



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

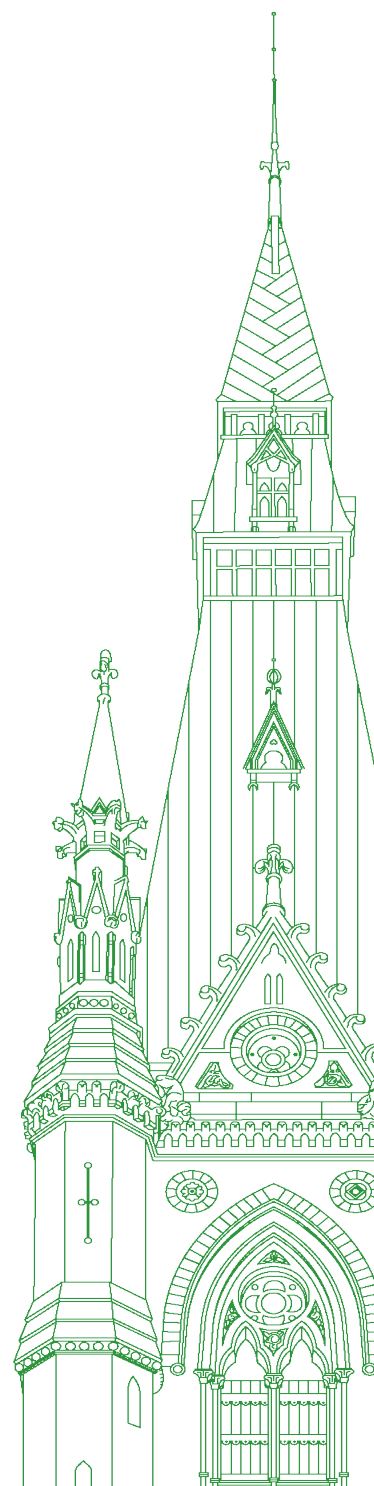
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Monday, June 9, 2025

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 9, 2025

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1100)

[English]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2025-26

A message from Her Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (A) for the financial year ending March 31, 2026, was presented by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and read by the Speaker to the House.

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the supplementary estimates (A), 2025-26.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FOOD INFLATION AND BUDGETARY POLICY

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC) moved:

That, given that,

- (i) the Prime Minister said he will be held to account by prices Canadians pay at the grocery store,
- (ii) under the Liberal government, food inflation continues to rise, forcing families to eat less nutritious foods,
- (iii) Canadian families will pay \$16,834 for food this year, an \$800 increase from last year,

the House call on the government to present a fiscally responsible budget before the House adjourns for the summer, that reverses Liberal inflationary policies so Canadians can afford to put food on the table.

He said: Mr. Speaker, since this is my first time rising to my feet in this 45th Parliament, I want to take the time to thank some important people. First and foremost, I want to thank the great people of Calgary East for giving me, for the third time, the opportunity and great honour to represent them in the House of Commons and to represent all Canadians and, most importantly, Albertans, who are screaming out loud that once again the government is attacking not only Alberta but our energy sector. I also want to thank my en-

tire campaign team, all the volunteers and everyone who put in all the hours to help me get re-elected.

I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your new role as Speaker.

I heard, door by door, in my constituency and in many others that the cost of groceries today is not only alarming but devastating for most families, which are just barely getting by. It did not take very long for the Liberals to expose that this guy is much worse than the old guy, Justin Trudeau. It is because he is already spending more than Justin Trudeau did, and things are only going to get worse.

We have to remember the Prime Minister said that he is a man with a plan, so let us look at his track record. He might say he is new, but had been advising the old guy for the last five years. What happened in the last five years? Canadians were hit after the Liberal government doubled the national debt and caused the worst inflationary crisis in Canadian history. Along with that, Canadians were hit with the most rapid interest rate hikes in Canadian history. Food bank usage doubled under this guy in his advisory role to Justin Trudeau. There is no way he can get away with saying that he is new here; he is the one who helped cause all the pain and suffering among Canadians over the last five years, the worst in Canadian history, in fact.

Let us take a look at what happened with all the spending of Canadian taxpayer money the government did.

After doubling the national debt and printing massive amounts of money, inflation soared. With inflation, came food inflation. If we look at the government's record since the Liberals took office in 2015, we see that food inflation has grown 38%.

Here are some new, alarming statistics about household groceries: Vegetable oil is up 50%, butter is up 45%, chicken breast is up 41%, ground beef is up 40%, milk is up 33%, bread is up 30% and eggs are up 28%. The average family this year will spend about \$17,000 at the grocery store on average. That is \$800 more this year that they will have to spend.

We hear all across the board that families are already suffering because the Liberal government, under the current Prime Minister's advice, doubled housing costs, which made more of a Canadian's paycheck go toward housing.

Before I continue, I want say that I am splitting my time with my new, great colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska.

Business of Supply

After the Liberal government, under the current Prime Minister's advice, doubled housing costs, whether for mortgages or rents, more and more of each Canadian's paycheque is going toward housing. What does that do? It puts a strain on Canadians' paycheques, because wages have not gone up; they have not kept up with inflation. The government did a great job of driving Canadian investment out of Canada, which has meant paycheques are not as powerful as they used to be.

With all the money-printing and borrowing, the Liberals also had to raise taxes to collect from Canadians. Therefore, not only did they double housing costs, which has meant that for some families, up to 80% of their paycheque goes toward housing, but they have left less and less for other essentials and goods.

What are Canadian families doing now to compensate? Well, they are taking on more debt. Credit card debt is up. More and more families are now borrowing money from loved ones and friends, and they are not able to pay those debts back.

● (1105)

It does not take much to realize how much more expensive things are at the grocery store. We all remember how far \$200 used to go at the grocery store. We could easily get a week or maybe two weeks of groceries before this government took over. Now \$200 does not get us very far or many bags of groceries. In fact, \$200 might even be two bags of groceries that last two to three days. Families and single moms are making some very tough decisions. They are having to buy less nutritious food for their kids, and for the first time in Canadian history, one in four Canadians is skipping meals because they cannot afford groceries. A third of those people are children.

On top of all that, we are seeing more and more food bank usage. In fact, it is the most in Canadian history. More than two million Canadians are going to a food bank in a single month. These stats do not sound like a first-world country. It is not the kind of country that my family or other people moved to or grew up in. Canada used to be one of those countries where people could put in hard work and get by. They could, on one income, afford their housing costs and groceries and put their kids in tutoring or sports, but after 10 years of the incompetent Liberal government, Canadians cannot do the same anymore.

There are double-income earners going to food banks, with stats we have never heard before. People who used to volunteer at food banks are standing in line at food banks for food. That is the record of the Prime Minister's advice over the last five years and what the Liberal government has done to Canadians and the reputation of Canada. It has diminished under the government over the last 10 years.

When we talk about grocery prices overall, we have to acknowledge the productivity crisis and the competition crisis the government created. As I said before, it drove away half a trillion dollars of good Canadian investment. That meant jobs, people and equipment. Good Canadian money ran away from Canada because the government made it impossible for anyone to want to invest here. In fact, Canada looks closed for business.

Trying to kill one of our most important industries, the energy sector, signalled this to the world: If the Liberal government cannot even support our most important industry and puts barriers up and tries to choke it, what hope does any other industry have? What is the effect of that? It affects our farmers. The industrial carbon tax and the carbon tax the government had before made it more and more expensive for our farmers to farm. The fertilizer tax the government put in and the cap are the types of bad policies that drove investment away and made things more expensive here, because if it is more expensive to produce or farm, then obviously it is going to be more expensive at the end of the day.

We need to get rid of the bad bills and make Canada open for business again. We need to get rid of Bill C-69, Bill C-48 and the oil and gas cap to show the world that we are serious and are open for business and so that one of our most important industries can help contribute to making Canada the great country it once was before the Liberals. It will give Canadians the most powerful paycheques, which will have an effect on other industries, like housing, and on competition overall, as with groceries.

● (1110)

We know Canadians are paying some of the highest grocery bills in the world. Canadians are paying the highest cellphone bills in the world and the highest banking fees in the world because investment keeps fleeing because of the incompetent policies from the Liberal government. That is not to mention that, overall, after the government doubled the national debt, it put strain on Canadians. In fact, as I said, now Canadians are borrowing more and more. They have more credit card debt and debt overall.

That is why Canadians needed a plan. The Prime Minister promised one but did not deliver. He is just like the old guy. They could have delivered a plan through a budget this spring, because Canadians need to know how much worse things are going to get. If we already know the Prime Minister is spending more than Justin Trudeau, how much higher are taxes going to go? What is the government's plan to get the economy going, if it is not going to get rid of Bill C-69, Bill C-48 or the oil and gas cap? Canadians need to know. They deserve to know.

We are once again calling on the government to release a spring budget and be clear and transparent with Canadians on what kind of plan it has. We have already said before that the Liberals have already started to steal some of the Conservatives' ideas. Why not steal all of them so that Canadians can actually get back the country we used to have?

Once again, it is time for the government to be transparent and deliver a budget this spring. If it really wants to lower the cost of groceries, it needs to bring more competition into this country.

• (1115)

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spent a lot of time in this House listening to this member deliver speeches; I spent many hours over the fall session. One would think, having listened to this, that we have not just gone through an election. I heard the member talk about a “corrupt government” on a number of occasions, which are the exact same words he used for years preceding his speech today in the House.

My question is very simple: If the member is right about everything he is saying, why is he still sitting on that side of the House?

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, these are the same Liberal ego and hypocrisy.

Canadians sent me to this House; my constituents sent me to this House, and I will continue to be their voice. In fact, more Canadians, over eight million Canadians, voted for the Conservatives and their plan. If that member was so sure, why did the Liberals start stealing our ideas? As I said before, if they really wanted to, they should take all of our good ideas so we can get Canada back on track.

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Conservatives moved a motion on the cost of food. Of course, we agree that the government should table a budget. We already voted on that last week.

As for the cost of food, I would like the member to tell us what meaningful measures could be put into place. I would like to know what he thinks about the following: Does he believe that the gradual implementation of a code of conduct for the grocery industry will help this situation?

[English]

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague and congratulate him on coming back to the House.

There are a number of things that can be done. We can get rid of the industrial carbon tax. The Liberal government can stop attacking our farmers, so that we can bring down the cost of what it costs to farm in this country. We need to increase competition, and we are only going to do that if we get rid of the red tape and all the barriers that the government created. Getting rid of bills like Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, the oil and gas cap, would be a signal to the world that we are serious. We can lower taxes on businesses and corporations and lower personal taxes so that we can bring more competition into this country, which the Liberals have driven away. Those are some of the concrete steps we can take to lower the grocery bills.

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our shadow minister for finance, the member for Calgary East, from the Marlborough area, where I have family as well. I have been to his riding and seen the great volunteer work that is done to provide food for people who cannot afford to live under the systems and governance of the Liberal Party.

Business of Supply

Could the member expound a little further on the need for food banks and volunteer groups to support people just so they can put food on the table for their children?

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my great colleague, who is a great pancake-flipper when he helps out at my Stampede breakfast every single year. Not only his daughter but his granddaughter lives in my riding.

I will answer his question in a different way, with my own personal experience. I came from small business. We were home builders before this. We were building homes at a time when there was a common-sense Conservative government. We had lower taxes, and we saw an energy industry that was supported, which meant that more houses were being built and more people were moving to Canada. There was more competition, and because more was getting built in this country, there were good, powerful paycheques. What did that do? It helped the small businesses. We used to run an after-school program for at-risk youth. We took zero dollars from any government, because it was funded by small businesses. Small businesses support their communities; they always want to give back. That is why we need to support small businesses.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2023, big grocery stores saw record profits of \$6 billion, an 8% increase in profit, double what it was pre-COVID. However, this place is starting to look like a corporate boardroom. We will never hear Liberals or Conservatives talk about corporate greed. Does my colleague agree that big grocery needs to pay an excess profit tax?

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, we need more competition. We need more grocery stores. It is as simple as that.

• (1120)

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Calgary East for his inspiring speech. As a business owner, he understands the importance of budgeting and tracking expenses to know how to direct a company.

Business of Supply

Why did I choose to rise in the House today? The reason is that the Prime Minister and his minority government—let us not forget—are refusing to comply with the demand of the majority of the House and table a budget in the spring. I would like to remind the government of this. Out of respect for the institution of the House of Commons, out of respect for Canadians, who budget, but who unfortunately are struggling to make ends meet after 10 years of an inflationary Liberal government, out of respect for our children who are currently learning about the importance of budgeting at school and out of respect for all business owners who budget in order to be good managers, I want to say, loud and clear, this morning that it is important that the government table a budget this spring, not in the fall.

The Liberals will go a year without a budget. They will manage our country without tabling a budget. It is unbelievable. What a lack of rigour. The government announced half a trillion dollars in spending without tabling a budget. To top it all off, the Prime Minister made the King read a promise in the throne speech about how the government would cap spending at 2%, but then two hours later, the government introduced a bill to increase spending by 8%. The Liberals themselves showed Justin Trudeau the door because he was not a good manager. With the arrival of Donald Trump's tariffs, the good Canadian banker appeared like a saviour. He said "elbows up" when it comes to the Americans, while promising to impose dollar-for-dollar tariffs. He anticipated \$20 billion in revenues to be redistributed to those affected by the tariffs. Apparently, the banker is also a magician. He made the retaliatory tariffs disappear, and we lost the \$20 billion in revenues he promised in his election platform.

When the Liberals came to power, the debt stood at \$700 billion. After 10 years of Liberal governance, the debt now stands at \$1.4 trillion. We thought it was impossible to have a prime minister who spends more than Justin Trudeau, but the Liberals have managed to find one who spends far more. Interest on the debt will amount to \$49 billion, or 10% of the total budget. That is more than the government transfers to the provinces for health care. This is unsustainable. The Parliamentary Budget Officer predicts that interest on the debt will reach \$70 billion in 2030.

I did a little research: In 2014-15, Quebec's former finance minister, the current federal MP for the riding of Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, took 42 days to present a budget. He said this: "The government is giving itself the means to achieve its objectives and return to a balanced budget.... This is not an obsession. It is an obligation." The current federal member of Parliament said that in 2014-15. I invite the Prime Minister to have a good talk with his MP about how to achieve ambitious budget targets.

What are the consequences of Liberal mismanagement? It creates inflation. A family of four is expected to see their annual grocery bill increase by \$800. Currently, nearly a quarter of the country's population is experiencing food insecurity.

• (1125)

In 2024, food banks marked another unfortunate milestone when Canadians made two million monthly visits. That is double the number of visits just five years ago. For 18% of people who use food banks, employment is their main source of income. That

means that one in five users is working and still relies on a food bank. That is the reality.

One of these two million is my friend and former high school classmate François. François works and sticks to a budget, but he still cannot make ends meet. He goes to a food bank, which is where I ran into him. A former employee heard me speak in the House and wrote me last week to tell me that she lives alone and that she is having a very hard time making ends meet. She has to pay rent, make payments, pay bills, and then eat if there is any money left over. Imagine talking about eating if there is any money left over. That is the reality.

I was a municipal councillor for seven years, during which I never heard anyone talk about homelessness in Victoriaville. Over the past 10 years, it has become a major issue. Kids are going to school with empty lunch boxes. Some of them have not had breakfast before going to school. We are lucky because we have organizations in our ridings that are there to help them. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the organizations that provide food aid to our constituents.

What does the Prime Minister have to say to Canadians as the price of food continues to skyrocket? Beef is up over 30%; oranges are up 26%; apples are up 18%; rice is up 14%; coffee is up 9%; and infant formula is up 9%.

In conclusion, I have to admit that I am worried. I am worried about the Liberal government blindly and irresponsibly managing the country we are so proud of without a budget. I am worried because young people are being asked to dream and bring about the prosperous future they dream of. That is what they are being asked to do, but this government has been managing the country without a budget for a year now.

What I have seen since arriving here is a government that is bringing in half a trillion dollars in new spending without a budget. That is irresponsible. As the opposition, we will do everything in our power to ensure that the government responds to the demand of the majority of the House. Let me remind members that this is a minority government. The majority of the House has asked that a budget be tabled this spring. We are going to keep a careful watch on this government. We are going to be there to stand up for Canadians and to ensure that this government is finally a responsible government.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague to the House of Commons.

The member just spoke about the fact that Canadians decided to elect a government that will work for them and that will ensure that families and young people can buy homes. We have just introduced legislation in the House of Commons that responds to what Canadians have been calling for, an economy that works for all Canadians.

I would like to know whether my colleague will support this bill. It is what Canadians have asked for. We are here. We are back in government. Of course, we are a minority government, but Canadians gave us an important mandate to build an economy that works for all the provinces of Canada.

Will my colleague support this bill?

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that I hope the Liberal government continues to steal good Conservative ideas, such as cutting taxes for Canadians and eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers.

I hope the Liberals continue to steal good Conservative ideas. However, the problem right now is that the Liberals are not making any budget cuts. How are they going to balance the budget? That is the big question.

• (1130)

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech.

Throughout the election campaign, the Prime Minister talked about Donald Trump and the disaster that was coming. Now the Liberals are putting forward measures without presenting a budget, which makes no sense. We completely agree on that. It is even more troubling because the fiscal framework the Liberals presented during the election campaign was not realistic. They were supposed to implement it with the \$20 billion that they were going to recover through retaliatory tariffs, but we have since learned that there will be no retaliatory measures.

In Bill C-4, the Liberals have included a tax cut and a GST exemption that will amount to roughly \$30 billion. Where are they going to get that money? Are they going to slash health transfers?

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

This may be one of the few times that I agree with my Bloc Québécois colleague, but when it happens, I will say so. I agree with him because the government was expecting to get \$20 billion in revenue from retaliatory tariffs, and now it is talking about \$600 million. Suppose the Liberals manage to get \$1 billion. They will still be \$19 billion short of what they promised in their election platform. Where are they going to get the remaining \$19 billion to fund the various measures they are putting in place?

My colleague asked an excellent question, and that is why we need a budget now, this spring.

[English]

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the average Canadian family will pay \$16,834 for food this year, which is about an \$800 increase from last year. That is \$15 more weekly than last year, bringing a grocery tab to \$324 each week. How will the government's policy, in trying to help Canadians, make an impact when its proposed tax cut will probably only be worth two weeks of groceries for Canadians?

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, Canadians will be forced to buy low quality food that is not nutritious for children and does not help them grow. That is the saddest part. Young children need good food to develop healthy bodies. People need to be able to buy fruit and vegetables, meat and milk to properly feed their children, but they currently have to compromise on the quality of the food that they buy to feed their children, and that is extremely sad.

[English]

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, good morning.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Hon. Wayne Long: Thank you for the comment on the tie, from across the House. I appreciate that. I had to go buy some new ties for my new role.

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you in your new position. I also want to congratulate all new members, on both sides of the House. To new members, enjoy this experience; it is a privilege to be in this House. I know everybody comes here with the best intentions, to work for their constituents and represent them in this beautiful place. Congratulations to everybody on both sides of the House.

I will say just a few words about my wonderful riding, Saint John—Kennebecasis. It used to be called Saint John—Rothesay but is now Saint John—Kennebecasis. It comprises Saint John, the beautiful town of Rothesay and now the town of Quispamsis, so I have three communities in my riding, and they sent me back with a very strong mandate. If someone had told me in 2014, when I was president of the Saint John Sea Dogs Hockey Club, that I would be a four-term member of Parliament, up here almost a decade, I would have said they were crazy, but here we are.

