  b  cois fully supports the bill's stated objective, which is to combat child pornography and the distribution and commercialization of non-consensual pornography.

Since the first warning about the tragedy of women and girls whose sexual exploitation is the source of profits for major online porn companies, the Bloc Qu  b  cois has been involved at every stage and at all times in the public process to expose the extent of this public problem, which goes to our core values, including the right to dignity, safety and equality.

On this subject of online sexual exploitation, as on all facets and forms of the sexual exploitation of women, we want to stand as allies not only of the victims, but also of all the women who are taking action to combat violence and exploitation. I will begin by giving a little background on the topic, then I will explain the bill and, in closing, I will expand on some of the other problems that exist in Canada.

First, let us not forget that the public was alerted to the presence of non-consensual child pornography by an article that was published in the New York Times on December 4, 2020. The article reported the poignant story of 14-year old Serena K. Fleites. Explicit videos of her were posted on the website Pornhub without her consent.

This Parliament has already heard the devastating, distressing and appalling testimony of young Serena, which helped us understand the sensitive nature and gravity of the issue, but also the perverse mechanisms that porn streaming platforms use to get rich by exploiting the flaws of a technological system that, far from successfully controlling the content that is broadcast, is built and designed to promote and yet conceal the criminal practices of sexual exploitation.

Reports regarding the presence of child sexual abuse material and other non-consensual content on the adult platform Pornhub led the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics to undertake a study on the protection of privacy and reputation on online platforms such as Pornhub. My colleague from Laurentides—Labelle has followed this issue closely.

The committee noted that these platforms' content moderation practices had failed to protect privacy and reputation and had failed to prevent child sexual abuse material from being uploaded, despite statements by representatives of MindGeek and Pornhub who testified before the committee.

That same committee looked at regulating adult sites and online pornography, without challenging the legality. The committee heard

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testimony from survivors, critics of MindGeek's practices, child protection organizations, members of law enforcement, the federal government, academics, experts and support organizations, and it received many briefs.

The Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics made 14 recommendations regarding the problems it had studied. The committee's 2021 report was clear and it recommended that the government introduce a bill to create a new regulator to ensure that online platforms remove harmful content, including depictions of child sexual exploitation and non-consensual images.

We know that sexually explicit content is being uploaded to Pornhub without the consent of the individuals involved, including minors, and that these individuals have tried and failed to get Pornhub to remove that content. We know that these survivors have been traumatized and harassed and that most of them have thought about suicide. That is the type of testimony that we heard at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women with regard to cases of sexual exploitation.

We know that even if content is finally removed, users just re-upload it shortly afterward. We know that the corporate structure of MindGeek, which was renamed Aylo last August, is the quintessential model for avoiding accountability, transparency and liability. We know that investigations are under way and that there has been a surge in online child sexual exploitation reports.

We must now legislate to respond to these crimes and deal with these problems. We also need to keep in mind the magnitude of the criminal allegations and the misconduct of which these companies are accused. Just recently, a new class action lawsuit was filed in the United States against MindGeek and many of the sites it owns, including Pornhub, over allegations of sex trafficking involving tens of thousands of children.

● (1755)

Let us not forget that these companies are headquartered right in Montreal. The fact that our country is home to mafia-style companies that profit from sexual exploitation is nothing to be proud of. The international community is well aware of this, and it reflects poorly on us. For these reasons, we have an additional obligation to take action, to find solutions that will put an end to sexual exploitation, and to implement those solutions through legislation.

With that in mind, we must use the following questions to guide our thinking. Are legislative proposals on this subject putting forward the right solutions? Will they be effective at controlling online sexual exploitation and, specifically, preventing the distribution of non-consensual content and pornographic content involving minors?

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Second, let us talk a little more about Bill C-270. This bill forces producers of pornographic material to obtain the consent of individuals and to ensure that they are of age. In addition, distributors will have to obtain written confirmation from producers that the individuals' consent has been obtained and that they are of age before the material is distributed. These new Criminal Code provisions will require large platforms and producers to have a process for verifying individuals' age and consent, without which they will be subject to fines or imprisonment.

The House will be considering two bills simultaneously. The first is Bill C-270, from the member for Peace River—Westlock, with whom I co-chair the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. The second is Bill C-63, introduced by the Minister of Justice, which also enacts new online harms legislation and aims to combat the sexual victimization of children and to make intimate content communicated without consent inaccessible.

We will need to achieve our goals, which are to combat all forms of online sexual exploitation and violence, stop the distribution and marketing of all pornographic material involving minors, prevent and prohibit the distribution of explicit non-consensual content, force adult content companies and platforms to control the distribution of such content, and make them accountable and criminally responsible for the presence of such content on their online platforms.

There is a debate about the law's ability to make platforms accountable for hosted content. It also raises questions about the relevance of self-regulation in the pornography industry.

Third, let us talk about what we can do here. Due to the high volume of complaints it receives, the RCMP often reacts to matters relating to child sexual abuse material, or CSAM, rather than acting proactively to prevent them. Canada's criminal legislation prohibits child pornography, but also other behaviours aimed at facilitating the commission of a sexual offence against a minor. It prohibits voyeurism and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images. Other offences of general application such as criminal harassment and human trafficking may also apply depending on the circumstances.

In closing, I will provide a few figures to illustrate the scope of this problem. Between 2014 and 2022, there were 15,630 incidents of police-reported online sexual offences against children and 45,816 incidents of online child pornography. The overall rate of police-reported online child sexual exploitation incidents has also risen since 2014. The rate of online child pornography increased 290% between 2014 and 2022. Girls were overrepresented as victims for all offence types over that 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, who accounted for 71% of victims.

Incidents of non-consensual distribution of intimate images most often involved a youth victim and a youth accused. Nearly all child and youth victims, 97% to be exact, between 2015 to 2022 were aged 12 to 17 years, with a median age of 15 years for girls and 14 years for boys. Overall, nine in 10 accused persons, or 90%, were youth aged 12 to 17. For one-third of youth victims, or 33%, a ca-

sual acquaintance had shared the victim's intimate images with others.

Here is a quote from the Montreal Council of Women: "On behalf of the members of the Montreal Council of Women, I wish to confirm our profound concern for those whose lives have been turned upside down by the involuntary and/or non-consensual sharing of their images on websites and other platforms such as the Montreal-based Pornhub. The 'stopping Internet sexual exploitation act' will make much-needed amendments to the Criminal Code to protect children and those who have not given consent for their images and other content to be shared and commercialized."

We must act. It is a question of safety for our women and girls. Young women and girls are depending on it.

● (1800)

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak to Bill C-270, which is an act to amend the Criminal Code around pornographic material.

We all, in the House, agree that we do not want to see children treated in a way that is sexualized. Children deserve to be children as long as possible. We know that, far too often, without consent, young people are exposed to predators who take advantage of their vulnerability.

I think it is important. I look forward to seeing the bill go to committee, where we can do some of the work. However, we also have to acknowledge some factors that move us into this place of having images online without young people's consent. We want to make sure that people participating in this realm are 18 or older. We need to find ways to address this.

We know that the resources are not there, as well, for enforcement to go after some of these very serious predators. We need to see the resources there, and they need to be supported so that we can move forward and protect young people.

I look forward to hearing those witnesses. We know that, as we move forward with this type of legislation, we have to look at ways that express consent can be given safely. This is something that we should be talking about a lot here, not only the outcome of this behaviour. We see young people being exploited; we see predators using technology to groom young people and mislead them into thinking they are someone else, then young people are sharing content about themselves that they should not be sharing.

When we think about this behaviour, we have to understand that these are predators. The bad people are not easy to see, and whenever it is revealed, we are often shocked by the members of our community who are part of this. I hope this discussion also looks at how we address that.

When we think of preventative measures, a significant part of prevention is looking at how we see sex education through our education fields and in the places where young people can come together and learn factual information. There is a lot of factual information that supports this.

I was looking at the report by Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights, which talks about the state of sex ed in Canada. I love the hashtag. It says #SexEdSavesLives, and I believe that is absolutely true. If young people are exposed, it is getting harder and harder for people who love them to try to find ways to keep them safe. That is the world we live in, with technology right now, as young people have access to information.

Part of keeping young people safe is allowing them to have the appropriate education for their needs. The report says some things. It says:

In sum, the sex-ed most young people in Canada receive is:

1. Not meeting international standards and best practices nor is it meeting our own 2019 Canadian Guidelines for Sexuality Education;
2. Outdated;
3. Not comprehensive;
4. Not monitored or evaluated to ensure high-quality delivery; and
5. Offered by educators who receive low to no support from provinces and educational systems and whose comfort levels are often low.

This leads to a lack of safety for young people if they do not understand the information that is around them. If a person has issues around sexuality as a young person, or really at any age, and they are fearful and do not know whom to ask, often they go where there are secrets. They do this because they are keeping a secret about their own understanding.

We have to think about that. We have to think about how young people are prepared or not prepared for these things.

As they are exploring, if they do not have a safe adult to go to and learn more from, if they do not have a place of education that teaches them factual information about their bodies and what is happening, then they are left vulnerable. It is really important that we do not leave young people vulnerable.

• (1805)

I had the great pleasure of raising two beautiful sons, and we spent a lot of time talking about things so that they would have an understanding. What I found is that my openness led to their friends coming to ask me questions, and sometimes they were very interesting questions. However, it allowed for that safe adult who was going to talk to them openly about it, who was not going to create a secret or hiding place but be open and up front, and it seemed to help.

I will read again from the report, and the amazing people in the House should not worry. I will make sure to send the link so that they know where the content is coming from. It reads:

...the federal government, as signatory to international human rights treaties, is failing to hold provinces and territories accountable to delivering comprehensive sexuality education in line with human rights obligations. This runs contrary to positions taken by Canada at the UN that support the full implementation of comprehensive sexuality education around the world.

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The threat is everywhere. I know it is scary, but a defence mechanism is making sure that people are properly educated, especially young people. I think that, regardless of our opinions on a lot of things in the House, everybody here understands, hopefully, that children are a precious gift and that we want to protect them as long as we possibly can. However, ignoring reality is not protecting them. Not talking about things that are happening for them and their friends is not helping them. It is keeping them less safe. Let us make sure that we educate people who will educate our children, that we are engaged in that process and that we make sure it is one of the beautiful lines of defence that we have created in our children, knowing that they can talk about these things openly.

The other thing that has come up as a concern around the bill, which I hope we address meaningfully in the study that we are doing, is around the safety of sex workers, and this is something that I am very passionate about. We know that there are a lot of people who are of the age of consent, and they are doing this work. It has happened forever. I cannot tell members when it was not happening. We know that sex work continues to be something that is just part of us as a people across the planet. One of the things that worries me is that we have to look at how we are building the defences so that we can protect our children. Part of building defences is making sure that sex work is safe, that people have the ability to talk about what is happening to them and that they are not put into positions where they are made increasingly vulnerable.

I was reading a report that Pivot Legal Society in B.C. sent as a submission to the special rapporteur on violence against women and girls for its report to the UN Human Rights Council on prostitution and violence against women and girls, and it was done in January of this year. One of the things that it talked about was this:

Qualitative research and data from Canada consistently shows that criminalization and policing of clients, under demand legislative models, shape sex workers' health and safety, and that police-based enforcement heighten the risk of violence, by reducing sex workers' ability to employ client screening mechanisms and negotiate safer terms of sexual transactions, including condom use for prevention of HIV/STI....

When we think about this, when we look at the legislation that we are making in this place, across this country and in every province and territory, part of what we have to be addressing is how we keep people safe.

When we have sexuality and that part of our human nature secret, repressed and pushed down, it comes out in ways that are dysfunctional, sick and violent, and that worries me. We need to make it safer for people to do what they do, because it takes it out of the shadows and makes it something that we can actually deal with that is out there. The more we repress it, push it aside and pretend it is not happening, the less safe children are and the less safe people are, and it is not okay.

I think of times in my community when I was approached about particular segments of the community that refused to use condoms when they were having sex with sex workers, and desperate people were getting into desperate situations. However, the spreading of STIs and HIV was only increasing, and the health outcomes were terrible.

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When we look at this issue, we should make sure that we are keeping children precious, make sure that we are keeping sex workers safe and make sure that education is at the core of it.

• (1810)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. It is especially a pleasure to rise when we are speaking to a bill that is on a subject I am very passionate about.

I have spoken before in this House about things I said when I was on the doorstep, in my time, dealing with Internet exploitation of children. That was something I devoted a number of years to in my professional career. It is something I am very proud of, and it is something that taught me a lot about life, about healing, about trauma and, sadly, about how prolific this type of exploitation is.

I believe it was my colleague from the Bloc who spoke about increases in numbers. If memory serves, when we talk about sexual exploitation of children, the spike in numbers happens, and this is not something that gets mentioned when opposing parties speak about the Harper government and its tough-on-crime agenda. One thing that does not get mentioned is that a number of providers, be it media providers or ISP providers, were getting a free ride. They knew or ought to have known that their platforms were being used to facilitate either the potential or actual sexual exploitation of children, which typically begins with the offence of Internet luring.