The riding, under our government, has flourished. Port Saint John is, I think, the fastest-growing port, certainly in Canada right now, for containers. It is an economic stimulus for the region. The port's containers went from 90,000 TEUs, container equivalents, to now almost 250,000, projected to go up to 800,000 in the next few years. The port's growth is nothing short of amazing. We have DP World, CPKC and Americold, which is building a cold storage facility. The port is providing hundreds and hundreds of amazing jobs for our community.

Business of Supply

The port's growth would not have happened without our government's investment. It has invested in phase 1 of the redo of the west side terminal and over \$200 million in both phases. It is a classic example of how government investment, the investment of taxpayers' dollars, can create private industry and business coming in. Because of that investment, DP World came in; we have gone from two cranes to six cranes. Because of that taxpayer investment, CPKC now calls on the port of Saint John, and Americold is building a 50,000-square-foot storage facility. It is a classic case, through trade corridor, of how government investment can help a community and create economic growth.

Saint John—Kennebecasis sent me back. I am privileged to be here, four times. I know it is frustrating for the members opposite. Some of them have been sitting over there for almost 10 years now. I understand their frustration, but guess what. I have always said this: Elections are job interviews. That is what they are. We, I, Prime Minister Carney and the former leader of the opposition Pierre Poilievre, are literally putting our resumes out to our constituents—

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman on a brief point of order.

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the minister is not new to this place, and he should know that he cannot use proper names of those who are currently sitting in the House. I think he should retract that he mentioned the Prime Minister's name. He should also resign.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is correct. I would ask the member not to use proper names.

The hon. Secretary of State.

Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, I will not resign on that, but I will certainly withdraw that. It is all in good humour. Again, for people who are watching this on TV, obviously members go back and forth, and the rhetoric gets high, but there are also a lot of friends on both sides of the aisle here. I appreciate the good-hearted comment.

Let us talk about some economic facts. I know the party opposite likes to talk about food inflation and how prices are high, and it is easy easy to cherry-pick 10 items. I know beef has been listed a lot. I used to work for a company called Canada Packers, which sold beef. Beef, historically, is always high at this time of year, for what that is worth.

I think turkey prices have come down. I remember the former leader of the opposition talking about these multi-hundred-dollar turkeys. I bought a turkey at our grocery store here two weeks ago; it was \$29.

Let us talk economic facts. Inflation, two years ago, was at 8.7%, and oh my gosh, the whole way up, it was our fault. There was this little thing called COVID. There was inflation in basically every country around the world, but it was our fault. It was our government's fault that inflation was happening. In two years, we have brought that down from 8.1%, I believe, to 1.7%. It is below the Bank of Canada's target rate.

Do we have a lot of work to do? Absolutely. Have prices come down like we want them to? No, they have not, but our economy is showing signs of life. We have a AAA Moody's credit rating. Workforce participation is 65.3%. In the U.S., it is 62.5%. There are a lot of good things happening in our economy. Real GDP just rose by 2.2% in the first quarter, surpassing expectations.

Look, there is nobody on this side of the House, there is nobody in the House, who is not saying we have more work to do as a party, as a government, as MPs. Do we need to hold grocery stores more to account? Absolutely we do, but our economy is growing, and our economy is going to thrive again under the leadership of our Prime Minister.

At door after door after door, people wanted our Prime Minister to lead this country. I think it goes without saying, with his economic background, his economic strength. They compared the two leaders. Straight up, they compared the two leaders, and they chose our Prime Minister. Sadly, the former leader of the opposition could not even hold his own riding.

Our economy is going to continue to grow. Right now, our government's main laser focus is to deliver for Canadians. We have moved forward with the plan to bring down costs so Canadians can keep more of their paycheques to spend where it matters the most. What I am talking about is the middle-class tax cut, effective July 1. It is going to have an impact on 22 million Canadians, saving families up to \$840 a year.

We want Canadians to have more money to put back in their pockets. It was a great idea. I am glad the Conservatives have joined us in helping us move that legislation forward. This is because the majority of relief on this tax cut is going to go to Canadians with incomes in the lowest two tax brackets, which is to say those with taxable incomes under \$114,750 in 2025.

Within that group of hard-working Canadians, nearly half of the tax savings would go to those in the lowest tax bracket, which is to say those who earn \$57,375 or less in 2025. We can deliver these tax savings to Canadians expeditiously because, with the announcement of our middle-class tax cut, the Canada Revenue Agency has updated its source deduction tables for the July to December 2025 period so that pay administrators are able to reduce tax withholdings as of July 1.

• (1140)

That is a government of action. That is a government that is responding to Canadians' needs. Sometimes, when I listen to the members across, I would not think we had a throne speech just two weeks ago. I would not believe we were elected to government just on April 28.

We want to make sure that our budget is accurate. We want to make sure that we take the time. There is absolutely no doubt that when we deliver our budget in the fall, it is going to be accurate, it is going to be serious and it is going to be delivered by one of the best finance ministers we have had, Minister Champagne.

Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think the member has already been admonished once, in a joking spirit, but perhaps we should start taking these rules a little more seriously.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I will remind the hon. secretary of state, who is an experienced member, not to use the proper names of members.

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, we have a wonderful finance minister. The budget is going to be delivered by our finance minister and our Prime Minister.

We will also remove the goods and services tax for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued up to \$1 million, saving them up to \$50,000, and lower the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. That is another point of action. This would provide a significant increase to the already substantial federal tax support available to first-time homebuyers through programs such as the first home savings account, the RRSP homebuyers' plan and first-time homebuyers' tax credit. By doing this, we would be helping more young people and young families achieve their dream of owning a home of their own. We are absolutely focused and committed to doing that.

We are also removing the consumer carbon price from law, following its cancellation, effective April 1. Yes, I know the party opposite said that we would never do it, that we were going to put it back on. We did it. We removed the GST from new homes and made the tax cut.

These moves are substantial for Canadians. We want to deliver change with measures that cut taxes, bring down costs and put money back into the pockets of Canadians. We are absolutely focused and committed to doing that. These are some of the ways the government is acting now to make life more affordable.

The government will also continue to protect the programs that are already saving families thousands of dollars every year. Those include child care, pharmacare, dental care and the Canada child benefit, which are saving families thousands, and which the Conservatives voted against. Child care was not supported. They voted against dental care.

Let us be clear. All of us on this side, as Liberals, believe that government has a role to play in Canadians' lives. We believe that government can come forth with transformational programs that help Canadians from coast to coast to coast. The other party members apparently do not, because they did not support the programs. We hear a lot about the price of housing, yet they voted against the rapid housing initiative. They voted against the coinvestment fund. For the housing accelerator fund, which is helping communities, villages and towns from coast to coast to coast, they voted against. Then their leader tells the members not to advocate for that program in their ridings.

Business of Supply

We are committed to delivering for Canadians. We are focused on delivering for Canadians. Straight-up, my constituency office has not had five calls about the budget. I have had many calls about the tax cut, many calls about the GST removal on new homes and many calls about the consumer carbon price being eliminated. Do members think Canadians are calling my office in Saint John—Kennebecasis wondering why there is no budget right now when, as I would argue, one of the leading economists in the world has their hands on the wheel?

His Majesty said, during the Speech from the Throne, "In all of [our] actions, the Government will be guided by a new fiscal discipline: spend less so Canadians can invest more." We will balance the government's operating budget over the next three years by cutting waste, capping the public service, ending duplication and deploying technology to improve public sector productivity.

● (1145)

To this end, the Liberals have committed to delivering the details of our plan in the fall. It is not as though it would be three years in the future or 10 years in the future, as the party opposite makes it seem. This fall, we will deliver the budget. Today we are debating the merits of releasing a budget this spring. Simply put, there is not much value in rushing to a budget within a narrow window of just a few weeks. There are other considerations that must be weighed in order to deliver a comprehensive and detailed budget.

Substantially advancing our discussions with the Americans would provide greater clarity. We all know those discussions are happening. The upcoming NATO summit is crucial for Canada's security and has significant budgetary implications. I think every member of this House will be pleased with the Prime Minister's announcement about the 2% commitment on spending with NATO. These are the kinds of things happening on a day in, day out basis. Yes, it is difficult to table a budget right this minute.

One of the key priorities we have emphasized and have been working on since the start of our mandate is improving government spending efficiency. We are looking for areas to reduce costs and enhance the productivity of the public service. Day-to-day government spending, the government's operating budget, has been growing by 9% every year. The government will introduce measures to bring it to below 2%.

Business of Supply

The Liberals are launching these priorities while preparing the budget. Defence spending, economic outcomes and efficiency are all factors that will be captured. By taking these steps, we will have a much stronger, ambitious, effective budget this fall. In parallel, the government will take a series of measures to catalyze new investment to create better jobs and higher incomes for Canadians.

As we have stated before, our government's overreaching goal, its core mission, is to build the strongest economy in the G7. We are committed to building a strong economy. The stronger our economy is, the more we can help Canadians with transformational programs.

It starts with creating one Canadian economy out of 13. We must bring down the trade barriers. Internal barriers to trade and labour mobility cost Canada as much as \$200 billion each year. That is why we have introduced legislation to remove all federal barriers to internal trade and labour mobility.

As many hon. members would have noticed last week, to build Canada strong, the government is also working closely with provinces, territories and indigenous peoples to identify and catalyze projects of national significance. What an exciting time for our country.

I talked to New Brunswick's premier about projects that the Liberals want to move forward with for New Brunswick, for Atlantic Canada. Maybe we can do something with Quebec and Ontario at the same time. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources say we will not be defined by delay. We will be defined by delivery. We will be judged by actions, not words. I am absolutely excited; I am absolutely convinced that our future is very bright.

The geopolitical landscape in our world has changed, most likely forever. Relationships that we used to have, we cannot count on. Trade relationships that we used to have are gone. No country, probably, is at greater risk than Canada. However, if we invest, grow, build and move forward with passion and aggression, and we are not afraid to break a few things along the way, then the future of our country will be very bright.

Our government will provide additional details on these efforts and a spending plan in due course as it prepares for a comprehensive federal budget in the fall. I thank members. I do have my tie on; I have three of them now. I want to say that I am very blessed to be here and to have the opportunity to speak to everyone this morning.

• (1150)

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Cambridge, food bank visits have surged 32% in just one year. Over 1,000 of those visits were from full-time workers, not because they have failed, but because the Liberal government has failed them. While families are skipping meals, the Liberals still cannot produce a spring budget. The Justin Trudeau government spent \$21 billion, and the new Prime Minister is proposing to spend \$26 billion. That will take \$1,400 per household to pay their high-priced consultants.

A colleague on the other side asked about the value of having a budget. It would help to rein in the overspending that would take

money out of the pockets of Canadians. That is the value of a spring budget.

Why is the Prime Minister draining families' grocery budgets to bankroll Liberal-friendly consultants when those same families cannot afford a meal?

• (1155)

Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member across.

We are a government of action. The government is going to get things done with a tax break for 22 million people that will save families up to \$840, as well as cut the consumer carbon tax and GST on new homes.

We are making the proper investments in our economy. Our economy will recover. Our economy will be one of the best economies in the G7. It will respond and be there for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech in the House. I have not seen him often in the past, so I assume that he is a newly elected member.

The member told us that he wants to get moving and that he is part of a government that is taking action. I find that interesting to hear. It is basically true, and we can see that. The government has introduced a few bills so far. These are fairly substantial bills. What is more, the Liberals would like to see these bills passed by July 1. They have tabled a notice of ways and means, Bill C-4 and Bill C-5, among other things. The Liberals are certainly proactive when it comes to asking the House for things.

The problem is that the committees are not even sitting. This means that we cannot even analyze the bills that the Liberals want us to pass by July 1. On top of that, they are asking us for new spending. They are asking us for a lot of things, but there is no budget. Does the member opposite not feel that the Liberals are being somewhat inconsistent? Their actions do not seem to match their words.

[English]

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that I am not able to answer the member in French, but I have undertaken to learn to become much more fluent in French.

We are in, I would argue, one of the most challenging times that our country has ever been in. How we used to do things, along with the time it took, is a thing of the past. Of course we have to study, consult and bring things to the House, but time is of the essence. We need to act now. We need to act aggressively to solidify our country against one of the greatest threats it has ever faced.

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned that we are a government of action. I would like to know how he sees the tax cut, the program to help children get food in their school and the reduction in the cost of child care. How is all of this going to help Canadians deal with the challenges they are facing today?

[English]

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, we can take child care as an example, which is the program we put in from coast to coast to coast, and we had to drag some provinces along, kicking and screaming. It is literally saving families thousands and thousands of dollars on an annual basis. The dental program and the Canada child benefit are programs that are giving back to Canadians and helping Canadians cope.

We know we need to do more. All of us in the House know that we need to be more responsive to Canadians, but we are committed to continuing to deliver for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have watched corporate taxes decrease from 28% under the Mulroney government to 15% today. We have seen record profits in big groceries, an 8% increase, which is double that from pre-COVID. In terms of big oil and gas, there has been a \$192-billion profit over the last four years, more than in the 2010s altogether.

Is the minister considering increasing corporate taxes or an excess profit tax on the corporate greed?

• (1200)

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, one thing members will not ever hear from me is that a lot of corporations in this world are bad. We have wonderful companies in our country that contribute, employ people and pay taxes.

We are a friend of business. We are a friend of big business and small business. We are going to continue to work with them because we need to work with them to grow our economy.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague said something that tweaked my memory. He said that the government is going to spend less so Canadians can invest more. That sounds really familiar to the previous regime, which was using a word salad to try to convince Canadians of something that was not true, like when it said, “The budget will balance itself,” and “We are taking on this debt so Canadians do not have to.”

Does the member's definition of the estimates, where the government is increasing spending by 8%, meet his definition of the government spending less? It certainly does not meet mine.

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, I would argue that we have one of the leading economists in the world running our government right now.

The fundamentals of our economy are strong. Canadians had a decision to make on April 28, and they resoundingly picked the Prime Minister to lead our country, because they have confidence in him and they have faith in him. When he speaks, he thinks. It is not about slogans. Our economy will be the best in the G7, just give us a bit of time.

Business of Supply

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, does my colleague have any concerns, as I do, with respect to the issue of misinformation, especially the spreading of misinformation on social media. For example, for years, Pierre Poilievre was telling Canadians that Canada was broken, when Canadians knew full well that Canada was not broken.

This morning, we have the shadow minister of finance saying that we have the worst inflation in the world, when in fact that is just not the case. Canada has always been the best at dealing with inflation compared to G7 and G20 countries.

Does the member have concerns with respect to misinformation being espoused by the Conservative Party?

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, I do have concerns. It is incumbent on everybody in the House to make sure that they speak truth and that their posts are accurate and thoughtful.

That is what we have with our Prime Minister. When he speaks, Canadians want to hear what he has to say, unlike the former leader of the opposition. Canadians did not want to hear what he had to say.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech and the answers he gave, and I have a very simple question for him. Is transparency an important value for this government? I really do not get the impression that it is.

[English]

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely a fundamental value of our government. It is a fundamental value of mine.

Transparency is always key, and we need to be honest. We need to be honest with Canadians. We need to be thoughtful and focused. Today, we have the 2% commitment to NATO. There is a lot of moving balls and a lot of moving targets right now. Hopefully some of that smoke will clear, so we will get something of value with the country to the south of us, and we can move forward with a focused budget in the fall. Transparency is key.

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to give my first speech. Since I have a bit more time and this is my first chance to do so in your presence, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment. However, I cannot congratulate the government on its transparency.

I want to mention that I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague from Laurentides—Labelle.

Business of Supply

Today's motion is on the price of groceries with the intention of reiterating the request to table a budget. It is a way to ensure that the government has understood the request, or rather the order from Parliament. It is interesting to hear a government representative say that no one has called his riding office asking for a budget to be tabled. He is the parliamentary secretary after all, so he should know what he is talking about. Let us be serious. The elected members of this House, the representatives of the people, ordered the government to table a budget before the summer.

Parliament is the government's boss. The government derives its legitimacy from Parliament. It has to respect the will of Parliament and I get the impression that today's motion will also be adopted. There is no time for populism, saying that no one is complaining about this. Obviously people are worried about being able to afford their groceries. I want to take this opportunity to contribute to the conversation on this.

We need to realize the scope of the current situation. We have not sat since December 18. We just resumed. Parliament has not been able to sit for many months, review government actions, hold the government to account or protect the people in the ridings. That is what the opposition's job is. Not only have we not been able to do that for a very long time, but we are also being told that the government is going to spend money.

I want to be very clear: The Bloc Québécois supports the principle of lower taxes. No one is against apple pie. However, we would like to know what the plan is, where the money will be taken from and which spending items it will come from. Will the government announce in the fall, once the tax cut has been implemented, that it is actually going to cut health transfers to the provinces, thinking that the provinces will just have to make do because the government decided to pander to people by lowering taxes? Is that where we are headed? If that is the case, I am not sure the people at home want us to let the government do that. That is the issue.

In what other areas will budget cuts be made, if not there? Will infrastructure programs be cut? This is a critical time in terms of adapting to climate change. Our municipalities need significant funds to overhaul infrastructure and prepare for flooding and flash floods, like the ones that my riding of Berthier-Maskinongé experienced on August 9. It was a terrible situation. It is not enough to just be there to show compassion for people and help them pump out their basements. We did that, but, as responsible elected officials, we have an administrative job to do. To do that, we have to look at how much money we have left.

On the weekend, I was chatting with my wife and I asked her if she wanted to get a pool. We can get one put in, no problem. Then I asked her if she wanted to go on a trip to Italy. Perfect, we will take a trip to Italy. Then I told her we could also get a new car, since ours is so old. I asked her opinion and we came to an agreement, but does anyone think that a typical family is going to spend that kind of money without budgeting? I am not saying that these kinds of expenses are not justified, important or worthwhile, but do we really think that ordinary people, a popular term many people here use indiscriminately, are going to do that without budgeting for it? It all starts there.

What is more, the government is saying that this is an urgent situation, that it wants to lower taxes now. However, one of the features of the parliamentary system is that when a notice of ways and means motion is tabled, the measure is implemented. We saw it last year with the capital gains tax. The House did not vote on that measure, but it was implemented, and now we are stuck with it. In this case, the Canada Revenue Agency and other other agencies have already made the tax adjustments. Employers have already begun to reduce income tax deductions. There is nothing urgent about this situation. That is just an excuse.

● (1205)

The important thing is doing the job right. There is plenty of time to do that. That is especially important because we are dealing with a government that made all sorts of magical promises during the election campaign. The Liberals told people not to worry because they were going to balance the budget while cutting taxes. They said that they would find a way to do that. It is going to take a hat, a magic wand and a rabbit or I do not know what. Let us be serious. All of this needs to be based on something.

We recently obtained the spending report and learned that spending has increased by 8%, even though this government was elected on a promise to limit spending increases to 2%. It is incapable of that. This government is completely out of control, especially when it comes to awarding contracts to friends, which is expensive. I think the increase there is 26%. The only area where this government is capable of restricting spending is in giving money to individuals, like the pension plan for seniors aged 65 and over, for example. They talk a good game, yet the Liberals have refused, without a hint of embarrassment, to increase pensions for seniors aged 65 and over and eliminate age discrimination. Today, they have the nerve to tell us that this is no big deal, that they are not tabling a budget. Then they are asking us to vote in favour of what they want.

The Bloc Québécois takes things seriously. We always try to behave like adults, and today, the members who are behaving like adults are saying that it is true, food prices have gone up. There are several reasons for this.

This is probably going to disappoint the Conservative Party a little, but I want to tell them something. Since April 1, when the consumer carbon tax was scrapped, food prices have not dropped, despite what the Conservatives have been claiming for months and years. That means there is something else going on.

We commissioned the Institut de recherche en économie contemporaine, or IREC, to do a study, and the findings were very clear. A great deal of the increase is attributable to climate change, and a great deal of it is due to global instability and conflict. How great is it that, during a global conflict, Canada opted to tax fertilizer for farmers. Canada was the only G7 country to do that, even though it is an extremely ineffective measure. The government knew it then, and it knows it now. The government tried to reimburse farmers, but it could not figure out how to do so because it did not know who had paid what, so now that money is paying for programs for farmers. Farmers are paying for their own programs, yet the government will tell them how lucky they are to have received so much government money. That money is the farmers' money. Business risk management programs do not work at all.

There are some simple things the government can do. I am not just complaining. I would like to congratulate MPs on making a significant and unanimous decision last Thursday to send the bill to protect supply management directly to the Senate. That is a very important measure that protects not only the people who get out of bed every morning to feed us, but also the price of groceries. Anyone who doubts that that is what supply management does should go check the price of a dozen eggs in the United States. Then they will understand what I am talking about.

In an earlier question, I raised the idea of implementing a code of conduct in the grocery industry to create better conditions for small suppliers. My NDP colleague will be pleased to hear me talk about that. We could look at the price-setting mechanism in this industry and create a monitoring organization to identify opportunities for action. We could help protect our fellow citizens by safeguarding competition and putting an end to the over-concentration of the industry. We could also promote local distribution channels and regional processing, and invest in infrastructure like regional slaughterhouses, which will form a basic infrastructure around which an ecosystem of producers can set up operations. All of these measures will bring stability, and with it, lower prices. We need to support our farmers in better ways than through absolutely ridiculous programs like AgriRecovery, which took two years to help just half of the people who needed it. A two-year response time for an emergency program is a total joke.

I have a message for the government. It needs to get serious and table a budget so that we can begin working seriously, on a solid foundation.

• (1210)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague across the way. My colleague said a lot of things, and I will come back to that in a few moments, but he left some things out.

I did not hear him talk much about the tax cut, nor did he talk about the expansion of the Canadian dental care plan to cover adults aged 18 to 64, or the school food program, which will benefit 100,000 children in Quebec alone. However, we did hear him say some things that make sense to me, such as the importance of doing things seriously and taking the time to write documents properly and rigorously.

Business of Supply

Why does my colleague think that taking the time to draft a credible and rigorous budget over the next few weeks is a bad thing?

• (1215)

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I actually feel like I have been misunderstood. I never said that taking the time to draft the budget and doing it conscientiously was not important.

However, the new Minister of Finance and National Revenue has been in the position for three months. His mandate was very clear. It was to create a budget that would allow for measures to help businesses affected by U.S. tariffs and the trade war, for example. The Liberals talked about that throughout the election campaign. Now that the Liberals no longer need people to be afraid, they do not want to talk about it anymore. What a joke. Tariffs on steel and aluminum are currently set at 50%. No business will be able to survive this without government support.

What is the government going to do? That would normally be answered in a budget. As for tax cuts, as I said at the beginning of my speech, we are never against them. We do not oppose them in principle, but we have to be serious. We need to know what the outcome will be and where the money is going to come from.

[English]

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the grocery bill for Canadian families is \$16,834, which is an \$800 increase since last year, about 5%. The government is claiming that inflation is at 1.7%. Economically speaking, can the hon. member explain that if inflation is at 1.7% and groceries are going up by 5%, how that can happen?

[Translation]

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, a number of factors came into play. I spoke earlier about the fact that climate change has caused a lot of problems not only in Quebec and Canada, but also in the United States. We have to remember that we import a lot of goods. Geopolitical factors have also had an impact on grain prices, for example. Consider Ukraine, which is still, sadly, occupied by a foreign invasion force. That also has consequences. There are a lot of things we cannot control.

However, my colleague will be happy to hear that I have ideas about things we can control. I talked about the grocery code of conduct, regional processing and business risk management. Those are things we can take action on. We can also take action on supply management, and we are doing so. Furthermore, we can streamline the temporary foreign worker program by reducing red tape for producers. As I just said, climate change is a major cause of rising prices. We should provide financial support to environmentally responsible producers. We should also encourage innovation and adaptation. We can put incentives in place for all that to get results in the short and medium terms, but we need to take action. We need to focus on what we can change.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the issue of a budget presentation. As I am sure the member is aware, when Stephen Harper became the prime minister of Canada, he was elected that February and presented a budget in May. Now, the Conservatives have adopted a double standard. I am wondering whether the member opposite from the Bloc would recognize that, given that the election was April 28 and given the very nature of what is taking place with the U.S., President Trump, trade and tariffs, it is better to make the budget accurate and to do it properly than to try to rush something through. Would the member not agree with that in principle?

[Translation]

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is talking about three months, correct? He talked about a time when an election was held in February and the budget was tabled in May. Well, the Minister of Finance and National Revenue has been in that position for three months with a clear mandate to prepare a budget to deal with the U.S. trade war. I think the minister would be able to do so.

Let us be serious. Let us do serious work. If the Liberals are unable to present a complete budget, then they could at least provide an economic update to tell us where the money is going to come from. Then we could sit down like adults, decide if we approve it or not, and make informed decisions for a positive future for everyone. That is our job.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since this is the first time I am speaking in this new Parliament, I will take the opportunity to say a few thank yous. I have had the privilege and honour of representing the people of Laurentides—Labelle since 2019. This is my third term.

First, I want to thank the 23,615 people who chose the Bloc Québécois. To all the others, as I said during the election campaign, I want them to know that I am there for and with them. I also want to thank my campaign team. I will take the time to mention them by name because their contribution was so valuable. They gave a great deal of their time. I want to thank Maryse, Samuel, Annie-Claude, Annie, François, Michel and Lévis. I seriously would not be here without them. I covered 11,000 kilometres in 39 municipalities. Laurentides—Labelle is a very large but very beautiful riding. I want to thank all these volunteers.

All of this already makes me feel very constructive. I am pleased to rise today to speak to the motion put forward by the Conservatives on their opposition day. I am going to break down the motion. I will begin by quickly explaining the essence of this motion. Then I will outline why the Bloc Québécois supports it.

Obviously, this motion raises important questions about accountability and governance. I will also provide details. My colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé has already set the stage, so I will try not to be too repetitive.

First of all, it is true that families will pay more for their food. In fact, this has already been the case for some time. It is perfectly reasonable to be concerned about this issue, given that families'

grocery bills are expected to increase by \$800 a year. I think that all parliamentarians have noticed the increase in the price of groceries. In addition, there has been a marked increase in demand at all food banks.

I want to bring my colleagues' attention to a particular point in the motion, the one that states that the House should call on the government to present a budget before the summer. Summer starts on June 21, although it could also happen after that date. This budget is supposed to reverse Liberal inflationary policies so Canadians can afford to put food on the table.

I have reread the motion several times. The first part is essential. It calls on the government to present a budget.

I worked in community organizations for over two decades, and I am also an entrepreneur. Spending money without first identifying our revenue sources is simply not an option. Come on. That part caught my attention, and I wondered whether no budget was being presented because there was not enough time or because this new role came as a surprise. However, the Prime Minister is supposedly a world-renowned expert. Parliamentarians thought they were coming back to the House quickly so that the government could present an economic statement or a budget for them to vote on, but that is not the case.

The government was trying to make itself look good. Parliamentarians returned quickly. However, the government was not ready. What should be done in such a situation? We should take our time. This might take a week or two. In any case, as of March 14, the first day the finance minister took office, he knew that he needed to immediately start thinking about what he would propose. There are 343 members in this minority House, and the government is accountable to them. The government is trying to make itself look good. It is talking to the media and announcing goodies like tax cuts, help for first-time homebuyers and all sorts of other things.

Parliamentarians agree that anyone who has to put a budget together should have a full breakdown of their cash flow, so that they know exactly how much money is coming in and how much is going out.

● (1220)

What we have here is the other extreme. I say this to everyone in Laurentides—Labelle. When I tell them that we are talking about tax measures and that we will agree with this motion because there is indeed an inflationary crisis, constituents ask me what we are working with. I tell them that we are working with nothing.

When I talk to colleagues who are economists and accountants and to business people, they tell me that they do not understand why a self-respecting government is not even able to do the basics. I would have expected us to come back a month later than we did and sit until the end of July so that we would be ready to start again. As my colleague said earlier, the committees are not even sitting and cannot conduct any studies. I am lost for words. I just do not get it.

Speaking of committees, I will be taking on new responsibilities in that area. I will be working on tourism and veterans' affairs. I will also be working on government operations as a member of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. This committee is responsible for analyzing costs. It is fortuitous that we have not started yet. Government spending on equipment purchases is rising from \$3.7 billion to \$10.8 billion, an increase of 190%. I find that very disconcerting. Governing with billions of dollars is nothing new. I therefore agree with my Conservative colleagues that a budget needs to be presented, and quickly. That is the first thing I wanted to say.

Furthermore, it has been six months since the House last sat. As I said, as of March 14, we expected to have something tangible to work on when we returned to the House. Instead, we are being presented with a bill called Bill C-4, which contains tax measures. However, we do not know how we can work on spending and approve it. The government is putting the screws on us, saying that surely we cannot oppose these measures, since they are intended to help people. To me, that is unacceptable.

I want to conclude by saying that Bloc Québécois members are really here to work for our people. We are not here to poll higher, get re-elected and keep our voters in line as of day one in office. We have already taken action. My colleague talked about this earlier. The Institut de recherche en économie contemporaine, or IREC, conducted a study. Everyone says that groceries are expensive, but we all know why. It is because of climate change.

Here is an example. I did some gardening this weekend. I can make plans based on the weather. If there is torrential rain, I will protect the garden. If there is a chance of frost in July, I will protect it. If the weather is too dry, I will water it. How well equipped are our producers to adapt to climate change? Basically, life is about supply and demand. If the supply is lacking, obviously things will cost more. The Conservatives care a lot about public safety, but I would suggest that food security is part of that as well, so let us tackle the root of the problem. We know that abolishing the carbon tax has done nothing to bring down the cost of groceries.

• (1225)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, let me congratulate you on your new role in the House.

I always appreciate the interventions of my hon. colleague from Laurentides—Labelle in the House. I look forward to working with her during the 45th Parliament.

The member mentioned that she had been involved in community work for the past two decades. I also engaged in community work as a social worker back home in the beautiful region of Moncton—Dieppe. That said, the member says that the government is handing out goodies. I dare say that, for the people back home, the tax cut that takes effect on July 1 is not a goody. It is real help.

Does my colleague not think that this tax cut will truly help families in Quebec and across Canada?

• (1230)

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate genuine collaboration.

Business of Supply

I spoke of goodies because, when money is given away, what people do with it is beyond the government's control. I would like to see some concrete figures showing that any additional money given is used for survival purposes. The day I have those figures, I will discuss the matter again.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about climate change. On Friday morning, Ottawa was the second-most polluted city in the world. That is a proven fact. I saw a photo and it looked apocalyptic. Nothing like it had been seen before.

I would therefore like to ask colleagues this: When was the last time that people had to wear N95 masks because of uncontrolled wildfires? Even Europe is affected.

[English]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Bloc for talking about small businesses. We know small businesses are facing an availability and affordability crisis when it comes to commercial insurance, and it can be quite hard to find an insurer at a price that a small firm can afford. In a recent report by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, we learned that half of Canadian business owners "have experienced an increase of 10% or more in their...insurance premiums over the last 12 months". The cost of insurance has been in the top three most impactful costs for businesses for months and months now.

Is it not time for the government to take a closer look at how insurance costs and accessibility are impacting small businesses in Canada and Quebec?

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague because I forgot to mention that. That is another concrete example. Just ask an actuary. When they plug in the numbers, they can see that it costs a lot more for people to insure their property these days.

Not only does the government need to table a budget, but it also needs to recognize that climate change is costing us a lot of money. That is what the Bloc Québécois is going to do. It will show how costly that is for all Quebecers and Canadians.

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is not hard to put together a budget. It is a matter of determining where the revenue will come from, where it will be spent and how much is in the account. That is essentially what it boils down to. What will the government spend money on? We have heard quite a lot about that. The Liberals told us about it during the election campaign and in the Speech from the Throne. What will the government's revenue sources be? We know that the government is going to cut taxes, so there will be less revenue coming in.

However, we do not know anything about the state of the government's finances. I think that after 10 years, and given that the Minister of Finance has been here for three months, we should have that figure. We all remember the fiasco in December when the former Minister of Finance resigned. We already had a \$50-billion deficit at that time.

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I would like to throw out a number based on the rule of three: Have we reached about \$75 billion in debt?

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, if the government cannot prove that it has everything it needs to balance the budget or at least keep the deficit as low as possible, it is because it gives us the impression that it is the world's leading expert on the economy. Unfortunately, that does not hold water. People are worried, and we are wondering what will happen in the coming months with regard to our finances and the fiscal imbalance.

[English]

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today. Since this is my first opportunity to give a speech in the House since the election, I want to thank the constituents of Foothills and the families in southern Alberta who once again elected me to represent them in the House of Commons. I am honoured that we received the second-highest number of votes in the country, almost 55,000. Only my colleague from Ponoka—Didsbury was able to surpass the wonderful people of Foothills. That certainly goes to show that our message as Conservatives standing up for Alberta resonates with my constituents in Foothills.

I want to state that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City. I welcome back to the House of Commons such an outstanding colleague here with me.

As the Conservative shadow minister for agriculture and agri-food, it is my duty to stand here and represent and be the voice for the hard-working farmers and ranchers and producers right across this country, as well as for those Canadians who have gone to the grocery store shelves over the last few months and have questioned how this could possibly be getting worse. People are asking this because the Prime Minister stated emphatically that he would be judged by the prices at the grocery store shelves. The Prime Minister said that, not the opposition. By his own metrics, by the Prime Minister's own statement, he has failed Canadians.

I admit that I rise today with some frustration, as certainly all of us in this House are hearing from our constituents who are frustrated with the price of groceries at the grocery store shelf, given the promises by the Liberal Prime Minister. It seems to us that they are the same old Liberals with the same old promises and the same old promises broken.

The average family is now spending close to \$1,000 more a year on groceries: close to \$16,000. These prices continue to rise: oranges are up more than 20%; apples, 20%; beef, more than 30%; rice, 14%, and the list goes on and on. As a result, Canadians are having to make very difficult choices every single month when they do their household budgets. I would expect that Canadians would want the government to follow their lead and actually have a budget showing Canadians where their tax dollars are going and just how bad the fiscal situation that the Liberals have left us is.

The Liberals are great at blaming someone else for their problems. The parliamentary secretary is still blaming COVID. I am sure the Liberals are going to be blaming Harper later today. However, the Prime Minister was the financial adviser for the previous prime minister, Trudeau, for more than five years. This is not a new group. The finance minister has been there for 10 years. The former finance minister has been there for 10 years. It is not like the Liber-

als do not have some data to go by. These are not new Liberals. However, despite the Liberals' refusal to table a budget, it is Canadians who are paying the price. They are paying the price at the grocery store shelf every single day.

The current Prime Minister said during the election that he was going to be different. Clearly, in only a couple of months, he is different; I would say arguably worse. He said that he would keep spending increases at 2%, that he would cap that, but his first group of estimates shows that he has increased spending more than 8%, by half a trillion dollars in more deficit spending. At a time when inflation and food security are top of mind, the government is continuing to throw gas on the inflationary fire. Not only are the Liberals breaking these promises; they are shattering them with this type of spending, and they refuse to hold themselves accountable, with their policies driving up food costs. If anything, the policies they continue to want to implement and continue to champion would only make matters worse. Ideological policies like front-of-pack labelling, a P2 plastics ban, a tariff on fertilizer, fertilizer and crop protection reductions and industrial carbon tax will all make life more difficult for farmers, manufacturers, truckers and retailers. All those costs get passed down to the consumer at the grocery store shelf.

● (1235)

I want to give a few examples of the incredible consequences these ideological policies will have on consumers. Michael Graydon, the CEO of Food, Health & Consumer Products of Canada, stated at the agriculture committee last year that the Liberals' nonsensical front-of-pack warning labels will cost the industry an additional \$8 billion and that manufacturers will have no choice to pass on those additional costs to the consumers, driving up food prices at the grocery store.

An in-depth report by Deloitte stated that the impact of the Liberals' P2 plastics ban on Canadian producers and produce growers will be catastrophic; it will increase the cost of produce another 35%. That is over and above the inflationary increases that we are already seeing as a result of the Liberals' out-of-control spending. It will reduce the availability of fresh produce by 50%. It will cost growers and producers more than \$6 billion in additional costs. It will increase food waste by 50%.

At a time when Canadians are wanting to support Canadian growers, Liberal policy is bankrupting Canadian producers. More than 44% of growers of fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada are already selling their products at a loss, and this is before the new ideological policies are being implemented.

An hon. member: Where do you get your numbers?

John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I just said “Deloitte”. I think that is pretty reputable, as are Farm Credit Canada and the CEO of Food, Health & Consumer Products of Canada. The Liberals do not like to hear the numbers. They do not like to hear those stats because they are a direct result of punishing policies being implemented by the Liberal government.

However, my colleague across the way is going to love it, because the Liberals are not done yet. The Liberal government wants to reduce fertilizer use by 30% and crop protection products by 50%. These losses would lead to losses for farmers exceeding \$50 billion and to a reduction of crop yields by 14 million tonnes.

Last, the impact of the Liberals' inflationary spending and regulations is taking a toll on the economic viability of Canadian farmers. I know that my colleague from Winnipeg North is going to hate this, but it comes from Statistics Canada and Farm Credit Canada: Last year was the most expensive crop in Canadian history. The results that just came out show that in 2024, Canadian farmers experienced a 25% decline in realized net income, a total loss of \$3.3 billion. Farmers are losing about \$3,000 every single month. This is the worst loss in realized net income since 2018.

In 2024, total farm operating expenses in Canada increased to \$78.3 billion, a 2.4% increase from the previous year. These increases are coming from fertilizer, feed and machinery. Fertilizer prices soared by more than 50%. Feed costs are up 20%. Machinery expenses and fuel are up by 53%. I cannot stress this enough. These are very real consequences of ideological and punishing policies by the Liberal government that are putting the economic viability of our farmers at risk and driving up food costs for Canadians. Every single month we are seeing this.

I have to ask whether the discussion in Alberta next week at the G7 will be whether Canada actually belongs in the G7, when we are a partner that is punishing our farmers and putting food security, not only here at home but also globally, at risk. We are ignoring our most important allies, who have come to us wanting cheap, affordable and sustainable Canadian LNG, but the Liberal government has said there is no business case. We are eroding our reputation as a trusted partner to our G7 allies.

However, a lot of these things could be resolved if the Liberal government repealed its ideological policies and tabled a budget so Canadians can actually see the financial picture they are facing. If the government is not willing to do it, I suggest it steps aside, because the Conservatives are ready to do just that.

● (1240)

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take inflation very seriously. That is why we are giving a tax break to support Canadians.

I would like to ask my colleague whether the Conservatives will support us to pass the legislation to bring middle-class tax cuts for nearly 22 million Canadians, to eliminate GST for the first-time homebuyers for new homes valued up to \$1 million, to remove the carbon tax and to bring one Canadian economy.