What happened, I believe in 2012, is that the Harper government passed legislation that placed a positive obligation on service providers to report suspected abuse of children. No longer could a platform simply look the other way. No longer could a platform simply say that it did not know what was going on. A lot of platforms probably knew it was going on or chose not to know that it was going on, because it was easier and cheaper to do business as usual. From 2012, if we look at the graphs, we can actually see this spiking. That spike really has not receded to this day.

I was speaking at the B.C. ICE conference with a number of brave officers, pediatricians and workers who put their lives into addressing sexual offences against children. There were probably about 100 people in a room, generally from British Columbia. It was one of the most profound honours I have had as a member of Parliament. I attended this conference as an attendee, just somebody who was trying to learn more. This year I was invited to be one of the keynote speakers. What a profound honour to go from attendee to keynote speaker.

We still see this spike. Technology and the law are really not working hand in hand, especially when we think about technology and how far we have to go: not only how far we have to go when it comes to technology, but how far we have to go when it comes to sentencing.

I will pause here to note that in 2011, in a case called *Woodward*, a former Supreme Court of Canada justice, Justice Moldaver, when he was on the Ontario Court of Appeal, actually said that when it came to Internet luring, we should be looking at sentences of three to five years. This is a judge who later went on to the Supreme Court of Canada. I still remember the language he used. He talked

about “this insidious crime”, the one that targets children in such a hidden way. Here we are dealing with it.

When I was on the doorsteps of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, when I was running for office, one of the things I committed to was changing the name of “child pornography” to “child sexual abuse and exploitation material”. I am very proud that my colleague from North Okanagan—Shuswap and I will be giving evidence as witnesses at third reading in the Senate on Thursday on Bill C-291. I researched the bill. I authored the bill, and I put forward the bill. My colleague sponsored the bill. It was unanimously passed at second reading and third reading, and now it is at third reading in the Senate and is about to be considered at committee. Again, it is a profound honour to be able to do this.

• (1815)

It is my hope that when we talk about things that are in Bill C-270, for instance, that we would eliminate the term “child pornography”. Pornography implies consent. Pornography implies adults who are voluntarily doing things. Children can never consent, so it is time we eliminate the term from our legal lexicon. Bill C-270 tells us why we need to be aware of this, so it is my hope that we will receive royal assent very quickly on Bill C-291.

I am just going to go through a few of the aspects of Bill C-270 and provide some input as to why I do support it, particularly as it relates to child sexual abuse and exploitation material that is being put on the Internet. Obviously I support the punishment at subsection 2 and the designation of the offence.

The reality is that I cannot adequately say how many times the police will come to ask questions when someone deals with this type of matter in a prosecutorial context. It is an area of law that someone needs to sink their teeth into in order to understand it. Unless someone spends a lot of time with it, I find, it has a really steep learning curve. It took me a long time. I still felt like a bit of an amateur even when I was elected here, with respect to the nature of the law on these types of things.

One of the struggles that the police would communicate to me when it was an attempt to prove Internet luring or possession of child sexual abuse and exploitation material was the age of the person being dealt with. That puts forward, again, a positive obligation. For those, like my mother, who are at home watching this on CPAC and who may wonder what I mean by a positive obligation, it is a requirement for somebody to take action.

One thing I really like about the bill is that it is not stating that somebody would need to refrain from doing something, which would be a negative obligation. There would be a positive obligation to ascertain the age. A failure to do that, to take that step, is the nature of the offence that I am speaking of right now, the failure to ascertain that a person is actually 18 years of age.

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In my view, child sexual abuse and exploitation material is a blight on our society. If anybody thinks that it is just something that happens over there or happens elsewhere, in my experience it is something happening far more than we want to admit, yet what have we seen when it comes to sentences? I referenced Justice Mol-daver earlier on Internet luring.

We have seen the Supreme Court of Canada come out with a case called *R. v. Friesen* that said mid-single-digit penitentiary terms should not be odd; they should be the norm. I cannot recall whether the maximum sentence for possession of child sexual abuse and exploitation material is 10 or 14 years, but for Internet luring it is 14 years, and for production, I believe, it is 14 years.

The court said that a maximum sentence should not be all that uncommon. I still look, to this day, at B.C. Court of Appeal decisions every day, just because I find them interesting. I cannot remember one time seeing anything close to the maximum sentence. In fact, what I am seeing more of is what used to be considered outlier cases, where community-based sentences are now being provided.

In 2011, a respected jurist said that we should be looking at three to five years for Internet luring. Then there was the Supreme Court of Canada case *R. v. Friesen* that said sentences should range from the upper-single digits to double digits on sexual offences against children, and the maximum should not be there. What are we seeing? We are just not seeing it come to fruition.

I know I have not touched on this as much as I could. I could obviously speak a lot more. I wholeheartedly endorse the bill. It is time that we address sexual offences in this country and that we do it with full vigour. I, my colleagues and, I believe, my colleagues across the aisle, should be focused on this. It is something that cannot wait another day.

• (1820)

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-270, an act to amend the Criminal Code (pornographic material), at second reading.

I would like to begin my remarks by stressing the bill's important objective. It is to ensure that those who make, distribute or advertise pornographic material verify that those depicted in that material are at least 18 years of age and have consented to its production and distribution.

As the sponsor has explained, the bill's objective is to implement recommendation number two of the 2021 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. Specifically, that report recommends that the government “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”.

This recommendation responds to ongoing concerns that corporations like Pornhub have made available pornographic images of persons who did not consent or were underage. I want to recognize and acknowledge that this conduct has caused those depicted in that material extreme suffering. I agree that we must do everything we

can to protect those who have been subjected to this trauma and to prevent it from occurring in the first place. I fully support the objective of the committee's recommendation.

I want to say at the outset that the government will be supporting this bill, Bill C-270, at second reading, but with some serious reservations. I have some concerns about the bill's ability to achieve the objective of the committee's recommendation. I look forward, at committee, to where we can hear from experts on whether this bill would be useful in combatting child pornography.

The bill proposes Criminal Code offences that would prohibit making, distributing or advertising pornographic material, without first verifying the age and consent of those depicted by examining legal documentation and securing formal written consent. These offences would not just apply to corporations. They would also apply to individuals who make or distribute pornographic material of themselves and others to generate income, a practice that is legal and that we know has increased in recent years due to financial hardship, including that caused by the pandemic.