John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Liberal member's rattling off just about every policy in the Conservative campaign that the Liberals took, and I would encourage her to take all of

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them. Why stop with just a few? Why take the GST off new homes for first-time buyers only? Why not take the GST off new homes for every buyer so we can have more accessible homes for all Canadians, not just those who are buying a home for the first time?

Do not just go halfway; if you are going to take the Conservative platform, take it all. We will support you the whole way.

● (1245)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I would just remind members to address their comments through the Chair.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the Conservative member's speech. I have to say that this does not happen every day, but I agree with much of what he said today. I would like to ask him about one thing in particular. Throughout the election, the Liberals sold us the new Prime Minister as a magician. He was going to solve our problems, he was extraordinarily talented, he could do anything, and everything was easy for him.

If the Prime Minister is so good and so extraordinary, how does my colleague explain the fact that he is unable to draw up a budget?

[English]

John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I know that this is going to be shocking to my colleague from the Bloc, whom I respect a great deal, but the Liberals say one thing during a campaign and do something very different once they have been elected. The Liberals like to say that they are not ready and that it has been only three months.

The cabinet has been there for 10 years. It is not like the Liberals just came into a new House of Commons and have no idea what has been going on for the last 10 years. They have caused all the problems. Their overspending, high taxes and bad policies have put Canada in this financial situation.

I would argue that the Liberals do not want to table a budget because Canadians would be frightened to see the financial situation the Liberals have left us in.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I always find it comical, if not sad, when the Liberals are questioning data that comes from Statistics Canada or Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, like they did with my hon. colleague.

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I do want to talk about the \$800 tax decrease that was announced. I want to counter that by saying that the average food costs are going to go up, per family, this year by \$800. The average family in the country is going to spend \$17,000 of its after-tax dollars on food.

Would the hon. member not agree that food insecurity is a major threat to many Canadian families, single moms and seniors?

John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, I would argue that it is going to get worse. An \$800 tax cut is wiped away by food inflation that is going up every single month; it has done so three months in a row. It is only going to get worse when the Liberals implement their policies like the front-of-pack labelling and the P2 plastics ban. Those two policies alone will increase food costs, potentially, by \$14 billion. Those are additional costs that are going to be put on produce growers, manufacturers and retailers. They will pass on those costs to consumers, which will continue to drive up food costs.

We are in a food security crisis here at home, and the Liberals need to step up and do something about it.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, think of the G7 countries or the G20 countries. Canada has always placed, in the last number of years, either first or third in terms of performance on issues like inflation and interest rates, yet the member continues to want, like a Conservative, to play down Canada. Yes, inflation is a serious issue; we understand that. When will the Conservatives start recognizing that Canada is the best country in the world to call home?

John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the member is the one who was questioning the data that is coming from Statistics Canada and Farm Credit Canada, the Liberals' own Crown corporation and their own agency. The statistics are coming from their own government. If they do not believe those statistics, maybe they should make some changes within their own bureaucracy. It is interesting that he is the one who talks about misinformation.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said he would be judged by the prices Canadians pay at the grocery store. Well, Canadians are holding him to that, and what they are seeing is shocking. Grocery prices are through the roof, food banks are overwhelmed, and more and more families are skipping meals, not because they want to but because they have to. In Cloverdale—Langley City, seniors who once relied on the food bank weekly now have to ration their visits to make room for new families in need.

Across the country, people are working full-time jobs and still cannot afford basic groceries. It has never been clearer that affordability is not just an issue but that it is a crisis. What is the government doing in response? It is making it worse with taxes on food production, with out-of-control inflationary spending and with a refusal to table a responsible budget.

Today I want to speak for the people who are being left behind and call on the government to start putting Canadians first. If we want to fix food prices, we need to start at the source: our producers, farmers right across Canada. The government will tell us that it has removed the carbon tax, but let us be honest; that is just spin.

What the Liberals have removed are the visible portions of carbon tax, the part that showed up on our fuel bill, but the tax is still there, buried in the cost of producing and transporting food.

Farmers still pay the industrial carbon tax on natural gas, propane and heating, for everything from drying grain to heating barns. These are not luxuries; they are essential parts of growing and storing our food. That tax gets passed along to every Canadian family at the checkout counter. We must not forget that our competitors in the U.S. and Mexico are not paying these hidden taxes, and their production costs are already lower. Why are we punishing our farmers, putting us at a major competitive disadvantage?

In Cloverdale—Langley City, both the Cloverdale Community Kitchen and Langley Food Bank are overwhelmed. Demand is growing so fast that they have had to ask seniors to cut back their visits from weekly to every two weeks, just to make space for all the new families showing up. This is not just a local issue, though; across Canada, more than two million visits were made to food banks in a single month. That is double what we saw five years ago. One-third of the clients are children, and nearly one in five is a person who is employed but still cannot afford groceries.

This is what happens when government policy punishes the very people who produce our food. We cannot tax the farmer who grows the food and the trucker who ships the food, and then act surprised when Canadians cannot afford to eat the food. The government says it cares about affordability, but its actions are showing the exact opposite. It is time to stop making life harder for those who feed us. If we want to lower prices at the checkout, then we have to axe the industrial tax for farmers and Canadians across Canada. Let them do what farmers do best, which is to feed the country, and let Canadians finally catch a break at the grocery store.

The damage does not end at the farm gate. Once food makes it off the field, it runs headfirst into another Liberal-made problem: inflation driven by out-of-control spending. It is hard to believe, but the new Liberal government has managed to outdo even itself. The Prime Minister inherited a bloated, reckless government, and rather than tighten the belt, he made it worse. Despite his promise to spend less, his first major bill spends 8% more than Trudeau's last year in office. That is not restraint; it is a runaway train.

This is a half-a-trillion-dollar spending spree with no budget, and the consequences are very real. Experts are now warning that government borrowing is set to hit record highs, even higher than during the pandemic. That means higher interest rates, higher borrowing costs and more pressure on an already-fragile economy. While the government racks up debt, Canadians are paying the price at the checkout line. When the government spends beyond its means, it drives up inflation. That is not theory; it is a reality.

Every reckless dollar Ottawa spends makes that dollar in our wallet worth less. Just ask the single mom trying to buy fresh fruit for her kids, or the senior on a fixed income watching groceries eat through their pension. They budget before they spend, but somehow the “man with the plan” cannot do the same.

• (1250)

Let us not forget where those reckless dollars are going. Consultants are getting a record-breaking \$26.1 billion in this plan, which works out to \$1,400 per Canadian household. This is not for housing and not for food, but for consultants. To top it off, on the very same day the Prime Minister promised in his throne speech to cap operating spending at 2%, his government introduced a bill to increase spending by 8%. That was just two hours later.

Canadians are forced to make hard decisions every single day, cutting back on groceries and downsizing their lives, yet their government cannot even produce a basic budget to show how it is going to pay for it all. If we want to get food inflation under control and food prices down, it starts here. Stop the reckless spending. Put Canadians first, not consultants—

• (1255)

Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, in fairness to the interpreters, somebody's phone is ringing in the chamber. I am seeing more and more of this behaviour. People are not turning off their phones, and I encourage you to speak to all members to remind them to turn their phones off. It is not fair to the interpretation staff.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I thank the hon. member for the intervention.

I will remind members to, first, turn off their phones and, second, which is not in this case, ensure they are not near any of the microphones that may be turned on.

I know hon. members are trying to find the ringing phone, but in the meantime we will resume with the hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, while inflation continues to drive food prices higher, the government still has not taken the one step that could start to restore confidence. We are coming perilously close to summer, and Canadians still do not have a budget. Parliament voted unanimously for the government to bring a budget forward in April. Instead, all the Prime Minister says he will do is take note of the vote. That is not leadership; that is disrespect, and it is not acceptable.

Here is why a budget matters, especially right now. Investors are concerned, and if they are concerned, we have a problem. Canada's debt issuance is set to surpass \$628 billion this fiscal year, beating

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even the pandemic-era high. That is a massive pile of debt. As the government borrows more, markets demand higher interest to compensate for rising risk. Canada's 10-year bond yields have already jumped over 50 basis points since April, hitting around 3.3%.

Investors are getting nervous, and they are starting to demand higher returns before they will lend Canada money. That means long-term borrowing is going to get a lot more expensive, and fast. Without a budget, no one knows how much the government plans to borrow or what it will spend it on, and that makes investors nervous. When they see runaway spending and no plan to pay for it, they demand higher returns to cover the risk. That drives up interest rates, and the cost of borrowing goes through the roof.

When a government borrows more, it means less money left over for hospitals, schools and roads. Inflation drives up interest rates. Higher interest rates drive up food production costs. Debt servicing for the farm is already a major cost. It is one of the highest costs for farmers and they cannot afford more. When the government refuses to lead or even show a plan, every Canadian is left holding the bag, paying more at the grocery store, on their bills and in their taxes.

Across the country, Canadians are doing everything right. They work hard, they budget carefully and they make sacrifices, but the government taxes the farmer who grows the food and spends without restraint while inflation skyrockets. When Parliament demands a budget, the Liberals shrug and say they will take note. Well, Canadians deserve better than that. In Cloverdale—Langley City, I have seen seniors line up for food banks and parents skip meals. Families wonder how much longer they can keep stretching their dollar. They are not asking for much, just a government that lives within its means and helps them to do the same.

Let me close with this. No parent should have to choose between a power bill and putting food on the table. After years of broken Liberal promises, it is time to put Canadians first.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I disagree in many ways with the way the Conservative Party is approaching its opposition day. When we take a look at inflation or the issue of affordability, we see that our new Prime Minister and new cabinet have presented, as one of their first initiatives, a tax break for Canadians. This is in recognition of the issue of affordability. However, time and time again, we see Conservatives stand in their place and provide at times what could be interpreted as misleading information, as opposed to trying to recognize that Canada as a whole is doing relatively well.

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Would the member not agree that in comparison to other G20 countries, Canada is doing relatively well, but we still need to be concerned about the issue of—

• (1300)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the question, I ran out of time to spotlight another huge issue, red tape, which is really impacting food affordability.

Maurizio Zinetti, owner of Zinetti Foods in Cloverdale, recently approached me regarding an issue that will seriously impact food affordability. He reached out to share just how serious the impact of the new front-of-package labelling rules are for his business, and I have to say that I left that conversation very frustrated.

This is a Canadian-owned company doing everything right: producing high-quality food, employing Canadians and helping families across this country. Now, thanks to new packaging rules and regulations that are not even about food safety, he is staring down a \$2.2-million compliance bill. He is not alone. Across the industry, the total cost of these regulations is expected to top \$1.8 billion.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, which was particularly sensitive to the reality facing our families.

However, I wonder if she could talk about this government's position. On the one hand, spending is clearly increasing. On the other hand, revenues are being reduced because taxes are being cut. Spending is going up and revenues are going down. Back in December, in a disastrous situation during which the finance minister resigned, a \$50-billion deficit had already been announced for the previous fiscal year. Last year, the deficit was \$61.9 billion.

Could my colleague estimate how much the deficit would be if the government were to table a budget? I would estimate it at about \$75 billion.

[English]

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, this is a great question. Every family in Cloverdale—Langley City knows what it means to budget. Parents sit at the kitchen table every week deciding what they can and cannot afford. Meanwhile, the government racks up half a trillion in spending without even producing a budget. The more the Liberals borrow, the more it drives up interest rates, and that hits mortgages and grocery prices. It hits everyone.

My constituents are not asking for luxury; they are asking for stability, but what they are getting is debt, inflation and empty cupboards. That not leadership; that is failure.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my common-sense Conservative colleague from Cloverdale—Langley City for the part of her speech that focused on agriculture. I was very fortunate as a youngster to grow up in Lacombe County. I grew up on a mixed farm in the early seventies that eventually became a cow-calf operation.

I remember going to town with my grandpa when I was about five years old. We would leave the windows rolled down on the truck. We were not worried about crime. The truck came right from the assembly line with a gun rack in the back. We could leave the .22 in there, pull up to the store in town, get the things we need and go home. We could actually produce high-quality food that people could afford.

As a matter of fact, when I was a kid, families could be single-income in this country, could have a nice home in a safe community and could afford groceries. What happened in the seventies? His name is Pierre Elliott Trudeau. With everything that has happened, we are continuing to pile red tape on farmers and make it so costly to produce food.

I wonder if my colleague could elaborate on how devastating this is.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the story about growing up on farmland.

The costs being driven up by red tape are absolutely astronomical. In my speech, I specifically talked about inflation rates. That is such an incredible extra cost on every farmer that we cannot afford. If we continue to spend with recklessness, we will continue to see inflation rates rise.

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kings—Hants.

I am honoured to rise today for the first time to properly introduce myself as the proud member of Parliament for Spadina—Harbourfront. I thank my constituents for trusting me. In thousands of conversations during the campaign, they shared their stories, hopes and worries. I carry their voices with me every single day and will make sure that when decisions are made in this chamber, their voices are in the room and at the centre of all that I do.

I thank the volunteers and my team, who gave up evenings and weekends and braved the unpredictable April weather. They proved what we can achieve when we come together with purpose and a love for this great country. I thank my husband Ian for being my champion, grounding me in my values and always being my home. To my boys Sam and Ellis, the work I do each day is driven by my desire to create a better future for them, and this does not mean a bill for unlimited screen time.

As I stand in this chamber, I am reminded of the first time I walked through these doors in 2001, over 20 years ago. I had just launched McGill University's "Women in House" program because I believed more women deserved a seat right here in this House.

• (1305)

[Translation]

Today, I am a member of a caucus that is nearly 40% women. We have made real progress on dental care, child care, pharmacare and programs that invest in our communities.

[English]

I learned the power of collaboration as a parliamentary intern, learning from Libby Davies and the honourable Sheila Copps, and became a young staffer to former minister Carolyn Bennett, who taught me that good leaders ask good questions. These lessons guide me now, because real solutions start when we listen and build with people at the centre.

I am the daughter of Vietnamese immigrants. My family's story, like those of so many across this country, began with hope. They left Vietnam dreaming of safety, dignity and opportunity for their children. They worked hard. They sacrificed. They built a life in a country that promised not only refuge, but belonging. Like so many newcomers, they gave back more than they ever took. Here, they found a home, a community that cared and a government compassionate enough to act, a government ready to invest in people, to build public systems and to make sure no one gets left behind.

I grew up running through the parks of Spadina—Harbourfront, shopping on Queen West and finding hidden gems in our local restaurants. I now raise my boys, Sam and Ellis, in the same community. I want them to grow up in a country where equity is not charity; it is strategy. When we widen the circle of opportunity, we grow the economy for everyone. The values that define Canada, such as fairness, opportunity and diversity, demand that when one of us struggles, we all step up.

[Translation]

Despite this, families are struggling to find affordable housing. Grocery prices are skyrocketing, and wages are not keeping pace with inflation. We are suffering from the impact of unfair U.S. tariffs and threats to our economic sovereignty and to Canadian jobs.

[English]

This is not the Canada I want to leave to my kids. My mandate from Spadina—Harbourfront is clear: build an economy that works for everyone by putting equity at its heart. That is why I am proud to be serving as part of this new Liberal government.

Affordable child care is economic infrastructure. For every dollar we invest, the return is measured in parents, especially mothers, re-entering the labour force, businesses gaining skilled talent and children gaining lifelong advantages. Our government's \$10-a-day child care program is one of the most transformational policies in decades. Equity builds our economy. When more women can work, GDP rises, tax revenue grows and families thrive. Every parent knows that child care is not a luxury; it is infrastructure. It is what makes everything else possible.

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If we want to build a resilient, thriving Canada, we must start with the people who are raising our future generations. That means making sure families have not just support, but stability, starting with a roof over their heads. Housing is more than real estate; it is belonging. In ridings like Spadina—Harbourfront, the crisis is urgent. It affects families, seniors, students and newcomers. It demands bold, coordinated national leadership. That is why our government has committed to doubling the pace of housing construction, a truly transformational and generational ambition.

[Translation]

We believe that housing is a human right, not just a commodity.

[English]

Housing alone is not enough. People need to be able to move, connect and thrive in the communities they call home. Accessible, climate-smart transit connects people to work, school, health care and each other. When we talk about nation building, we must mean more than roads and towers. Let us build homes people can afford. Let us build transit systems that reflect the future we want to live in. Equity builds our economy. Every home built generates local jobs. Every transit line unlocks new markets and new opportunities.

I may be new to this chamber, but I am not new to this work. We are at a crossroads, and this is a moment that demands courage, care and clarity.

I know the road ahead will not be easy, but I did not come here for easiness. I came here to build Canada strong. I came here to make an impact. Let us all continue to work together to fight against the unjust tariffs and to make sure that we are taking clear steps to make life more affordable for Spadina—Harbourfront residents and all Canadians.

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● (1310)

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Spadina—Harbourfront on her first remarks in this House of Commons. We share one thing in common: We are both former parliamentary interns. I welcome her to the House of Commons. I would encourage her to use her voice in this chamber. The Liberal Party has a tradition of allowing the member for Winnipeg North to disproportionately take up all the time. Therefore, I encourage her to stand so that we hear less from the member for Winnipeg North.

So far, the government has tabled Bill C-2, Bill C-3, Bill C-4 and Bill C-5. Today we heard from the government that it is going to spend billions upon billions of dollars more on defence. We are also facing the reality that the Liberal budget misallocated over \$20 billion in its fiscal projections on what the government would be collecting on tariffs.

Amidst all the uncertainty and the major defence spending commitments, why has the government not committed to tabling a budget this spring, in this session, to give Canadians clarity?

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his past experience as an intern. I am glad to join him in these ranks.

Our government is working hard to make sure that we are doing our homework and that we are prepared for a very thoughtful budget process in the fall, after we have continued the fantastic work of putting out legislation that is going to help Canadians today: a middle-class tax cut for 22 million Canadians, eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued up to \$1 million and removing the consumer carbon price from law.

These are measures and actions that we are taking immediately to support Canadians in the moment.

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my new Liberal colleague.

Speaking of homework, we could make a list of important things for the government to do.

Does my colleague agree with me that, if we are to agree on measures, then the first thing on the government's homework list should be to table a budget?

[English]

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, again I will reiterate that we are doing our work and thoughtfully preparing the estimates and work that is required to make sure that when we bring the budget forward in the fall, it has the right figures. There are many things at play at this particularly challenging time. After we do that work, we will be in the House to defend it and make sure that we table the numbers as appropriate.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate my hon. colleague for taking her seat in this House. We are very excited. As a woman who has been a champion for other women, she spoke highly of the child care benefit that we offer to many women across the country, the dental care plan and many other measures that are in our budget, things

that we have tabled here in this House to make sure that women across the country are taken care of.

Can the member expand a little on the impact these measures are going to have on people in her riding, as a woman who has been a strong champion for other women?

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I care deeply about the issue of making sure that we have the right infrastructure in place for our communities. This is what I heard about at the doors, with many young parents and family members thinking about their path and how they were going to build the child care required in our communities. We have firmed up our child care program. Seeing those commitments in place makes my heart sing, as I am a mom of two boys.

We continue to make other investments in programs, such as in expanding dental care. These are components of how we build the infrastructure that supports and grows our economy, and it is the kind of thing I am very proud of as a Liberal member of Parliament.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just said something very interesting, which is that the Liberals are going to table a budget in the fall so they have the right figures. Do they not have the right figures to table a budget now? Does that make any sense?

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the fantastic question. They are all fantastic questions. I love being in the House.