Individuals who informally make or distribute pornographic material of themselves and of people they know are unlikely to verify age by examining legal documentation, especially if they already know the age of those participating in the creation of the material. They are also unlikely to secure formal written consent. It concerns me that such people would be criminalized by the bill's proposed offences, where they knew that everyone implicated was consenting and of age, merely because they did not comply with the bill's proposed regulatory regime governing how age and consent must be verified.

Who is most likely to engage in this conduct? The marginalized people who have been most impacted by the pandemic, in particular sex workers, who are disproportionately women and members of the 2SLGBTQI+ communities. Notably, the privacy and ethics committee clearly stated that its goal was “in no way to challenge the legality of pornography involving consenting adults or to negatively impact sex workers.” However, I fear that the bill's proposed reforms could very well have this effect.

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I am also concerned that this approach is not consistent with the basic principles of criminal law. Such principles require criminal offences to have a fault or a mental element, for example, that the accused knew or was reckless as to whether those depicted in the pornographic material did not consent or were not of age. This concern is exacerbated by the fact that the bill would place the burden on the accused to establish that they took the necessary steps to verify age and consent to avoid criminal liability. However, basic principles of criminal law specify that persons accused of criminal offences need only raise a reasonable doubt as to whether they committed the offence to avoid criminal liability.

I would also note that the committee did not specifically contemplate a criminal law response to its concerns. In fact, a regulatory response that applies to corporations that make, distribute or advertise pornographic material may be better positioned to achieve the objectives of the bill. For example, our government's bill, Bill C-63, which would enact the online harms act, would achieve many of Bill C-270's objectives. In particular, the online harms act would target seven types of harmful content, including content that sexually victimizes a child or revictimizes a survivor, and intimate content communicated without consent.

● (1825)

Social media services would be subjected to three duties: to act responsibly, to protect children and to make content inaccessible that sexually victimizes a child or revictimizes a survivor, as well as intimate images posted without consent.

These duties would apply to social media services, including livestreaming and user-uploaded adult content services. They would require social media services to actively reduce the risk of exposure to harmful content on their services; provide clear and accessible ways to flag harmful content and block users; put in place special protections for children; take action to address child sexual exploitation and the non-consensual posting of intimate content, including deepfake sexual images; and publish transparency reports.

Bill C-63 would also create a new digital safety commission to administer this regulatory framework and to improve the investigation of child pornography cases through amendments to the Mandatory Reporting Act. That act requires Internet service providers to report to police when they have reasonable grounds to believe their service is being used to commit a child pornography offence. Failure to comply with this obligation can result in severe penalties.

As I know we are all aware, the Criminal Code also covers a range of offences that address aspects of the concerns animating the proposed bill. Of course, making and distributing child pornography are both already offences under the Criminal Code. As well, making pornography without the depicted person's knowledge can constitute voyeurism, and filming or distributing a recording of a sexual assault constitutes obscenity. Also, distributing intimate images without the consent of the person depicted in those images constitutes non-consensual distribution of intimate images, and the Criminal Code authorizes courts to order the takedown or removal of non-consensual intimate images and child pornography.

All these offences apply to both individuals and organizations, including corporations, as set out in section 2 of the Criminal Code. Should parliamentarians choose to pursue a criminal response to

the concerns the proposed bill seeks to address, we may want to reflect upon whether the bill's objectives should be construed differently and its provisions amended accordingly.

I look forward to further studying such an important bill at committee.

● (1830)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the subject that we are dealing with this evening is a sensitive one. My colleagues have clearly demonstrated that in the last couple of minutes.

We all have access to the Internet and we basically use it for three reasons: for personal reasons, for professional reasons and for leisure, which can sometimes overlap with personal reasons. Pornography is one of those uses that is both for leisure and for personal reasons. To each their own.

The use of pornography is a personal choice that is not illegal. Some people might question that. We might agree or disagree, but it is a personal decision. However, the choice that one person makes for their own pleasure may be the cause of another person's or many other people's nightmare. Basically, that is what Bill C-270 seeks to prevent, what it seeks to sanction. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that people do not have to go through hell because of pornography. This bill seeks to criminalize the fact that, under the guise of legality, some of the images that are being viewed were taken or are being used illegally.

I want to talk briefly about the problem this bill addresses and the solutions that it proposes. Then, to wrap up, I will share some of my own thoughts about it.

For context for this bill and two others that are being studied, Bill S-210 and C-63, it was a newspaper article that sounded the alarm. After the article came out, a House of Commons committee that my esteemed colleague from Laurentides—Labelle sits on looked at the issue. At that time, the media informed the public that videos of women and children were available on websites even though these women and, naturally, these children never gave their consent to be filmed or for their video to be shared. We also learned that this included youths under 18. As I said, a committee looked at the issue. The images and testimonies received by the committee members were so shocking that several bills that I mentioned earlier were introduced to try to tackle the issue in whole or in part.

I want to be clear: watching pornography is not the problem—to each their own. If someone likes watching others have sex, that is none of my concern or anyone else's. However, the problem is the lack of consent of the people involved in the video and the use of children, as I have already said.

I am sure that the vast majority of consumers of pornography were horrified to find out that some of the videos they watched may have involved young people under the age of 18. These children sometimes wear makeup to look older. Women could be filmed without their knowledge by a partner or former partner, who then released the video. These are intimate interactions. People have forgotten what intimacy means. If a person agrees to be filmed in an intimate situation because it is kind of exciting or whatever, that is fine, but intimacy, as the word itself implies, does not mean public.

When a young person or an adult decides to show the video to friends to prove how cool it is that they got someone else to do something, that is degrading. It is beyond the pale. It gets to me because I saw that kind of thing in schools. Kids were so pleased with themselves. I am sorry, but it is rarely the girls who are so pleased with themselves. They are the ones who suffer the negative consequences. At the end of the day, they are the ones who get dragged through the mud. Porn sites were no better. They tried to absolve themselves by saying that they just broadcast the stuff and it is not up to them to find out if the person consented or was at least 18. Broadcasting is just as bad as producing without consent. It encourages these illegal, degrading, utterly dehumanizing acts.

• (1835)

I am going back to my notes now. The problem is that everyone is blaming everyone else. The producer says it is fine. The platform says it is fine. Ultimately, governments say the same thing. This is 2024. The Internet is not new. Man being man—and I am talking about humankind, humans in general—we were bound to find ourselves in degrading situations. The government waited far too long to legislate on this issue.

In fact, the committee that looked into the matter could only observe the failure of content moderation practices, as well as the failure to protect people's privacy. Even if the video was taken down, it would resurface because a consumer had downloaded it and thought it was a good idea to upload it again and watch it again. This is unspeakable. It seems to me that people need to use some brain cells. If a video can no longer be found, perhaps there is a reason for that, and the video should not be uploaded again. Thinking and using one's head is not something governments can control, but we have to do everything we can.

What is the purpose of this bill and the other two bills? We want to fight against all forms of sexual exploitation and violence online, end the streaming and marketing of all pornographic material involving minors, prevent and prohibit the streaming of non-consensual explicit content, force adult content companies and streaming services to control the streaming of this content and make them accountable and criminally responsible for the presence of this content on their online sites. Enough with shirking responsibility. Enough with saying: it is not my fault if she feels degraded, if her reputation is ruined and if, at the end of the day, she feels like throwing herself off a bridge. Yes, the person who distributes

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pornographic material and the person who makes it are equally responsible.

Bill C-270 defines the word “consent” and the expression “pornographic material”, which is good. It adds two new penalties. Essentially, a person who makes or distributes the material must ensure that the person involved in the video is 18 and has given their express consent. If the distributor does not ask for it and does not require it, they are at fault.

We must also think about some of the terms, such as “privacy”, “education”, but also the definition of “distributor” because Bill C-270 focuses primarily on distributors for commercial purposes. However, there are other distributors who are not in this for commercial purposes. That is not nearly as pretty. I believe we need to think about that aspect. Perhaps legal consumers of pornography would like to see their rights protected.

I will end with just one sentence: A real statesperson protects the dignity of the weak. That is our role.

• (1840)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words in support of Bill C-270, which is an excellent bill from my colleague from Peace River—Westlock, who has been working so hard over his nine years in Parliament to defend the interests of his constituents on important issues like firearms, forestry and fracking, but also to stand up for justice and the recognition of the universal human dignity of all people, including and especially the most vulnerable.

Bill C-270 seeks to create mechanisms for the effective enforcement of substantively already existing legal provisions that prohibit non-consensual distribution of intimate images and child pornography. Right now, as the law stands, it is a criminal offence to produce this type of horrific material, but there are not the appropriate legal mechanisms to prevent the distribution of this material by, for instance, large pornography websites.

It has come to light that Pornhub, which is headquartered in Canada, has completely failed to prevent the presence on its platform of non-consensual and child-depicting pornographic images. This has been a matter that has been studied in great detail at parliamentary committees. My colleague for Peace River—Westlock has played a central role, but other members from other parties have as well, in identifying the fact that Pornhub and other websites have not only failed but have shown no interest in meaningfully protecting potential victims of non-consensual and child pornographic images.

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It is already illegal to produce these images. Why, therefore, should it not also be clearly illegal to distribute those images without having the necessary proof of consent? This bill would require that there be verification of age and consent associated with images that are distributed. It is a common-sense legal change that would require and affect greater compliance with existing criminal prohibitions on the creation of these images. It is based on the evidence heard at committee and based on the reality that major pornography websites, many of which are headquartered in Canada, are continuing to allow this material to exist. To clarify, the fact that those images are on those websites means that we desperately need stronger legal tools to protect children and stronger legal tools to protect people who are victims of the non-consensual sharing of their images.

Further, in response to the recognition of the potential harms on children associated with exposure to pornography or associated with having images taken of them and published online, there has been discussion in Parliament and a number of different bills put forward designed to protect children in vulnerable situations. These bills are, most notably, Bill C-270 and Bill S-210.

Bill S-210 would protect children by requiring meaningful age verification for those who are viewing pornography. It is recognized that exposing children to sexual images is a form of child abuse. If an adult were to show videos or pictures to a child of a sexual nature, that would be considered child abuse. However, when websites fail to have meaningful age verification and, therefore, very young children are accessing pornography, there are not currently the legal tools to hold them accountable for that. We need to recognize that exposing young children to sexual images is a form of child abuse, and therefore it is an urgent matter that we pass legislation requiring meaningful age verification. That is Bill S-210.

Then we have Bill C-270, which would protect children in a different context. It would protect children from having their images depicted as part of child pornography. Bill C-270 takes those existing prohibitions further by requiring that those distributing images also have proof of age and consent.

• (1845)

This is common sense; the use of criminal law is appropriate here because we are talking about instances of child sexual abuse. Both Bill S-210 and Bill C-270 deal with child sexual abuse. It should be clear that the criminal law, not some complicated nebulous regulatory regime, is the appropriate mechanism for dealing with child abuse.

In that context, we also have a government bill that has been put forward, Bill C-63, which it calls the online harms act. The proposed bill is kind of a bizarre combination of talking about issues of radically different natures; there are some issues around speech, changes to human rights law and, potentially, attempts to protect children, as we have talked about.

The freedom of speech issues raised by the bill have been well discussed. The government has been denounced from a broad range of quarters, including some of their traditional supporters, for the failures of Bill C-63 on speech.

However, Bill C-63 also profoundly fails to be effective when it comes to child protection and the removal of non-consensual images. It would create a new bureaucratic structure, and it is based on a 24-hour takedown model; it says that if something is identified, it should be taken down within 24 hours. Anybody involved in this area will tell us that 24-hour takedown is totally ineffective, because once something is on the Internet, it is likely to be downloaded and reshared over and over again. The traumatization, the revictimization that happens, continues to happen in the face of a 24-hour takedown model.

This is why we need strong Criminal Code measures to protect children. The Conservative bills, Bill S-210 and Bill C-270, would provide the strong criminal tools to protect children without all the additional problems associated with Bill C-63. I encourage the House to pass these proposed strong child protection Criminal Code-amending bills, Bill S-210 and Bill C-270. They would protect children from child abuse, and given the legal vacuums that exist in this area, there can be no greater, more important objective than protecting children from the kind of violence and sexualization they are currently exposed to.

The Deputy Speaker: Continuing debate.

I recognize the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock for his right of reply.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to wrap up the debate on the SISE act at second reading.

I have appreciated listening to the members give their speeches. At the outset, I want to briefly urge members to use the term “child sexual abuse material”, or CSAM, rather than “child pornography”. As we heard from the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, the latter term is being replaced with CSAM because pornography allows for the idea that this could be consensual. That is why the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has put forward a bill that would change this in the Criminal Code as well.

During the first hour of debate, we heard from the member for Laurentides—Labelle, who gave a passionate speech outlining the many serious issues of the impact of the pornography industry on women and youth. I simply do not have the time to include all of that in my speech, but we both sat on the ethics committee during the Pornhub study and heard directly from the survivors who testified.