We are working to make sure those estimates are accurate. Numbers are changing rapidly with the pressure points, as we are in conversation around responding to the tariffs and as other elements have an impact on our global community. That work is under way. We will be delighted to come forward with that when the time is right, after we have done our homework to make sure that we can share this appropriately in the fall.

● (1315)

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to be able to stand here in this place, particularly on opposition days. I know the member for Winnipeg North enjoys it, and so do I. It is a good opportunity for us on this side of the House to critique and also perhaps to find fallacy in some of the arguments that are being put forward by opposition members.

I have had the opportunity to look into the opposition day motion, to read it in great detail and to be able to identify some pieces that I am going to pick up on here today. The first piece that is particularly important is around these words: “the Prime Minister...will be held to account.” That is in the opposition day motion from the Conservative Party. It is important to reflect upon what that actually means.

We have just gone through a federal election, and the Prime Minister won the referendum in this country about who was best to serve during a very uncertain time. The Canadian people are also the ones who ultimately hold to account all of us here in this place: our constituents. The 343 members of this House are tied directly to a constituency. They are responsible to constituents, to this country and its citizens. Ultimately, the Prime Minister and our members of Parliament are going to be tied on that side.

I do think it gives us an opportunity to reflect upon the work of the Prime Minister and the leadership of the Liberal government. We are now in week three of the House returning. It is important to reflect upon what has already been accomplished in two weeks and what is going to be accomplished in the days ahead.

First of all, the opposition day motion really talks about affordability. I did not hear, in any of the speeches from the opposition members, their support or their acknowledgement of the government's middle-income tax cut, notwithstanding the fact that they actually voted for it just a few days ago on the ways and means motion. This represents up to \$840 a year for two-income families in this country. Twenty-two million Canadians will benefit from this policy. We have not heard one word about the work the government has done. I went back and reflected on Hansard this morning.

I give full credit to the opposition and, in fact, all of this House, for at least having enough foresight to support this type of measure. However, there is something concrete that this government is doing. It is moving quickly to be able to implement that by July 1.

We also need to talk about young people in this country and the fact that it is a difficult housing market. We should all acknowledge that, as parliamentarians. The government has already moved to remove the GST, which is the federal tax portion of home sales up to \$1 million for first-time homebuyers.

I am in my mid-thirties. There are a lot of people in their late twenties, thirties and early forties who are trying to get into the housing market in this country. The government recognizes that. We are removing the GST; again, this is something that was supported by every member in this House on the ways and means motion. It is directly accountable to affordability, and it is a good measure.

I want to differentiate, though, between this side of the House and that side of the House. In our platform, our commitment, we actually proposed to remove the GST and, again, so did the Conservatives. However, the Conservatives proposed to pay for that by actually eliminating the supply side of the program. Not only are we getting rid of the taxation for those first-time homebuyers, but we have programs that are around supply. It is not a great mechanism if the supply side that is about building more homes in this country is actually used to pay for the tax cut that is proposed. That would actually limit the number of Canadians who could benefit, because that would not solve the supply side of the equation.

When I looked at the Conservative platform from just over a month ago, this is something that was actually problematic. They were going to use the supply-side funding, the supports to the municipalities, the supports for infrastructure upgrades in this country and affordable housing, to pay for that tax cut. We think it has to be

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both at the same time, the affordability measure, while we are also building more houses.

On the ways of means motion, we have also eliminated the consumer carbon tax. Again, the Prime Minister and the Liberal government have highlighted that this had become a divisive policy in the country. There are ways to be able to fight climate change and reduce emissions in this country that do not involve a consumer carbon price.

I do need to talk about Bill C-5, which is the economic legislation that was tabled in this House on Friday to create one Canadian economy, not 13. There are federal barriers to interprovincial trade, and, of course, there are provincial and territorial barriers to interprovincial trade. The federal portion represents a small magnitude of what is left and remaining, but the government wants to show leadership and make sure that we are stepping up.

● (1320)

As a country, we are leaving approximately 200 billion dollars' worth of economic growth on the table every single year by not being able to remove these interprovincial trade barriers. They have been talked about for decades. Right now, we are in a political moment where I think there is the political wherewithal to actually advance these forward. I give full credit to the Minister of Internal Trade and Transport for her work to be able to advance them.

Again, we should not let the legislation languish. The Conservatives ran on these same types of policies in their platform. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues opposite about whether they will be stepping up to support the legislation quickly, because time is of the essence. They want to talk about the economy; they want to talk about affordability. They should be stepping up to support the legislation as soon as it gets up for debate here in this place.

We also need to build major national projects. This is part of Bill C-5, which is a commitment to identify projects of major national concern and opportunity, as well as to be able to advance them with the goal of having them permitted within two years. That is extremely important.

There are five criteria, five elements, that outline how these projects can ultimately be designated by the Privy Council. They have to be of major economic benefit to the country. They have to have the support of indigenous people. They have to be likely to be able to be advanced and to be accomplished. They have to set and establish Canada's autonomy, the ability for these projects to help our sovereignty in this country, especially with what we are seeing around the world. The last piece is that they have to be reconciled with the goals that this government has and our country has in terms of being able to reduce emissions. This is very crucial legislation to make sure that we can advance major projects. It is an initiative of the Prime Minister and the government. It is being introduced very quickly, in fact, within the first two weeks of being back.

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The last thing I want to talk about in the three and a half minutes that I assume I have left, based on my timing, is defence. We hear members opposite on the importance of investing in defence. I want to remind Canadians at home of a few things. When Mr. Harper left office, defence spending under the Conservatives in 2015 had dipped below 1% of GDP. Every single year that the Liberal government was in power from 2015 to 2024, defence spending increased. Of course, that is never recognized on the side opposite, but I will go as far as to say that was the last government under former prime minister Trudeau, notwithstanding that these guys on that side want to pretend that it is the same government, which it is not. The current government is stepping up to meet our 2% spending target by the end of this fiscal year.

I look forward to help from the member from Manitoba in support of that. I know there are many members, but I hope the shadow critic for defence is actually pleased today that he is seeing public policy advance in this country about the spending that is necessary to make sure that Canada can have a strong, sovereign and reliable Canadian Armed Forces. We have to be standing here shoulder to shoulder with our Canadian Armed Forces to help support them.

The last piece I want to talk about is around the mention of food in the opposition day motion. Food is driven by our farmers in this country. It is driven by our agricultural producers. There are a few things we have to put on the record: The Conservatives voted against the national school food program in the last Parliament, which actually supports children in need in this country. They voted against it. They voted against the Canada child benefit, which helps put nutritious food on the table via extra money for parents. I have heard the stories in my own riding, and other members of Parliament have talked about this. They voted against those measures.

It is important to recognize that, as much as I have heard Conservative members stand up and talk about farmers over the last couple of hours in this debate, there was next to nothing in the Conservative election platform for farmers. I had the opportunity to debate the member for Foothills as part of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture debate. The member for Foothills is a great guy and a good parliamentarian. He had nothing to deal with, because Pierre Poilievre and the Conservative Party had nothing in their platform for farmers.

Mr. Speaker, you are from Wellington County in Ontario, the supply-managed capital of this country in terms of Ontario. There are lots of supply-managed farmers. Not one single mention in the platform of the Conservative Party actually said that members of the Conservative Party, if they formed government, would protect supply management.

If we are going to tie food policy to budgetary policy and policy in this place, I would like to actually see the Conservatives back up some of their words with actual substantive policy in their platform. Maybe for the next election, they will have something a bit more substantive. It is this party, this government, that actually has a plan to support Canadian farmers. I hope I get asked a question on it, because I would love to be able to elaborate.

• (1325)

Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I heard the member speak about the supply side of housing and the

importance of that. He bragged about the government's various different programs.

I wonder if he would acknowledge, though, that one of the key flaws in the government's housing accelerator program is that in the larger centres that were getting huge sums of money, those cities were also increasing the cost to build homes. If we have a housing crisis in this country, we have to acknowledge that it is a cost of housing crisis.

Why would the government give money to cities that are raising the cost to build homes?

Hon. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, my humble question back to my hon. colleague, who I know does a lot of good, important work on housing policy in this place, is about why the Conservative Party would propose to get rid of the supply-side funding that was supporting homebuilding, and has been supporting homebuilding in this country, to fund the GST tax cut. Those two things do not add up, and I know the hon. member knows that the programs need to be in place to drive supply.

There was very little in the Conservative platform. Thank goodness Conservatives are not on this side of the House, because it would not have resulted in the types of housing that need to be built in this country.

We are going to work with municipalities, and we are going to work with cities. As part of the conditions, we will make sure that if they are actually driving up development charges, they will not receive federal funding. That is part of the ongoing oversight of that housing accelerator policy.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Kings—Hants for his speech, and congratulate him on his appointment as parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister. I would imagine that this position will give him access to some important figures.

I would like to apply the rule of three. At the end of December, we knew that there was a \$50-billion deficit for last year so far. If we apply the rule of three and there were four months left, that gives us a \$75-billion deficit for the previous year.

Do I have my numbers right? I would like to know what my colleague thinks.

[*English*]

Hon. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, all parliamentarians have before us the main estimates and the supplementary (A)s that were provided in relation to what this government is planning on spending on defence. We as parliamentarians have an ability to look at the outlay of money here in this place to be able to make those decisions.

The government has committed to a budget in the fall session. It is important. I did not get the chance to raise this directly in my speech, but whether the government is looking at defence partnerships in Europe, the continuation of the dynamic between Canada and U.S. administrations and how that shoe may fall, or the one Canadian economy legislation and whether we have supportive members in this House to be able to move forward, all of that is going to have an impact on what a financial analysis and a budget will actually look like, including measures of saving, where this government will be looking to find efficiency in government spending. All of that is coming in the fall, and my colleague will have the ability to look at it, as will we.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague can provide, or reinforce, his thoughts on the Prime Minister getting rid of the carbon tax when he first became leader of the Liberal Party and then, right after the federal election, making a commitment to Canadians about giving them a tax break, which, as my colleague has pointed out, 22 million Canadians will benefit from directly. Can my colleague address the issue of affordability and how the Prime Minister has already been boots-in on getting it dealt with?

Hon. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, one of the differences between the way we have handled the public policy issue versus the way the Conservatives have is that this government and this Prime Minister recognized that the policy of carbon pricing at the consumer level had become divisive and that there had to be a change. Instead of just cutting the consumer carbon price, we recognized there were rebates tied to the consumer price that went back to people and that eight out of 10 households were better off. However, it had become politically challenging, and the policy did not have the support of enough Canadians to be able to move forward.

That is why we also introduced the tax cut I referenced in my speech, with up to \$840 a year for two-income households in this country, or 22 million Canadians, as my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North has mentioned.

That is the difference: We have removed that policy but also introduced a tax cut to make sure those households that were receiving a benefit from the rebate are better off and are continuing to be supported through tax measures that this government is introducing. The opposition members would have simply cut the program and made no mention of the fact that rebates were coming back. It was good to see them actually support this measure, because it is smart public policy.

• (1330)

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the member for Tobique—Mactaquac.

It is an honour to rise again today on behalf of Oshawa and the countless families, seniors and everyday Canadians who, unfortunately, are being punished even though they are doing everything right. They work hard. They pay their taxes. They follow the rules. What do they get in return? They get soaring grocery bills, bare cupboards and empty fridges.

I have spoken to so many families, and the stories are the same. It feels like every time they walk into a grocery store, they are ner-

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vous about what the attendant might say. Single parents, as well as those in double-income homes, are watching each item pass by the scanner as the grocery bill rises way quicker than ever before. Hearts are beating with nervous fear that if they spend too much here, they may not be able to get their kids their other needs in life, like clothing, or maybe they will just need to forget programs like sports or the arts. They are not just shopping; they are trying to survive. They are walking aisle to aisle doing the mental math: “Can we afford beef or any meat this week? Do we really need fruit? Can we stretch what is in the pantry for just a few more days?”

Conservatives refuse to accept this as normal. Now even the Prime Minister, finally, after the Liberals have been ignoring this growing crisis for 10 years, has admitted that he will be held to account by the prices Canadians pay at the grocery store. Today is the day we will hold him to it.

Since the start of 2025, food inflation has worsened even more. Families are eating less nutritious food, cutting back on meals and turning to food banks in record numbers, not because they want to but because they have no other choice. According to the latest data, Canadian families will pay \$16,834 for food this year, an increase of \$800 since 2024. For most people, that is a couple of car payments, maybe three, or perhaps a chance for their kids to get into that sports or arts program they have always wanted to do. Worse, that might be the difference between getting by and going under.

Why is this happening? Why are Canadians paying more and getting less? It is not sustainable. It is not responsible. After 10 years of Liberal inflationary deficits, it is the direct result of the government's choices. Let me share some of the numbers, because the statistics now match the stories we have been hearing for months.

The statistics are in. Since the start of 2024, the price of beef strip loin has increased by 34.2%. Beef top sirloin is up almost 34%. Oranges have risen by 26% and apples by almost 19%. The cost of white rice has gone up 14.2%, while sweet potatoes are up almost 13%. Coffee has increased 9.3%, and I know other members in this House are struggling with that as well, because we need our coffee. Chicken breasts and pork rib cuts are both up 6%, pork shoulder has increased 5% and eggs have risen almost 4%.

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I cannot be the only one here noticing the pattern. These foods are examples of the healthy choices, the ones we need the most to nourish our families. How does a country that grows food for the world make food so unaffordable for its own people? I think the answer is sitting across the aisle. The current Liberal government is not the solution, because, I believe, it is the architect of the problem. The Liberals want us to trust the people who created the problem to fix it. To me, it almost sounds like an abusive relationship, and a bit of gaslighting. They spend too much. They tax too much. Now everything costs too much. Even baby formula is up 9.1%. Let us think about that. Baby formula is now a luxury item under the current Liberal government.

A recent CTV News report confirmed what Canadians were already feeling. For three months in a row now, grocery prices are rising faster than overall inflation. The government cannot blame this on grocers anymore.

• (1335)

The truth is in the numbers, yet the government continues to pour fuel on the fire. It is now introducing a half-trillion dollars in inflationary spending. The Prime Minister said he would cap spending growth at 2%; now he is saying 8%, which is an astounding four times what he promised. That is not just a broken promise; it is an economic betrayal of Canadian families, and all without presenting a budget.

In my own hometown of Oshawa, we are seeing these consequences first-hand. The organizers at Simcoe Hall Settlement House, a local food bank that has honourably served our community for 90 years, are sounding the alarm. Usage of the food bank has surged to 55% more this year. It is not just low-income or single-income families anymore; it is dual-income households, working full time, raising kids and still coming up short. The largest group using the food bank now are single parents. I know what that is like. I have been there, and I can say that when a government makes it harder to feed the kids, that is not a government that is helping the middle class; that is a government that is hurting it.

Feed the Need in Durham was established in 2008 by local food banks as a regional food-distribution hub. Its distribution is annually worth \$8.8 million: 2.5 million pounds. From 2021 to 2023, it saw an increase in usage of 60%; from then to 2024, an additional 26%; and in just the third quarter of last year, another 25%.

The Liberals say everything is fine: Inflation is under control. “You can trust us.” Well, come to Oshawa. Tell that to the senior living at Faith Place or on Benson Street who is choosing between food and rent this month. Tell that to the single parent shopping at the No Frills on Bloor Street who is putting groceries back at the till. Tell that to the working families of General Motors who can no longer afford basic staples because beef, fruit, rice and even baby formula are now luxuries. Tell that to the food bank volunteers at Simcoe Hall Settlement House who are watching shelves empty faster than they can be filled.

Canadians are not asking for much. They are not asking for luxuries; they are asking for groceries. They are asking for leadership who understand that budgets do not balance themselves, that we cannot tax and spend our way to prosperity and that economic dis-

cipline is not just a talking point but a lifeline for families barely hanging on.

The Conservative motion before the House is not complicated. It is a call for accountability through a tabled budget. It is a demand for answers. It is a stand on behalf of every Canadian who has opened a grocery bill and felt fear. The government has had a chance to fix this. For 10 years, the Liberals ignored it. They spent, they taxed, they blamed, and now they want credit for admitting there is a problem. That is not leadership; that is damage control and, again, akin to abuse and gaslighting.

“We made the problem; now trust us to fix the problem.” Canadians are not accepting that. On behalf of Oshawa, I am not accepting that.

This House is meant to represent the common people, but do the members across the aisle even understand what the average Canadian is struggling with on a day-to-day basis? Enough is enough. Canadians are making sacrifices every day. The least their government can do is show the same discipline. If the Liberal government cannot live within its means, how can Canadian families be expected to live within their means?

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about the government living within its means, and of course, this government has committed to an operational balanced budget within three years, recognizing that there have to be major capital expenditures, particularly for our Canadian Armed Forces, which the Prime Minister highlighted today.

Does the member not recognize the irony that her Conservative Party platform actually committed to billions and billions of dollars of deficits in the election period that she just ran under? Does she find it a bit ironic to stand in this place and talk about fiscal discipline when the Conservatives were more than willing to run on a platform of major, major spending and deficit financing?

• (1340)

Rhonda Kirkland: I would much rather trust the members on this side of the aisle, who have lived regular lives and understand what it is like to go to a grocery store. Our Prime Minister admitted that he has never really even been in a grocery store.

What we are saying here is very top level, but we need to tell that to the parent putting apples back at the till or the senior who is skipping their meals. We cannot spin a grocery receipt. The government's economic optimism may work in a boardroom, but in Oshawa and across the country, people are hurting.

The numbers are clear. Food inflation is rising faster than inflation rates. Something has to be done.

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we agree with the Conservatives that committing that much money without tabling a budget does not make sense.

The Bloc Québécois commissioned a study from the Institut de recherche en économie contemporaine. We wanted to see if food inflation is tied to the carbon tax. The answer we got is that it is not tied to the carbon tax, or at least not in any significant way. However, it is tied to climate change.

I would like my colleague's thoughts on that.

[English]

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, I definitely heard those across the aisle blaming global inflation, which is a tired deflection. Canadians do not care where it all started. They care that it is worse here and that they are paying for it. The government's refusal to control its spending and the industrial carbon tax directly drives up costs across the supply chain, from farms to trucks to store shelves. It is not a global issue; it is Liberal policy.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made an excellent speech. According to Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, a professor at Dalhousie who is among the national leaders in food pricing, Canada's food inflation is the highest in the G7. This is not a global issue; it is a Liberal-made issue.

I would ask my colleague what impact Canada having the highest food inflation in the G7 is having on her constituents and the families in Oshawa.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, I referred to this in my speech as having a massive impact.

We have seen a major increase in food bank usage. Simcoe Hall Settlement House, which has been serving our community for 90 years, has seen a 55% increase. It cannot keep groceries on the shelves. It is running out to the grocery store, spending the money it is getting from gifts from the community to fill up its shelves, but by noon, the shelves are empty. Seniors who are hoping to get help are coming in the afternoon, and they cannot get it. We need change, and we need it now. We need a budget, and we needed it yesterday.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see someone from our region in the chair.

I agree that there is a lot of work to do, and I do believe that many hands make light work. I think there are steps that we need to take. I would ask the member if programs, such as the tax-free child benefit, the school nutrition program and the help for not-for-profit organizations, especially through challenging times such as the pandemic, also help in the conversation we are having today?

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, that is a huge question. I feel like those are a pittance. They are little pieces of the puzzle that many Canadians do not have access to other than, of course, the child benefit. In terms of child care, I would invite the member to tell the shift workers in my community about the \$10-a-day child

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care. They do not have access to it because they work midnight shift. The child care is mostly for day shifts.