It was the speech, however, from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons that left me scratching my head. I do not think he actually read Bill C-270 or even the Liberals' own bill, Bill C-63. The parliamentary secretary fixated on the 24-hour takedown requirement in Bill C-63 as the solution to this issue. However, I do not think anyone is opposed to a 24-hour takedown for this exploitative intimate content sharing without consent or the child sexual abuse material. In fact, a bill that was solely focused on the 24-hour takedown would pass very quickly through this House with the support of everyone, but that does not take into account what Bill C-270 is trying to do. It is completely missing the point.

The 24-hour takedown has effect only after harmful content has been put up, such as CSAM, deepfakes and intimate images that have been shared. Bill C-270 is a preventative upstream approach. While the takedown mechanism should be available to victims, the goal of Bill C-270 is to go upstream and stop this abusive content from ever ending up on the Internet in the first place.

As I shared at the beginning of the debate, many survivors do not know that their images are online for years. They do not know that this exploitative content has been uploaded. What good would a 24-hour takedown be if they do not even know the content is there? I will repeat the words of one survivor that I shared during the first hour of debate: "I was 17 when videos of me on Pornhub came to my knowledge, and I was only 15 in the videos they've been profiting from." She did not know for two years that exploitative content of her was being circulated online and sold. That is why Bill C-270 requires age verification and consent of individuals in pornographic material before it is posted.

I would also point out that the primary focus of the government's bill is not to reduce harm to victims. The government's bill requires services "to mitigate the risk that users of the regulated service will be exposed to harmful content". It talks about users of the platform, not the folks depicted in it. The focus of Bill C-270 is the other side of the screen. Bill C-270 seeks to protect survivors and vulnerable populations from being the harmful content. The two goals could not be more different, and I hope the government is supportive of preventing victims of exploitation from further exploitation online.

My colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke also noted that the narrow focus of the SISE act is targeted at people and companies that profit from sexual exploitative content. This is, indeed, one of the primary aims of this bill. I hope, as with many things, that the spread of this exploitative content online will be diminished, as it is driven by profit. The Privacy Commissioner's investigation into Canada's MindGeek found that "MindGeek surely benefits commercially from these non-compliant privacy practices, which result in a larger content volume/stream and library of intimate content on its websites."

For years, pornography companies have been just turning a blind eye, and it is time to end that. Bill C-270 is a fulfillment of a key recommendation made by the ethics committee three years ago and supported by all parties, including the government. I hope to have the support from all of my colleagues in this place for Bill C-270, and I hope to see it at committee, where we can hear from survivors and experts.

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• (1850)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 8, 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. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, the standard of living in Canada is in a total free fall, and the carbon tax is causing this crisis. The only goals that the government has accomplished is to indebt Canadians more and more, and to make bankers and bondholders wealthier.

Common-sense Conservatives have a plan for Canada and have a plan to restore the promise of Canada, where people are the masters and the government is the servant. It would be a Canada where, if they were to work hard, they could accomplish anything. It would be a Canada that would be glorious and free. We would axe the tax so that Canadians could afford to put food on their tables, to put gas in their cars and to put heat in their homes. Back in March, I asked the Liberal minister this: When will he see the facts and axe the tax?

The fact is that, in Canada, life has never been so unaffordable. Our next generation will be the first generation that has it worse than the previous generation. I understand the frustration that Canadians are facing, and I know that because of the current government's incompetence, Canadians are broke and Canada is broken. Our young people are stuck in their parents' basements because under the Liberal-NDP government, rent has doubled, home prices have doubled, the cost of a down payment has doubled, and our dollar just does not go as far as it used to. Therefore, people's hard work does not pay either. All of that is due to the reckless government spending and bad Liberal policies.

Since I asked the minister my question, the Liberals have refused to listen to the 70% of Canadians and the 70% of premiers who asked that the hike be spiked and that the increase on the carbon tax be avoided. Nonetheless, the Liberals did not listen, and they increased the carbon tax on April 1 by 23%.

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The minister is making life more unaffordable for all Canadians every day. We have said it over and over again, and I will say it again. If the Liberals tax the farmer who grows the food, tax the trucker who delivers the food and tax the grocer who sells the food, Canadians cannot afford to buy food. The carbon tax is a tax on everything, both indirectly and directly, and it makes all aspects of our life more unaffordable.

For example, a school division in my riding, Peace River School Division, reported that it has spent \$522,000 on the carbon tax since 2020. That is over \$280,000 on transportation costs and \$240,000 in carbon tax to heat its facilities. What a shame it is for the government to be putting this strain on our education system, and in every area of the country for that matter. I wonder how many teachers the school division would have been able to hire with that money. I wonder how many new books or how many new building materials to build new schools could have been paid for with that money. Let us think about all the property tax that needed to be raised and collected to pay this tax. This is a tax on a tax.

This also affects municipalities, which are not exempt from the carbon tax. For the Town of Whitecourt, just heating its municipal buildings is costing it \$30,000 a year. There is no dimension of our society that is not being crushed by the carbon tax. Therefore, my question to the minister, again, and to the Liberal government is this: When will the Liberals do something good for Canadians and axe their disastrous carbon tax?

• (1855)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a common misconception about carbon pollution pricing. It is not a tax. It is a measure recognized as one of the lowest cost and most effective ways of reducing greenhouse gases, and therefore, of tackling the adverse impacts of climate change, which are very real. It is also a measure that the government has designed to make life more affordable for Canadians.

Natural disasters are on the rise due to climate change, and we are all suffering the effects and the costs too. Last summer, forest fires forced tens of thousands of Canadians to evacuate their homes. There were also droughts in the Prairies, where the hon. member is from. There were intense hurricanes on the east coast, extreme flooding on the west coast, and melting permafrost in the north. What does that mean? It means we all need to accelerate climate action.

Carbon pricing is core to serious climate action. It provides an incentive to innovate and reduce emissions, while allowing businesses and households to decide for themselves how best to reduce emissions. Carbon pricing is not about raising revenues. All proceeds from carbon pricing are returned to the jurisdiction they were collected from.

The Canada carbon rebate, the CCR, returns fuel charge proceeds to Canadian residents through direct deposit or cheque every three months. Eight out of 10 households receive more money back through the CCR than they pay toward the fuel charge. Residents of these provinces living in small and rural communities also receive a rural top-up, which the government, under Bill C-59, is proposing to double from 10% of the base amount to 20%. The system actual-

ly leaves most families, especially low- and middle-income ones, better off financially.