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to once again rise in the people's House. I always count it a privilege, and it is the first time I am addressing the House with a speech since being re-elected by the great people of Tobique—Mactaquac. I want to express my appreciation and heartfelt thanks to them and to my family for all their love, support and care. It is truly the honour of my life to serve here in the people's House, so I want to thank them.

It is a privilege to rise on this opposition motion. Our motion is to hold the government to account and put forward alternatives that would serve the people of Canada. It is only responsible for any government, and let alone government, but any family or business, to bring forth a budget and to plan, to make sure to, at the end of the day, when at all possible, balance the budget and make sure there is enough there to pay the bills, meet the obligations and hopefully, if they are fortunate enough, have a little bit to set aside for the future.

What is true for a household and a business should also be true for any government, especially the Government of Canada, but right now, we are going into one of the longest periods in our history without having a budget tabled. I think Canadians from coast to coast are wondering when that budget will get tabled. It is wonderful to have great ideas, have wonderful plans and talk a great game, but can it back it up with the dollars and cents, the budgetary means, to both make it happen and be responsible? I think Canadians are looking to us to provide reasonable alternatives and to make sure we hold the government to account in regard to this.

I have a few remarks today. I guess, the way to sum it up is from my background. I like the use of alliteration, so I have four Cs, and I am going to try to cover them quickly in the short time that we have. There are four Cs to seeing our way clear.

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The first C we need to address here today is the challenges we face. When we start thinking about the challenges we face as a nation, none of us should be ignorant of these, as we have several. One of the first and foremost challenges is the rising cost of living. We have heard a lot about how our food inflation is the highest in the G7, but I do not have to look at an economics report to realize that. I just have to visit a local grocery store and talk to the seniors who are on fixed incomes trying to make ends meet or talk to the young families who are trying to make their mortgage payments and their vehicle payments, keep their kids in sports and maybe plan for a bit of a trip, if they could at the end of the day, while putting food on the table. When I talk to them, I soon realize the challenges we are facing as they relate to food inflation and the soaring cost of groceries.

The challenges we face are not just what is happening at home, here in our country. We are also obviously feeling the effects of the global uncertainty happening right now: wars, rumours of wars, conflicts and riots. We are seeing instability. We are seeing things that once seemed so certain that no longer seem certain. With that, there is rising anxiety, fear and despair. We, as elected representatives, pick that up in our daily conversations and interactions with people. We hear it, and we cannot help but be affected by it. We are surrounded by those challenges, and yes, Canada's not immune to the external threats, but there are a lot of those that we do not have direct control over. We cannot affect what is happening overseas on a grand scale. We have a limited amount that we can say and do in regard to the vast geopolitical challenges facing our world.

The greatest threat to us, far more than anything that may be happening externally or some strong southern wind that may blow in from time to time, is the threats that are within. We have gone through an era of Canadian self-sabotage. That is the biggest threat that the House has the responsibility to address.

• (1345)

It was no external force that brought a carbon tax on our people. It was no external government that shut down pipeline construction and passed Bill C-69 and Bill C-48. It was no external government that brought the highest levels of taxation in comparison to other advanced economies. It was our own government in our own country. That is the biggest challenge we have to face, which is to get our own house in order and have a massive course correction so that we can change the way we are going. If we deal with our problems within, we can face the challenges without with confidence.

Though our challenges are many and that is the first C, I have to deal with the second C, which refers to contradictions. We are filled with contradictions when I consider the record of our dear friends on the other side. These were the ones who said that, if we do not put in a carbon tax, we will burn our planet. These are the ones who said that, if we do not put the cost on carbon, we are going to absolutely destroy our environment in this country. I am glad they contradicted themselves most recently and adopted our policy of eliminating, or reducing, as I think that, for now, it has been eliminated for the consumer, the carbon tax.

They realized that it is a punitive tax that accomplished nothing as it relates to the environment and only had a diminishing impact

on the pocketbooks of Canadians. I thank them for recognizing that the carbon tax served no purpose but to punish our own citizens.

The contradictions continue. While they reduced the rate of the carbon tax to zero, as a result of the election, they kept the carbon tax on, and are going to put it on, industry, thinking, somehow, that the industries are not going to transmit those costs back to the consumers, who are ultimately Canadians. Talk about contradictions. It is really quite something. These are the same ones who were against pipeline construction, who talked down our oil and gas sector for 10 years and who said that it was dirty oil and dirty gas. All of a sudden, they are becoming champions for it. I am thankful for the road-to-Damascus experience my friends on the other side have had, and I hope it continues, but I cannot help but be struck by the contradiction. Canadians must be scratching their heads and asking if this is the same crew. They look the same. They sound somewhat the same but they are talking a new talk. I think that, if we are going to overcome and see our way clear, we have to overcome the contradictions between what they have done in policy and what they are saying in rhetoric.

Let us get the policy fixed so that we can get the country on the right course. That is the third C. I have to get to my third and fourth Cs. The second was the contradictions we have to overcome. Do members know what that means, if we overcome the contradictions? We have to have a course correction. It is time to change course.

It is time to stop pitting one region against another region. It is time to stop pitting rural Canadians against urban Canadians. It is time to stop pitting family against family and start bringing Canadians together to do something big for the country, which is, yes, to build the infrastructure necessary to get our energy and our resources to world markets so that we can lift our standard of living and tackle the food inflation crisis face on.

It is time to get off the backs of our farmers, producers and workers and leave more of the money in their pockets, the money that they have worked hard to earn. It is time that we change course as a country and get on the right way. By doing that, we will start seeing our way clear. I challenge the House to consider a severe course correction from the error and the era of Canadian self-sabotage to the time and the season of great change that will bring prosperity, not just to a certain element of our society, the elite and the sophisticated, but to all Canadians, especially the working class, those who put boots on every day, carry their buckets to work and wait on our tables. They are those who have often been overlooked and forgotten. Let us change course and make sure that their needs are addressed in the House.

The last C I am going to end on is this: There is a question that comes in the midst of a crisis. Oftentimes, we look at who can save us, what can save us, what can change it and what can help us. I think we have to ask ourselves what it is in our own house that needs to be addressed. If we look at what is in our own house, we can find the answers to our problem. Stop blaming that which is without. Stop looking everywhere else to escape our own responsibility. Let us change course within and unleash the potential of Canada's resource, energy and farming sectors, and watch us overcome any challenge we could ever face. It is time to get our own house in order.

• (1350)

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did very well for the first five minutes in showing a level of nuance. I enjoyed the Cs he laid out. I will lay out a C, which is the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers in this country. Its statistics show that oil and gas sector production increased by 41% in the last 10 years. We never hear that from the opposition benches whatsoever.

Here is another C: the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. I was with the member for Foothills during the election. He is a really good parliamentarian and a smart guy. He had nothing to work with because that C, the Conservative Party, had next to nothing for farmers in its platform.

The last piece is a small C, because the member talked about the environment. I find it very ironic when we see the member stand up to talk about some of the policies that the government has tried to work with to actually reduce emissions and grow the economy at the same time.

Why was his party committing to spending more taxpayers' dollars to reduce emissions during the campaign instead of using the small-c Conservative policy of carbon pricing?

• (1355)

Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, I have another C for the hon. member across the way, and that is called common sense. Common sense would tell someone that they do not talk down the life-giving sectors of this country, namely energy, oil, gas and natural resources, for 10 years, telling them how bad and how horrible it is, how we have to get off it and it is no good. They have provided transfer payments to the rest of us in this country to help keep our hospitals open, keep our schools open and keep us functioning. All of a sudden, the Liberals are doing a gymnastic backflip in the midst of a campaign and pretending to be champions of the energy sector. Canadians are not buying it.

It is time to use common sense. More Canadian energy on the global markets is better for the global environment, because we have the best practices for extraction and the best environmental regulations on the planet. It is time to use Canadian energy and stand up for it.

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is fairly simple.

Business of Supply

Speaking of common sense, on Friday, Ottawa was the most polluted city in the world because of the forest fires that are unfortunately out of control. Now Europe is being affected.

Does my colleague agree that climate change is caused by the fossil fuel industry?

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my answer is simple. We need to acknowledge the fact that many of the fires in Canada are considered acts of arson committed by people who acted irresponsibly.

[English]

It is because people are not taking responsibility. We can blame people and do all this other stuff, but primarily let us get our house in order and do the practical things, like good forest management practice. That is common sense that would help reduce the risk of forest fires.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it feels like I am at Sunday morning church right now. The amazing member here has inspired us with his words, and I am grateful for those words.

When I think about Sunday morning, I think about the word “trust”. Canadians are feeling like they cannot trust the government opposite, because it has been saying one thing for 10 years and now it is doing something else, claiming that it never said that. That is the gaslighting that I spoke about in my speech.

Would the member comment on that?

Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, what has become abundantly clear is that people are tired of the contradictions and they are tired of the verbal gymnastics. One thing is said in conversation and grandiose ideas are put forth, but in the reality of walking it out and taking the steps necessary to release the potential of our country, the Liberals do nothing. They talk a great talk, but let us see what they do when it comes to actually putting in place the policies necessary to unleash our potential and unlock our resources so that we can prosper and tackle the challenges within our own country.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we may not agree on the causation of inflation, but in the spirit of solidarity, we know that Canadian retaliatory tariffs are having a significant impact on small business. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has cited that 49% of small businesses are feeling the impact either on their bottom line or throughout their supply chain. My colleague talked about transparency and accountability. We are still left in the dark. Canadians do not know how much money the federal government has collected or how it is going to get that money to small businesses.

Does my colleague agree that it cannot wait until the fall?

Statements by Members

● (1400)

Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, we need to get to the bottom of how much has been collected so far through the countertariff measures and make sure that what has been collected is getting to the businesses and families that have been most impacted by these tariffs.

It is time we had accountability, and the best way to get that is to have a budget tabled in this House.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

RUNNYMEDE UNITED CHURCH

Karim Bardeesy (Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, exactly 100 years ago less a day, 468 Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists in west Toronto put aside their differences to worship together for the first time. They gathered at a church at 432 Runnymede Road, a church they had just disassembled together and reassembled six blocks away. They were part of a national movement sweeping farming communities, small towns and cities across Canada. Scarred by war and motivated by their faith and their belief in justice, these believers put aside their differences to create The United Church of Canada.

This weekend, I had the honour of joining members of Runnymede United Church, still at 432 Runnymede Road, for their 100th anniversary celebration. Thanks go to centennial committee chair David Ambrose and all of those who put on and attended this celebration.

The community at Runnymede United is active, reconciling with its past and reaching beyond its community to its neighbours and the world beyond. It is a spirit we see throughout the riding of Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, and at a time when so many are doom-scrolling, retreating or dividing, it is one that I commend to this House.

* * *

PITT MEADOWS—MAPLE RIDGE

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the residents of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge and Mission for re-electing me to a third term in the House of Commons, and previously twice to the B.C. legislature. It is an honour that I take seriously.

This has always been a competitive riding, and while this election was no different, support for our message grew significantly. There were 12,000 more votes locally than in previous elections. I saw a shift, particularly among blue-collar workers and young Canadians struggling with affordability. I spoke with thousands of constituents and asked a simple question: Are things better after 10 years of Liberal rule? Not one person said yes, and that says a lot.

The Liberals won, not by their own sorry record but by copying Conservative policies like scrapping the carbon tax and by capitalizing on Trump. Still, they won, but make no mistake, Conservative

MPs like me will keep fighting every day for a safer, stronger, more affordable and more prosperous Canada.

* * *

NATIONAL HOLOCAUST MONUMENT

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night, the National Holocaust Monument was vandalized. Are there no limits? The monument commemorates not only the six million murdered Jewish women, men and children but the millions of other victims of Nazism and its collaborators during the Second World War. More than that, the National Holocaust Monument is a statement for today. It is an ever-living declaration by right-minded people for tolerance, for understanding, for respect for all peoples.

The depraved soul who defaced the monument should give their head a shake, reconnect with their humanity, appreciate our common history and rejoin the better angels of our natures to build a better world so that we never again need to erect another Holocaust monument.

* * *

SILVER ALERT SYSTEM

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been 18 months since the tragic disappearance of Earl Moberg, a beloved husband, father and grandfather from my community. Mr. Moberg suffered from dementia and despite exhaustive search efforts, he has not been found and is presumed deceased.

Unfortunately, by 2030, nearly one million people will be living with Alzheimer's in Canada, and nearly 60% will go missing at some point. Tragically, if they are not found within 12 hours, there is a 50% chance they will be injured or deceased from hypothermia, dehydration or drowning. This really underlines the urgency of finding our loved ones as quickly as possible. That is why there is an urgent need for a national silver alert system. Like the Amber alert system for children, it would rapidly notify the public when a senior with cognitive impairments goes missing in the area.

To that effect, I have sponsored petition e-5196, launched by the Moberg family, urging the federal government to work with provinces and police to implement a national silver alert system to save lives by helping locate missing seniors faster. We must act now to protect our most vulnerable and prevent future tragedies.

* * *

[Translation]

TROIS-RIVIÈRES LIONS

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Trois-Rivières Lions for their historic victory on Saturday, when they defeated the Toledo Walleye to win the Kelly Cup in the East Coast Hockey League finals.

The Trois-Rivières Lions are the only Canadian team in that professional hockey league, and this was the first time that the team participated in the Kelly Cup finals. It is safe to say that Trois-Rivières is at the top of their game these days.

I want to congratulate all the Lions players and their head coach, Ron Choules. I also want to give a big shout-out to goalie Luke Cavallin, who was named series MVP, and to Alex Beaucage, a Trois-Rivières native and the pride of his hometown today.

[English]

I wish the same success to the Edmonton Oilers in their match this evening. Canada is behind them.

* * *

• (1405)

NEW TECUMSETH—GWILLIMBURY

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is something special about life in a Canadian small town, especially in New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury. These are places shaped by open fields, quiet roads and a strong sense of community. People look out for one another, show up for local events and take pride in the place they call home. That spirit is what Canada is all about.

On July 1, we will kick things off with my annual Canada Day barbecue from 11:30 to 1:30. Join us at Riverdale Park in Alliston. We will have free burgers, ice cream and live music as we celebrate Confederation together. The fun will not stop there. August brings Carrot Fest in Bradford, part of the 100th anniversary of Holland Marsh, and Potato Festival in Alliston. It is not just about the vegetables; these festivals dedicated to hometown staples celebrate who we are.

We will see everyone in the soup and salad bowl of Canada. It is going to be unbelievable.

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CORONATION MEDAL RECIPIENTS

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous honour to rise again in the House as the member of Parliament for Markham—Stouffville. I am thankful to my wonderful campaign team and to the people of Markham—Stouffville for the privilege of serving them.

Markham—Stouffville is an extraordinary place due to the contributions of countless exceptional individuals, whom I recognized earlier this year with the King's coronation medals. Congratulations to Mark Atikian, Allan Bell, Lina Bigioni, Shaowen Chen, Mike Clare, Glenn Crosby, Wayne Emmerson, Margaret Grandison, Ray McNeice, Jack Heath, Sivan Ilangko, Dr. Fareen Karachiwalla, Dr. Emilie Lam, Madge Logan, Mayor Iain Lovatt, Jo-anne Marr, Rev. Joan Masterton, Haresh Mehta, Ignacio “Mogi” Mogado, Marlene Mogado, Dr. Najmul Siddiqui, Chief Bill Snowball, Susan Tucker, Dr. Rui Wang, John Webster, Tupper Wheatley. Congratulations to them all.

Statements by Members

KEMPTVILLE BREWERY

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if anyone is travelling this summer and finds themselves on Highway 416 near the town of Kemptville, be sure to visit the Kemptville Brewing Company. I had the privilege of joining their grand opening on June 3, alongside outstanding entrepreneurs Nathan Devries, Kurtis Devries, Braden Dukelow and Jocelyn Major. Their passion and dedication have brought something truly special to our community.

Set in the beautiful North Grenville countryside, Kemptville Brewing Company is already becoming a local favourite. For anyone keen to sample small-batch craft brews or enjoy delicious comfort food, my go-tos are a can of Caddy's Choice and a wood-fired pizza, or they can experience live music and trivia nights. It is the perfect way to unwind and enjoy the vibes of our region.

This summer, make a point to visit. Bring friends, meet new faces and support this fantastic addition to Kemptville. It is more than a place to grab a drink. It is a destination that is worth the stop.

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[Translation]

2025 MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNION DES MUNICIPALITÉS DU QUÉBEC

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say how proud I am of the awards received by the City of Mirabel and the mayor of Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac at the 2025 Municipal Conference of the Union des municipalités du Québec, or UMQ.

First, there is the Ovation municipale award in the climate future category in recognition of the ingenuity and creativity behind the work to reduce the ecological footprint of the Bois de Belle-Rivière regional educational park.

I wish to congratulate the entire municipal council, mayor Patrick Charbonneau, Stéphane Michaud, CEO of the Corporation de la protection de l'environnement de Mirabel, and Jacques Bellerose, park president.

I would also like to congratulate my friend Francine Charles, city councillor for ward 6, for receiving the Francine Ruest-Jutras award, which recognizes women's excellence in municipal politics. This award highlights what we already knew about Francine, which is her great vision and outstanding commitment to the community.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate my friend François Robillard, mayor of Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, who was honoured for his 20 years in municipal politics.

These dear friends can be proud. I commend them for their dedication.

Statements by Members

Long live municipal engagement!

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

AVALON

Paul Connors (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to deliver my first member statement as the member of Parliament for Avalon. I am deeply humbled by the responsibility entrusted to me.

I want to take a moment to thank those who made this happen. To my family, their strength, love and support through this journey mean more than words can express. To my friends, many of whom never imagined themselves knocking on doors or making calls during a federal campaign, I thank them for stepping up and believing in me. I thank them very much.

To my incredible team of volunteers, through rain, wind and even snow, their dedication never wavered. They inspired me every day. Most importantly, to the voters of Avalon, I thank them for their trust. I thank them for choosing me to be their voice. I do not take this responsibility lightly, and I will work every day to be worthy of the honour they have given me.

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FINANCE

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister campaigned as the “man with the plan”, but so far he is still following Justin Trudeau's plan, so let us take a look at the results.

Canada is staring down the barrel of a recession and the potential loss of 100,000 jobs. Unemployment is now at 7%, the highest in nearly a decade outside COVID. There has been effectively no job growth since January. Over 1.6 million Canadians are now unemployed and, on average, are spending 22 weeks, nearly half a year, without a job. One in five young people cannot find work. Food banks are seeing record numbers. Missed mortgage payments are up, grocery prices are skyrocketing, and according to the 2025 Canada food price report, the average family of four will spend an extra \$800 on groceries this year.

Canadians are working harder than ever yet falling further and further behind. That is why the House voted for the government to present a budget this spring. It is time the Prime Minister reeled in his reckless spending so Canadians can finally catch a break.

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OTTAWA INNOVATION WEEK

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Kanata, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week marks Ottawa Innovation Week, a celebration of brilliant minds, bold ideas and cutting-edge technology shaping Canada's capital city.

Ottawa is home to the highest concentration of tech talent in North America, with over 13% of our workforce in the tech sector. Our innovation ecosystem includes more than 65 federal research labs and world-class institutions like Area X.O. My riding of Kanata is home to Canada's largest technology park, with over 500 com-

panies and more than 30,000 people working there each and every day. Leaders like Kinaxis, Solace, Ranovus and Solink are not only growing our economy; they are also transforming global industries.