Carbon pricing is a fair system that does leave more money in the pockets of Canadian workers, and that makes life more affordable for lower-income families. The benefits go way beyond that. It is a tool to help us create healthier communities and usher in clean growth and a more sustainable future for our children and our children's children.

• (1900)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, no matter how many times the parliamentary secretary says it, Canadians are not better off under the carbon tax scheme. Canadians are feeling the weight of everyday costs going up, and we have seen that the carbon tax has cascaded through the economy, making life unaffordable.

We also see it when a local school division has to pay \$522,000 in carbon tax to heat its buildings and drive its buses. The carbon tax affects every area of our economy, wherever someone lives in Canada. No one is better off under the carbon tax.

Conservatives believe in innovation, not taxes. We believe that we have the ability to solve the issues that we see in front of us without taxing and making Canadians' lives less affordable. The carbon tax drives innovation out of our country and makes people poor. When will the government listen to us and axe the tax?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, to reiterate, by putting a price on carbon pollution and returning the proceeds directly to Canadians, Canada is using the most efficient and affordable way to fight climate change and reduce emissions. If Canada is recognized internationally as a climate leader, it is in large part due to the robust carbon pollution pricing system we have in this country.

We are seeing great progress. According to the World Bank, there are now 73 carbon pricing initiatives in place or slated for implementation across the globe, and they are following our example here in Canada. Together, these initiatives cover 23% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Of course, Canada will keep promoting carbon pollution pricing. We cannot afford not to.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it being May 7, I want to start by wishing my dear wife back home a happy anniversary. With five kids and one more on the way and through four election campaigns, it has been a wild 13 years. I am so grateful to her and to my whole family for supporting me in this important vocation. It involves far more sacrifice for them than it does for me.

The process was rigged. The arrive scam process was rigged in favour of well-connected insider companies. We know this because the procurement ombud's report identified the well-connected insiders at GC Strategies, the small two-person company that the government loved giving deals to, over and over again. GC Strategies, the small two-person company, was actually founded in the same year that the Prime Minister took office. Fancy that.

The company was founded the same year the Prime Minister took office, and it became a favoured go-to supplier for the government. A supplier of what? A supplier of nothing. This company did no work. It simply received contracts and subcontracted all of the work. If the government needed to pay someone to do nothing, GC Strategies was its go-to.

The process was rigged because GC Strategies sat down with folks inside of the government who were deciding the terms of critical contracts. GC Strategies said what the specifications of the contract and the terms of the contract should look like, and that advice was taken. GC Strategies then bid on the contract, which it had informed the development of, and, surprise, it got it. GC Strategies was able to sit down with those developing the contracting process, fix the process by saying exactly what the specifications of the contract could be and then, surprise, it got the deal.

I have continually asked the government why. Why did sketchy companies like GC Strategies develop this favoured stature within the NDP-Liberal government? Why did it continue to go to the same shady characters over and over again to give them these incredibly generous contracts?

On arrive scam alone, this glitchy app that did not work, that sent over 10,000 people into quarantine on an error, that had real horrifying impacts on the lives of Canadians, this company got, according to the Auditor General, almost \$20 million for nothing. It simply got the work and then subcontracted all of it to other people. Now that is a glorious gig. It got millions of dollars, tens of millions of dollars, from the NDP-Liberal government to do nothing. It had the process rigged in its favour when it was a two-person company working out of a basement.

I am trying to understand. There is this systematic rot in the procurement process. This arrive scam issue is just the tip of the iceberg. We keep hearing new reports about broken contracting, contracting across various departments that clearly did not follow the rules.

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary a question. Why did the government rig the process in favour of the shady characters at GC Strategies? Why did the government do it?

• (1905)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure all gathered in the House this evening wish the hon. member a very happy 17th anniversary and all the best to his growing family.

Taxpayers' money needs to be treated with the utmost respect. Departments and agencies must follow contracting rules and handle all procurement processes in a fair, open and transparent manner and in accordance with all policies, regulations, guidelines and trade agreements. The gaps in management processes, roles and

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controls that the Auditor General of Canada and the procurement ombudsman have identified in the reports are unacceptable.

We welcome the recommendations made in these reports.

I want to remind the hon. member that the CBSA has already taken steps to strengthen its procurement activities and ensure proper oversight of these activities. The agency has established an executive procurement review committee, which is tasked with approving contracts and task authorizations. This is already providing additional oversight on all contracting activities, focusing on delivering value for money. Employees will be required to disclose interactions with potential vendors.

Furthermore, Public Services and Procurement Canada will continue to strengthen all aspects of the federal procurement system and will use the findings of the Auditor General's report to improve the way the Government of Canada does business with its suppliers.

The hon. member will certainly remember the unprecedented context in which the ArriveCAN application was created. After the pandemic was declared in March 2020, the app was developed and launched as quickly as possible by the CBSA at the request of the Public Health Agency of Canada. The data provided by ArriveCAN was essential for the Government of Canada to monitor, detect and identify new COVID-19 variants of concern and to respond as these variants evolved.

The CBSA worked as quickly as possible to replace a paper process that was not meeting public health needs. At the time, there were significant wait times at the border that disrupted the essential flow of people and goods.

I wish to point out to the hon. member the Auditor General's recognition in her report that the government improved the speed and quality of information collected at the border by using the ArriveCAN app rather than the paper form. We should not forget that this app helped ensure the continued flow of essential goods, including food and medical supplies, for all Canadians. The CBSA also played a key role in facilitating the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines in this country.

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The public health measures that were taken have supported Canadian businesses that depend on secure and timely cross-border shipments. They kept food and goods on store shelves and ensured our frontline workers were equipped with essential supplies, such as personal protective equipment.

I would like to emphasize the efforts of frontline border officers and all CBSA personnel, who diligently served and protected Canadian citizens during the pandemic and continue to do so every day in Canada and around the world.

• (1910)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that my hon. friend has read his pre-prepared statement about government procurement policy, but he has not answered the basic question. The question is why the government rigged the process in favour of this shady two-person company that was working out of somebody's basement. How did this company, which was just founded in the same year the Prime Minister took office, manage to get so much money from the government?

If I started a company in my basement tomorrow with one other person, I suspect we would not be turning over tens of millions of dollars in government contracts, within a short space of time, for doing no work. It is pretty clear that there is some reason the government was constantly funnelling money to and through GC Strategies, and the process was, in fact, as we know, rigged in their favour.

As such, why did the government continuously funnel money to and through GC Strategies? Why did it do that?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that transparency and accountability are priorities for the government. We expect that procurement processes will be properly followed and that anyone accused of wrongdoing will face appropriate consequences. This has been and will always be the case.