I invite all members of the House to join me in celebrating Ottawa's innovators and entrepreneurs this week. Their work is not just powering local economy but also shaping the future.

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HOUSING

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the lost Liberal decade, the dream of home ownership continues to be a nightmare. A new study ranks Toronto as having one of the least affordable housing markets in the world. Construction costs are up 58%, and zoning delays mean it takes up to 32 months to approve a single project in Toronto. It is no wonder Canada is short two million homes.

Housing costs will average 52% of household income this year, according to a new federal memo, and that is up from 38% in 2015. I have heard from far too many families in the GTHA that now teeter on the brink because their monthly payments are up by thousands of dollars, and young Canadians who have yet to enter the market have simply given up. Even the new housing minister admits it is a crisis but says it is a slow-moving creature.

After five housing ministers in six years, Canadians cannot wait any longer.

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[Translation]

FESTIVITIES IN THE RIDING OF BOURASSA

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last weekend in Bourassa, as across the country, we celebrated Fête des voisins, or neighbours day, which is a special opportunity to get to know our neighbours, share a smile and build stronger communities.

Bourassa is also buzzing with excitement for the NBA finals. Two basketball players from Montreal, Canada, Quebec—but most importantly, from the riding of Bourassa—are facing off in the NBA finals. The player whose team wins the finals will bring the cup to Bourassa and bring immense pride to Canadians, Quebecers, Montrealers, and the people of Bourassa in particular. The finals will be shown in Bourassa. The good news is that the cup will be coming here. We are going to celebrate diversity and celebrate our young people, who grew up and honed their skills in Bourassa. The cup is coming to Montreal.

• (1415)

[English]

FINANCE

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are calling on the Prime Minister to table a budget as soon as possible. The Prime Minister platformed on making groceries more affordable for Canadians, yet they will spend \$800 more on food this year. Food prices continue to rise, and I am referring only to essentials, such as beef, chicken, apples, white rice and infant formula.

The Prime Minister's first spending bill, the main estimates, would increase government spending by 8%, and the House has been clear that the Liberal deficit spending is driving this inflation. Inflation hurts us all. Hard-working Canadians are visiting food banks at record levels. Last year, Food Banks Canada reported an unprecedented level of two million visits in March alone.

With no budget coming until this fall, Liberals will go over one year without a fiscal plan. Single moms, families and small businesses cannot maintain proper finances without a budget. What makes the government think it can do differently?

* * *

TRANS CANADA TRAIL

Kent MacDonald (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday I was proud to mark International Trails Day in Morell, Prince Edward Island, which was one of 13 communities across the country where Trans Canada Trail supported events to celebrate and give back to the trail.

In Morell, we rolled up our sleeves and planted trees alongside neighbours and volunteers, contributing to a greener, more resilient trail for future generations. It is a powerful feeling to know that, at the same time, Canadians across our great nation were also coming together to care for this incredible national resource.

The Trans Canada Trail links thousands of communities across the country, including in P.E.I., where it follows the Confederation Trail and draws countless Islanders and visitors each year to walk, cycle, and ski through our beautiful landscape.

The trail plays such an important role in our economies and our tourism development. We thank Trans Canada Trail, the town of Morell and all the volunteers who made the celebration a success and who remind us of the power of trails to connect people to nature and to each other.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FINANCE

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today Conservatives have tabled a motion in the House that the Liberal government finally put forward a fiscally responsible budget. The Prime Minister says that he wants to be held to account based on what Canadians are paying for their groceries, but instead of putting forward a budget

Oral Questions

or bringing down grocery prices, he has introduced a half-trillion dollars in what we can only assume is more inflationary spending, with Canadians expected to pay an additional \$800 in groceries this year over what they paid last year.

Our ask is very simple for the Liberal government after 10 years of its inflationary spending: Table a budget.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there will be a budget in the fall of this year, but what is a bit rich for Canadians watching at home is to see that the Conservatives have consistently, at every step of the way, voted against affordability measures. They voted against child care. They voted against pharmacare. They voted against the dental program we have in Canada.

How can the member seriously stand up in the House and criticize the government, when at every step of the way he failed to have the back of Canadians in times of need?

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have consistently voted against all of the inflationary spending and the Liberals' half measures that would see those savings vaporized by their continued inflationary spending. We will keep voting against them unless we see a responsible budget from the government for once.

Moms and dads, small businesses, single Canadians and seniors all have to table a budget; they have to live by a budget, so why is it that the Liberals, while food prices are going through the roof and moms are having to water down the milk they give to their babies, will not just table a budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that when we have a choice, we will always side with them. We sided with children in this country to make sure they would have a national food program. We sided with seniors to make sure there would be a dental program in this country. We sided with young families to make sure there will be child care. On this side of the House, we will always be on the side of Canadians, whether they are young, whether they are seniors or whether they are workers. Canadians know we have their back. That is what we have said; that is what we will do.

• (1420)

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “food prices up” has replaced “elbows up” at grocery stores lately as food inflation has tripled in the past two months. It is so bad now that even sale items are too expensive for Canadian families, and we are lucky if we walk out of a grocery store with two bags for less than \$80. Inflationary spending must be reversed so Canadians can afford to put food on the table.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberals present a budget to show that they are at least trying to bring food prices down?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new government is a government of action, and this is what action looks like: We are rapidly advancing legislation to cut tax for 22 million people, cut the tax for first home purchases and permanently cut the consumer carbon tax. I hope the Conservatives will cut the rhetoric and join us in advancing the legislation.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that he should be judged by the prices at the grocery store, so let us do that. Food inflation has tripled in the past two months, and Canadian families will pay \$800 more on food this year than last year, so there goes their tax cut. That is about \$17,000 on food alone this year. Families, single moms and seniors are at a breaking point, and this cannot go on. Do the Liberals not see what their inflationary spending is doing to families, or do they just not care?

Why will the Prime Minister not table a budget and show the true cost of his inflationary deficits and debts?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us look at some economic facts: Inflation is down from 8.1% to 1.7% over the last two years, workforce participation is 65.3% compared to that of the U.S. at 62.5%, and we have a AAA credit rating from Moody's. The fundamentals of our economy are strong, and we are going to continue to build the strongest economy in the G7.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the Liberals will have to choose between continuing to starve Canadians and voting in favour of our motion to present a budget this spring. Groceries cost a fortune, and food banks are swamped and declaring a social emergency. This is all because of the inflationary policies of the Prime Minister's Liberal government. I am not the one saying this; it is Sylvain Charlebois from Dalhousie University. He said that much of the grocery store inflation is policy-induced.

Will the Prime Minister table a budget this spring and put an end to Liberal food inflation once and for all?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have already chosen, and that is why we are in government. They know that a Liberal government is a government that will be there for families, for children and for our seniors.

What is really odd today for people watching at home is that, every single time the Conservatives had a chance to vote, they voted against measures to help Canadians.

We will take no lessons from the Conservatives. We will continue to fight for Canadians.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister himself said that the Prime Minister should be held responsible for what Canadians pay at the grocery store. I take him at his word. He and his government are responsible for the second-worst food inflation in the G7.

Since he became the Liberal Prime Minister, the cost of groceries has skyrocketed, increasing by nearly \$800 per family. It is worse than under Justin Trudeau. The Prime Minister is increasing his government's spending by 8%, even though he promised to cap it at 2%.

Will he present a budget this spring, yes or no, or will he continue to be as irresponsible as his predecessor?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the responsible thing to do is exactly what we did, which was to lower taxes for 22 million Canadians. That was the responsible thing to do. The responsible thing to do is to ensure that Canadians have more money in their pockets. That is one of the best measures of affordability. On this side of the House, we will continue to fight for families, for children and for seniors. Together, we are going to build Canada strong.

* * *

● (1425)

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-5's measures to do away with trade barriers could move forward without any issue had the Liberals not decided the bill should also include provisions imposing dirty oil and gas pipelines on Quebec.

The Bloc Québécois is willing to work with the government on interprovincial trade, but it is a two-way street. If the Liberals want to work on trade, then we will be a partner, but if they want to use trade as a smokescreen for imposing energy projects, then we will stand in their way.

Will they accept our help and divide Bill C-5?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House agrees on one important fact: This is a critical time for Canada, as we face tariff threats from the United States. At this critical time, all members of the House must work together to build one Canadian economy, to create the strongest economy in the G7. We need free trade in Canada. We must build major projects.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the second part of Bill C-5 is called the building Canada act, but it might as well be called the destroying the planet act. Ottawa is giving itself the right to green-light fossil fuel projects by making orders, with no environmental assessment or consultation. It will decide unilaterally. Only once the decision has been made will it conduct bogus assessments and consult Quebec, the provinces and indigenous peoples on what is essentially a *fait accompli*.

Do the Liberals realize that this is a setback of historic proportions for both the environment and democracy?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-5 is a response to an economic and trade crisis caused by our neighbours to the south. We sought a mandate during the election campaign, and this is how our government is responding to the tariff war, creating opportunities here at home and doing what we can to help our economy and protect jobs in Quebec, including jobs in the forestry, aluminum and steel sectors. This is our response to the economic crisis.

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with the election six weeks behind us, let us look back at the Liberals' record on the environment.

The Liberals cancelled carbon pricing for consumers. They approved exploratory oil and gas drilling off the coast of Newfoundland. The Toronto Star revealed that they are thinking of cancelling the oil and gas emissions cap. Under Bill C-5, they want to allow fossil fuel projects to bypass environmental assessments. According to Ecojustice, never before in the history of modern environmental law has any legislation given this much power to the government.

How are the Liberals any different from Pierre Poilievre?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would say there is a big difference between a Liberal government and a government led by Pierre Poilievre.

We believe in protecting the environment, and we are constantly working to do just that. We are working to ensure that we have clean energy. We are going to keep working to build Canada strong and protect the environment at the same time.

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[English]

FINANCE

Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government, the cost of groceries and food prices continue to skyrocket. This year alone, the cost of apples is up 19%, beef strip loin is up 34%, white rice is up 14% and infant formula is up 9%. We know the Liberal government's deficit spending drives inflation and leads to higher prices at the grocery store.

Will the minority Liberal government table a budget that reverses this inflationary spending so Canadians can afford to put food on their table?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency

Oral Questions

for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, child poverty is down 38% since 2015, and overall, 26% in the general population for ages 18 to 65.

The party opposite could help by not voting against things that make it better for Canadians, things like the Canada child benefit, dental care, the school food program or supports for apprentices. Every step of the way, the Conservative Party stands in the way of families.

Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said he wants to be held accountable for what Canadians pay at the grocery store. This year, Canadians are spending \$800 more on groceries, and the Barrie Food Bank is now supporting upwards of 7,000 people per month, 37% of whom are children. Instead of offering relief and a real fiscal plan, the Prime Minister is spending a half-trillion dollars without telling Canadians where the revenue is coming from.

When will the Prime Minister table a budget that fights inflation so that Canadians can afford to feed their families?

• (1430)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a tax cut for 22 million Canadians is exactly the kind of support that Canadians are asking for, and that is why they elected us. They know that when things are difficult for Canadians, they can count on the Liberal government to be there for them, whether it is to help raise healthy children, make sure their kids get a good breakfast in the morning or make sure that they too can afford child care so that they can continue to grow and earn great livings across this country. We will be there for Canadians.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is official: the new Liberal Prime Minister refuses to present a spring budget even though Canadians have been without one for over a year. In that time, students have had budgets, families have budgets, small businesses have budgets, towns and cities have budgets, provinces and territories all have budgets, banks have budgets and I am pretty sure Brookfield has a budget.

Why does this government not have a budget? The last guy thought budgets balanced themselves. Does the new guy think budgets just draft and table themselves?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member failed to mention one: Canada will have a budget in the fall of this year. That is one thing he forgot to mention to Canadians.

Oral Questions

What is responsible to do is the first thing we did when we came to this House, which was to lower tax for 22 million Canadians. That is something the Conservatives failed to mention. Canadians at home who are watching know that with our motion, and the Conservatives voting for the bill, by July 1 their taxes will come down. That is what Canadians expect; that is what we deliver.

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians from Field, B.C., in the Rockies to the ranchlands of Kamloops tell me that family budgets are being destroyed by Liberal inflationary spending. The Prime Minister wants to be held to account by what Canadians pay at the grocery store. Today, we are debating our Conservative motion, calling for a budget as soon as possible.

Will the Liberal government table a budget and reverse its inflationary spending so that Canadians can afford to put food on the table?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this House for the first time as the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

This government is doing important work to ensure that we are protecting vulnerable Canadians, including vulnerable seniors, and that is why we continue to stand up for seniors. We are restoring eligibility to age 65 with the old age security program, and this is an important step to defend vulnerable seniors from falling into poverty. This policy also helps to protect low-income seniors who depend heavily on OAS and GIS—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the lost Liberal decade of Justin Trudeau and company, our military is gutted, and Canada has been left weaker, poorer and defenceless. For 10 years, the Liberals failed to take our national defence and security seriously, instead relying on our allies to defend Canada's sovereignty. The Canadian Armed Forces is facing a devastating recruitment crisis and does not have enough soldiers, sailors and aircrew, and only half of our military equipment is serviceable.

Why should Canadians believe the Prime Minister will fix what his Liberals have already broken?

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is a good day for Canada. This morning, the Prime Minister announced a \$9.3-billion investment in Canada's defence, which means we would achieve NATO's 2% target this fiscal year.

This is the largest investment in defence since the end of the Second World War. On this side of the House, we are thankful to those who serve, past and present.

• (1435)

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody believes them. After 10 years of the Liberals, our warships are rusting out, our fighter jets are worn out, and our

troops are burnt out. Today, the Canadian Armed Forces is short 13,000 troops, due to the Liberals' recruitment and retention crisis. An additional 10,000 personnel are under-trained and non-deployable. Over the past decade, the Liberals lapsed \$12 billion in defence spending and cut \$2.7 billion from the military over the last year.

Why would our troops believe anything the Liberal government says, since the Liberals are responsible for breaking our military?

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, today is a great day for Canada. Our allies and our partners around the world are watching.

I find it surprising that the Conservatives want to talk about supporting and equipping forces when they are the ones who cut Canada's defence spending to below 1%. On this side of the House, Canada's new government is investing now to re-equip, rebuild and bolster our armed forces and our defence industrial capacity. We will ensure Canada remains strong, sovereign and secure.

[Translation]

Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal rule, our fighter jets are at the end of their service life, our ships are outdated and our troops are exhausted. We are short 13,000 troops. Recruitment and morale among our military personnel have never been lower. Over the past decade, the Liberals have slashed \$12 billion from defence and cut the military budget. The Liberals have turned their backs on our armed forces.

How can the government responsible for this fiasco claim to be improving it?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives may have turned their backs on the Canadian Armed Forces, but our government certainly has not.

Today we are announcing historic investments in defence. We are going to properly equip the Canadian Armed Forces. We are also going to build ships, aircraft and other equipment in Canada. We are going to create jobs in Quebec and across the country, and we are going to protect our sovereignty.

FINANCE

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Ottawa just announced \$9 billion in new defence spending starting this year. In the current global context, the Bloc Québécois agrees that we must invest in defence, but that is another \$9 billion that the Liberals are asking us to blindly support without a budget or even an economic update. No one will know how that spending will be financed or how big the deficit is at the time of voting.

Could the Liberals finally do the responsible thing and show us the state of our public finances?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize what my hon. colleague said, that the Bloc Québécois agrees with rearming the Canadian Armed Forces and supports today's historic announcement about meeting the target of 2% of GDP set by NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. That represents \$9.3 billion in defence spending that is needed to defend Canada's sovereignty and protect Canadians. I thank the Bloc Québécois for agreeing with this ambitious proposal for the country.

I would also like to point out that I was at the Davie shipyard this weekend. It was celebrating its 200th anniversary. It contributes to Canada's sovereignty by building high-quality ships right here at home, in Quebec.

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the \$9 billion in spending is in addition to the \$26 billion over five years in tax cuts. Add to that the \$4 billion for the GST exemption for new homes. All that is in addition to the \$38 billion more in appropriations for the cost of the federal government. That alone is more than Quebec's total annual health care budget.

The Liberals are asking us to support it without a budget being tabled. That is totally irresponsible.

Why is the government trying to hide the state of its finances from us?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that my colleagues in the House just witnessed a historic moment. We heard the Bloc Québécois say that it wanted to build Canada strong. This is a historic moment for all parliamentarians.

We agree with the Bloc Québécois. We just made a generational investment in Canada's sovereignty, a generational investment in our industries, as the Minister of Industry just said, a generational investment in our workers. Employees at Bombardier, CAE, Davie and Marmen are celebrating today because Canada is going to invest in its sovereignty and in its industrial base.

• (1440)

[English]

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are hiding the state of Canada's finances from Canadians. The so-called brilliant banker, who said his strength was planning, is not planning on actually producing a budget for Canadians. Meanwhile, one million Ontarians used a food bank last year, a ter-

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rible new record, and unemployment in the GTA has now surged to almost 9%. Guess what. There is no budget.

How bad is the state of Canada's finances that the so-called brilliant planner is not planning to produce a budget for Canadians?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we increased the CCB. We delivered \$10-a-day day care. We put in place a national school food program. The federal minimum wage was increased. We have dental care and pharmacare.

All those programs have reduced child poverty by 38% since 2015. Seniors' poverty is down by 30% since 2015. They are all things the Conservatives voted against.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we voted against all the policies that led to one million Ontarians using a food bank. The Liberals should all be ashamed of themselves that that is their performance. Meanwhile, TD Bank has now said that up to 100,000 Canadians will lose their job this year, and guess what. The government refuses to produce a budget. Bankruptcies in Canada have surged 20%. Guess what. The government is not going to produce a budget.

I will ask this again: What is so terrible about the state of Canada's finances that the so-called brilliant planner is refusing to produce a budget for Canadians?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to talk about this list again because I think it is so important. We increased the CCB, delivered \$10 day care and put in place a national school food program. The federal minimum wage has been increased. We have dental care and pharmacare.

All those programs have reduced poverty in all age groups. They are the things that Conservatives have voted against.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a record stuck on skip, but Canadians are now facing the consequences of the Liberal government's economic drift.

Oxford Economics says that Canada is heading into a recession with 200,000 more job losses and unemployment reaching 7.7% this year. Full-time workers are turning to food banks in record numbers, and mortgage defaults are rising. Meanwhile, the Liberal government wants to spend a record half a trillion dollars with no plan.

Will the Prime Minister show some accountability to the Canadians who are going to be losing their jobs, do his job and table a budget?

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Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a tax cut for 22 million Canadians is exactly the kind of relief that Canadians are looking for on top of all the programs and supports for Canadians, whether they have children, are seniors or are low-income.

We expect with all of this concern that we will see support from the Conservative Party for things like our one Canadian economy bill, which is going to further enhance opportunities for Canadians to have well-paying jobs all across the country.

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Prime Minister that he is leading a minority government and that the majority of members of the House of Commons voted in favour of a spring budget.

This morning, during debate on the Conservative motion, I asked a question but did not receive an answer. I will try my luck here. I have two simple yes-or-no questions.

First, does the Prime Minister respect the institution of the House of Commons? Second, will he respect the will of the majority of elected members and table a spring budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two answers for my colleague: Yes, we respect the House, and yes, there will be a budget in the fall of 2025.

We are working for Canadians. I know that my colleague is new to the House, but he has no doubt seen the big announcement that will please the constituents in his riding of Richmond—Arthabaska. I am talking about the tax cut for 22 million Canadians.