On the gaps found by the Auditor General and the procurement ombudsperson in their reports, as I have said already, those findings are unacceptable, and we welcome the recommendations. The government is taking steps to ensure all government departments are better positioned to undertake projects of this nature in the future. Some of the recognitions outlined in the report have already been addressed. The president of the CBSA has implemented measures to strengthen and improve procurement processes and internal controls.

The government has full confidence that any investigation into wrongdoing allegations will be pursued with integrity and efficiency.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, five months ago I asked the Prime Minister to acknowledge that the carbon tax was at the root of food inflation in Canada. The response I received was irrelevant.

I will try to address inflation, its causes and the government's complicity in raising prices for Canadians again, and we will see if anyone is prepared to acknowledge and respond, given the Liberals

have had some time to brush up on the economic challenges that inflation has caused in our economy and our society.

Food, in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ranks at the base physiological level, long before any self-actualization or any need or desire for a government that constantly looks for ways of expanding government spending. Canadians see that spending, and the resulting tax grab, as an overreach and as being out of control.

Inflation is measured in Canada by Statistics Canada, a government agency, which gives an approximation of how Canadians experience inflationary effects and reports it as the consumer price index, or the CPI. In 2023, the CPI was measured at 3.9%. In March 2024, that measure had fallen to 2.9% the way it measures it. The April CPI number will be available on May 21. What April's number will show is the 23% increase in the carbon tax, which was implemented on April 1. It is a tax on food, fuel, home heating and everything else. Let me help predict that there will be a hiccup in our supposed decline in inflation.

The Bank of Canada will take its cue from this report for its June decision on interest rates. An inflation uptick would reinforce the decision to not drop interest rates, thus keeping rates high, primarily for mortgage holders. Real estate inflation is the worst effect of the government's failed fiscal policies. The Governor of the Bank of Canada has repeatedly spoken about how the government's policies are causing inflation, while the government is taking no lessons, as it always says. The Bank of Canada openly predicted last year that the carbon tax added 0.15 points to the interest rate, so inflation may have been 3.7% to 3.8% without the carbon tax increase last year.

Inflation is the rate of increase, so last year's increase is baked into a new, higher base cost for food, fuel, home heating and everything else. What would happen to that base effect when this ineffective tax on everything is removed? Canadians would get real pricing relief immediately. Food price inflation peaked at the beginning of last year at close to 12%. Members can think about that. It is down now to about 2%, but let us acknowledge the base effect. The increased costs add significantly to continued increases in food costs across Canada.

If the government wants to pay attention to the effects of the food inflation it is causing, I would ask it to pay attention to the increasing rise in the use of food banks. Last year, food bank use rose to over two million monthly visitors, up 32% year over year. This year that increase is expected to be an additional 18%.

It is time the government started paying attention to the harm it is causing, which is very evident in food inflation. This carbon tax needs to be repealed.

• (1915)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see my friend from Calgary Centre. I enjoyed working with him at the environment committee on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, where we agreed on many things.

Unfortunately, on this particular matter, I disagree strongly and I think the evidence supports what I am about to say, which is that carbon pricing is not increasing food prices significantly.

As of December, the grand total impact of carbon pricing on food prices for Canadians, according to independent researchers, was less than half a per cent. It goes without saying that all of us are very concerned about the increases in food bank usage and the increased cost of living being felt by families. Our government is taking this very seriously and taking action to address it.

However, fearmongering about carbon pricing does nothing to address this issue. Of course, it carefully avoids mentioning the reality that, because of the Canadian carbon rebate, eight out of 10 households receive more money back through the CCR than they pay toward the fuel charge. Because these are average amounts, lower and middle-income households are particularly better off.

Most emissions from farming are already exempt from the federal fuel charge, 97%, in fact. Biological emissions from crop and livestock production are not subject to pollution pricing. Exemptions are provided for gasoline and diesel used in eligible farming machinery, and commercial greenhouse operators are eligible to receive 80% relief from the fuel charge on natural gas and propane. I would also add that the Government of Canada has also implemented a refundable tax credit to return a portion of fuel charge proceeds directly to farm businesses operating in jurisdictions where the fuel charge applies.

The Canada carbon rebate is also available to eligible individuals and their families to help offset the cost of federal pollution pricing, with residents of small and rural communities, including farmers and their families, able to receive a supplement of 20% of the baseline amount.

Of course, our government has committed more than \$1.5 billion to support farmers with adopting new practices and technologies that can reduce emissions and improve farm performance. For example, almost \$170.2 million has been committed across 415 projects announced to date, under the agricultural clean technology program, to support the development and adoption of clean technologies that can reduce emissions and help farmers adapt to climate change, including more than \$50 million that is set aside for farmers to put toward the purchase of more efficient grain dryers.

Pricing pollution is not affecting food prices significantly. It is not hurting our farmers, who know more than many about the im-

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portance of taking action on climate change. Using misinformation and scare tactics is irresponsible when many Canadians are struggling right now.

• (1920)

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, that was an oxymoron in many respects. There is fear because Canadians are suffering. We are actually talking about the issues facing Canadians, particularly the cost of living increases that the government is imposing upon them with consistent tax increases.

Its whole time in office has been tax increase after tax increase after tax increase, particularly, in the case that we have talked about tonight, the carbon tax increase.

My colleague across the way spoke about all of the agricultural rebates that are available for the carbon tax, but he did not speak about Bill C-234 and that is one that his government has held up intentionally from getting passed in the House of Commons. It is one of the ways we could help farmers actually benefit from a rebate on the carbon tax, but he ignores all that and pretends that the government is actually doing something for farmers in this respect. I disagree.

If members take a look at the facts that we presented here, this is very factual. It is very clear that Canadians are actually suffering. It is not fear to indicate that Canadians are going to food banks. To not say it might be burying one's head in the sand. We are actually saying that, yes, Canadians are going to food banks at a record level. That is something the government has to address and has to consider in its response to the carbon tax and why it should be repealed.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, by taking the lead on climate action, Canada can become a leader on many of the new technologies the world will need to adopt on a massive scale to fight climate change, unlocking economic growth and important trade opportunities. We are seeing these opportunities already, for example, the announcement last summer of a new \$1.5-billion battery component plant in Ontario that will create hundreds of jobs.

The new, cleaner sources of energy we have developed and are putting in place have many other benefits, such as reducing other types of air pollution from burning fossil fuels that can cause asthma and damage ecosystems.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now 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 7:22 p.m.)

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