I am sure that the member will call his constituents and include this information in his householders to join us in celebrating a great moment for all taxpayers in his riding.

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his answer. Unfortunately, the answer is wrong. He talked about a budget in the fall, when the House asked for a budget in the spring.

We are talking about an impending recession with a possible loss of 100,000 jobs, according to TD Bank. There are already full-time workers using food banks in record numbers. There is a rise in missed mortgage payments and a housing crisis across Canada. Canadians are worried. We need a budget to be tabled this spring.

When will the budget be tabled this spring?

• (1445)

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true that Canadians need the essential support measures provided by the federal government. Still, we cannot ignore the record of the Conservative Party, which has voted against families in Quebec and Canada at every turn. Take, for example, the Canada child benefit or the Canadian dental care plan, which has saved an average of \$900 for each person who has had access. We are talking about 1.9 million Canadians. That is thousands of people in his riding. We

could also talk about child care spaces or affordable housing. There are a number of programs. The Conservatives should vote with us to support Canadians.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next week, Canada will host the leaders of the world's advanced economies at the G7 leaders' summit in Kananaskis. This meeting comes amid rising geopolitical tension and increasing disruption to global supply chains. As global challenges intensify, the G7 must meet this moment with purpose and with force.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs share with the House Canada's priorities for this critical summer?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the world is facing geostrategic challenges, and Canada is ready to lead. Canada has what the world wants and the values to which the world aspires. As president of the G7, Canada will leverage our strength to seek new agreement on protecting our communities and the world, building energy security and securing the economic partnerships of the future.

The world needs more Canada, and we will deliver.

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HOUSING

Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are being crushed by the housing crisis. The Liberals' own internal documents admit that housing now eats up 52% of household income. Mortgage delinquencies are at a record high. Families cannot keep up, young people cannot get in and the Liberal government will not show us a plan.

A budget is a plan. While Canadians suffer, the Liberals refuse to present a budget that will solve the housing crisis. My question is very simple: Why?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to taking action on housing. That is why we have rolled out the GST break for first-time homebuyers, saving them \$50,000 on up to a \$1-million purchase. That is why we have rolled out a tax break for 22 million Canadians to help them afford housing.

We are taking action, and we will continue to take action at a pace that I hope the members opposite will support us on.

Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what we know. We know that Toronto and Vancouver are two of the most unaffordable cities in the world. We know that the cost to construct a residential building in Canada has increased by 58% in the last five years. We know that the latest housing minister increased homebuilding taxes by 141% while he was mayor of Vancouver. We also know that TD Bank has declared that the government will not come close to its promise to build 500,000 new homes per year.

Are the Liberals refusing to deliver a plan because they do not have a real one?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has been very clear about our plan for housing, the most ambitious plan for housing in Canadian history, and that is “build Canada homes”. It is moving forward on concrete actions that will save people money.

We are going to take action for multi-unit residential buildings that we hope the members opposite will support in the fall to increase rental supply. We are going to take action across the board, particularly on affordable housing, and we expect support in this House.

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing minister, who increased building taxes by 141% the last time he had a chance, should be aware that the Oxford Economics global cities index found that residents of Toronto spend more of their income on housing than any other city in the world. However, the man in charge of housing does not think that is a problem. He says that housing prices should not go down, period.

If he does not think that housing prices should go down, can he tell the residents of Toronto how much more of their income they are going to have to spend on their homes?

• (1450)

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say it is refreshing to hear the members opposite care about affordable housing, because they never did anything about it. That made life very difficult for mayors, premiers and housing ministers across the country, who saw no support for 10 years from the members opposite and their government.

We are taking action. We are committed to scaling up that action with “build Canada homes” and direct action in the weeks and months ahead.

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, forgive me if I am a bit skeptical of the housing minister, who increased the price of housing by 179% in just eight years in Vancouver.

The Liberals broke housing. They fuelled inflation, which drove up rates. They rewarded those who blocked housing construction. They supercharged immigration numbers, which outpaced the availability of housing.

Oral Questions

The housing minister says we need affordable housing, which is great, but then he turns around and says that home prices should not go down. Both of these things cannot be true, so which one is it?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am, frankly, not surprised to hear the confusion on the other side of the House when they put the words “affordable” and “housing” together.

We are taking action on it. Though the federal government does not control the price of housing, we want to see the overall cost of housing come down. That is why we are investing in local partnerships with cities across Canada to bring development cost charges down for housing and deliver affordability.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after a lost decade of the Liberal government, housing in Toronto is unaffordable. Last week, we learned that new home sales are at a record low. According to Oxford Economics, as a result of high immigration, residents of Toronto “spend more of their income on housing than residents of nearly every other city in the world.” One would think that would prompt the Liberals to present a serious plan. Instead, they want to break for the summer without a plan.

Will the Prime Minister respect the will of this House and pass a budget before his summer vacation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really like to believe that all members of this House are sincere in their desire to make life better for Canadians and want to make life more affordable and get more homes built. That is why I really hope members on the opposite side of the House will join us in supporting the one Canadian economy legislation. It would help us build more homes faster. It would bring down prices for Canadians by 15% if we remove all trade barriers in our own country.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Housing said he does not want to bring down prices for Canadians, but Toronto residents cannot afford a roof over their head. When I knocked on doors this spring, voters would tell me that they cannot afford their mortgages or, in apartments, would tell me they cannot afford their rent. It is heartbreaking.

Liberal immigration policies are forcing Torontonians to spend more of their income on housing than anyone else on planet earth, but the Prime Minister is failing Canadians and refuses to listen to this House. When will the Prime Minister deliver a budget?

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Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the policies the Prime Minister campaigned on was building modular housing. That is a way to get more homes built faster. We know that by removing barriers to internal trade in our country, we can get a modular housing industry going in our country. That is one of the solutions to the housing crisis.

I hope the members opposite will be constructive and support this important legislation.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my generation refuses to live in a shipping container.

Oxford Economics reported yesterday that Toronto's housing market ranks among the worst in the world for affordability. At the same time, mortgage delinquency rates in Toronto are now higher than at any time during the pandemic. The financial burden is suffocating the next generation of homebuyers, and history has shown us that if we fail to plan, we are planning to fail.

A budget is a plan. My question for the Prime Minister is, when will Canadians see one?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have travelled all across this country. It is a huge privilege of this job. I have visited families in every riding and from every walk of life. I can say that modular housing, which provides a housing solution for so many families, is not a shipping container. To speak with such a demeaning tone about families that are living in a variety of different kinds of housing really indicates the kind of disrespect that the Conservative Party of Canada has for low-income Canadians and middle-income Canadians.

• (1455)

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tents are not houses. The Prime Minister told us during the campaign that Canada was facing the biggest crisis of our lifetime. Well, here is a crisis: In 2015, housing costs were an average of 38% of Canadian household budgets. Today, it is overwhelming. It is 52%. A recent study found that Toronto residents spend more of their income on housing than nearly every other city in the world.

We were told that the Prime Minister is the “man with the plan”. Canadians want to see it, and time is of the essence. When are we going to get a budget?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe the member opposite should ask himself, look in the mirror and ask his colleagues why they voted against every housing initiative we put forward over the last several years: the rapid housing initiative, the federal coinvestment fund and the housing accelerator fund. Their own leader told them not to support the program, while the MPs themselves were trying to advocate for it. Shame on them.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing accelerator cost \$4 billion and zero homes were built. Meanwhile, housing prices have doubled, rent has doubled, down payments have doubled and people are now defaulting on their mortgages at record rates due to the disastrous inflationary

spending of the Liberal government. A federal memo confirms that housing will consume 52% of the household budget this year, up from 38% in 2015. They know they caused this problem.

When will the government table a budget with a plan to give the hope of home ownership back to young people?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is taking action on delivering affordability. We have done that with a tax cut for 22 million Canadians. We have done that with a cut to the GST for first-time homebuyers. We will continue to do that with actions throughout this year, and we expect the members opposite to support this.

This is a new voice. Suddenly, there is concern from the Conservatives, who never voted for affordable housing and never supported a single initiative on affordable housing.

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the government introduced the one Canadian economy legislation. The bill removes federal internal trade barriers and advances national interest projects, providing a framework to strengthen the Canadian economy.

Can the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade share what she has heard from Canadians about this very important bill?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how wonderful to finally get a great question. I would like to thank the member for Guelph for her hard work and for her focus on an issue I am hearing about from premiers of provinces and territories, from union leaders, from business leaders and from Canadians of all walks of life. Canadians understand that now, when our economy is being battered by tariffs from the United States, we need to build a strong Canada by lifting all barriers to internal trade and by building big national projects.

I would like to call on all members of the House to support this essential legislation.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his anti-energy ministers say there are no pipelines in Canada without consensus, but there is not even consensus in the Prime Minister's cabinet. The Prime Minister has stacked that cabinet with ministers who want to kill the Canadian oil and gas industry, but there is not even consensus in the Prime Minister's own head. He said he wanted to make Canada an energy superpower, but he also said, “maybe as much as half of oil reserves, proven [oil] reserves, need to stay in the ground”.

In the Prime Minister's head, who gets a pipeline veto?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we presented the one Canadian economy bill to fast-track projects of national interest and build one economy, not 13. This bill will grow the Canadian economy and support our sovereignty to ensure we build the strongest economy in the G7. Canada's new government will work with provincial, territorial and indigenous partners to get projects built and to make Canada an energy superpower. I hope my Conservative colleagues will join us in supporting this bill.

Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they are the same old Liberals. Our allies, like Germany, are desperately needing energy. Canada has the energy but, due to 10 years of anti-energy policies from the Liberals, we have blocked all pipelines in Canada and we cannot sell to Germany. The German ambassador says that they will now need to import LNG from America. The Prime Minister is selling out our country by sending our jobs and our wealth to the States.

Does the Prime Minister not realize that no one is building pipelines in Canada because of Liberal anti-energy laws, or is it the Prime Minister's plan all along to keep it in the ground?

• (1500)

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's new government will get projects built, create high-paying jobs and bring greater prosperity to Canadians. That is why we presented the one Canadian economy bill, which would fast-track projects of national interest. If my Conservative colleagues want to get projects built, they should support the bill. Let me be clear. We will do this while respecting indigenous rights. By working with indigenous partners and premiers, we will build the strongest economy in the G7.

[Translation]

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik-Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the German ambassador said again yesterday that he still wants to import our natural gas. With Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, the production cap and the industrial carbon tax, this Liberal government is stifling our economic growth with its anti-energy measures.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister finally allow Canadians to build pipelines, help our allies and benefit from Canada's resources by scrapping his anti-development agenda once and for all?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are not going to take the Conservatives' advice. When they were in power, they were unable to get

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projects built because they did not have environmental assessments or consultations with indigenous peoples. We have nothing to learn from them.

We are going to get it right. We are going to build Canada strong, a Canada that takes care of the environment and consults with indigenous peoples.

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EMPLOYMENT

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada summer jobs program provides young Canadians across the country with an opportunity to gain quality work experience over the summer, which also helps them develop their job skills. Since 2020, the program has helped create over 454,000 jobs for young Canadians.

Can the secretary of state update Canadians on the status of this important program for the summer of 2025?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for her commitment, and I welcome her back to the House.

To build a strong economy with the most robust workforce in the G7, we need our young people to gain valuable work experience. That is why your new government is going further by creating up to 6,000 additional summer jobs for young people this summer, for a total of 76,000 jobs.

I encourage young Canadians to apply for these exciting job opportunities.

[English]

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, dozens of skilled workers at General Dynamics Land Systems in London were laid off, leaving many London families in uncertainty. In addition, Ontario lost over 25,000 manufacturing jobs since last May alone. Canada's unemployment rate has climbed to 7%, the highest level since 2016, outside of COVID. Meanwhile, record mortgage defaults and soaring food prices are forcing even full-time workers to rely on food banks.

When will the Liberals admit the harm their policies have caused and table a budget that gets General Dynamics Land Systems employees back to work?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will create jobs in this country. We will invest in our manufacturing sector. We will invest in the steel and aluminum sector. That is why the announcement that the Prime Minister made today is pivotal. It will create jobs across different industries, including at GDLS, including in the member's riding. We will also make sure that we build Canada through major national projects. That is why we need to support the one Canadian economy bill.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, there is no way on God's green earth that Bill C-5 is ready for passage. Concerns and alarms have been raised by every environmental law association in Canada, by the Climate Action Network and now by the grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations. The Canadian Cancer Society has pointed out that the interprovincial barriers that come down may lead to a race to the bottom on health and environmental risks.

Will the government please redraft and reintroduce a bill that has a hope of passage?

• (1505)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her hard work and her real commitment to Canadians. I am really glad that she raised the issue of the interprovincial barriers to trade. The fact is that today we effectively impose a 7% tariff on each other: Canadians imposing tariffs on Canadians with these interprovincial barriers to trade. Now is the moment when Canadians understand we need to stop doing this and we need to knit our country more closely together. We need to build the strongest economy in the G7.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

PETITIONS

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is my great honour to rise to present a petition on the subject of public transit.

[English]

The petitioners note that the 10-year transit plan that was funded will end in 2027 and that the funding was inadequate to meet the needs of a modern, industrialized country. They ask for a continuation and an expansion of the fund, and for all governments to pull together in order to ensure that Canadians have access to public transit across the country from coast to coast to coast.

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a huge honour and privilege to table this petition, signed by members

of the Port Alberni Friendship Center. They highlight that friendship centres across Canada serve as vital community hubs for indigenous people, offering culturally appropriate services in areas such as health, education, housing, employment and youth programming.

The petitioners also highlight that governments at all levels have increasingly depended on the services of friendship centres to respond to socio-economic conditions, climate events and public health emergencies, such as the toxic drug crisis, but that funding for friendship centres has failed to keep pace with the rate of inflation.

The petitioners are calling on the government to commit to enhanced core funding to ensure friendship centres have sufficient financial resources to maintain and expand their services to meet community needs, as well as to provide multi-year, predictable funding agreements that allow them to plan strategically, recruit and retain qualified staff, develop culturally appropriate resources to support growing responsibilities, and recognize and support the role of friendship centres in reconciliation.

• (1510)

NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPIES

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, petitioners in my riding of Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford are concerned on behalf of small businesses, including convenience stores, and ask the government to remove the restrictions on the sale of nicotine pouches.

Many adult Canadians make use of nicotine pouches to help them quit tobacco-smoking by relieving cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Only allowing pharmacies to sell the product from behind the counter takes away the freedom of choice on where and how adults can access such products. Small businesses have a track record of selling age-restricted products, including nicotine replacement therapies.

The petitioners call on the Minister of Health to remove the restrictions on the sale of nicotine pouches only to pharmacies and allow convenience stores to continue selling these products as they have always done in the past.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, Canada's national Holocaust memorial was vandalized. The Ottawa police are now investigating the matter.

The CEO of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa said, "This is not just vandalism, it is an act of desecration against the memory of six million Jews and millions of other victims murdered in the Holocaust."

The House must unequivocally condemn this vile, anti-Semitic act. The government must enforce the law and protect Jewish Canadians from hate, violence and intimidation. The Minister of Public Safety should immediately and publicly condemn this act in solidarity with the Jewish community.

I am tabling a petition today about human rights and political discrimination. I commend this to the consideration of the House.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I did not want to interrupt the member's petition, but I think this is worthwhile to review. When we present petitions, we are supposed to capture the essence of the petition and convey that to the House, not indicate whether we support or do not support the petition. I have noticed that we seem to get off track maybe a little too much on that issue, so I submit that just as a point, believing that maybe it is something the Speaker might want to review.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[English]

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

U.S. DECISION REGARDING TRAVEL BAN

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52(2), I am seeking leave to propose an emergency debate regarding the discriminatory U.S. travel ban announced by President Donald Trump, which came into effect at 12.01 a.m. today.

The sweeping travel ban bars entry to the United States from 12 countries: Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. Additional partial travel restrictions have been imposed on Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela.

This is a deeply troubling and discriminatory policy that disproportionately targets countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and South America, many with large Black and Muslim populations, or those deemed “anti-American” under vague ideological criteria. A former Biden administration official at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services called it “a misguided concept of collective punishment”. It echoes the xenophobic and Islamophobic Muslim ban from Trump's first term and raises serious human rights concerns.

Many Canadians have family, work or study ties in countries facing a travel ban in the United States. Dual nationals, cross-border families and individuals from affected communities are already experiencing fear and confusion. Human rights organizations report widespread concern and uncertainty. Amnesty International Secretary-General Agnès Callamard, in response to the travel ban, said:

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Trump's new travel ban is discriminatory, racist, and downright cruel. By targeting people based on their race, religion, or nationality, from countries with predominantly Black, Brown and Muslim-majority populations, this blanket ban constitutes racial discrimination under international human rights law. It also spreads hate and disinformation, reinforcing the misleading idea that certain populations are more likely to pose security risks or engage in acts of violence.

Canada has a duty to respond. This is especially urgent given that the government has signed the Safe Third Country Agreement with the United States. Urgent action is required on Canada's diplomatic and policy response to the new U.S. restrictions to protect the rights of Canadians and for Canada to ensure a human rights approach to protect vulnerable communities.

I hope that this request will be granted.

• (1515)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Vancouver East for her intervention. However, I am not satisfied that this request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FOOD INFLATION AND BUDGETARY POLICY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in today's debate on the timing of budget 2025, a subject that the Canadian government obviously takes very seriously. With that in mind, I am pleased to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague from Whitby.

We believe it would be both ill-advised and confusing to draft such a major financial planning document in the few weeks we have left before the House rises for the summer. Instead, the government will present a comprehensive, carefully planned and detailed budget in the fall, a budget that will reflect Canada's major national and international priorities, one that will provide a much more accurate picture of our macroeconomic outlook than what is currently available.

As we all know, the Government of Canada is restructuring its relationship with the United States, our oldest and, historically, largest trading partner. It is crucial that this be done in a spirit of co-operation and mutual understanding, with a view to ensuring a better future for citizens on both sides of the border.

Business of Supply

As the Prime Minister aptly said not long ago, the road there will be long. There is no quick fix. That is precisely why our ongoing discussions with the United States are so important. That is why it is essential that we develop an updated picture of this important economic relationship before we rush into drafting a budget.

Of course, we know that a lot of Canadians are understandably anxious and concerned about the impact that U.S. tariffs are still having on their lives and pocketbooks. To these people, we make and repeat this promise: Our government will never back down. It will keep working tirelessly to protect our businesses, our workers and our country's sovereignty. By focusing our attention on this important issue at this decisive time, we will ensure Canada's success in a radically different world, and build a new, stronger Canadian economy for everyone.

In addition, the government will undertake a review of its daily spending based on its core mandate of spending less to invest more. That is why we are taking action to keep the Government of Canada's operating budget increase below 2% by capping the size of the public service, eliminating duplication and using technology, including artificial intelligence, to improve the productivity and quality of public sector services.

I would also like to touch briefly on how Canada's defence spending plays a very important role in the timing of budget 2025. Our government is working very hard to review this defence spending ahead of the upcoming NATO leaders summit later this month, where new defence spending targets will be discussed, as well as to better prepare us for future global conflicts and the rapidly changing geopolitical environment.

In short, by tabling the budget in the fall, we will have a better idea of our macroeconomic picture and will be in a much better position to share our overall investment plan with Canadians. In the meantime, our Canadian government will continue to deliver on its mandate to build a stronger economy, reduce the cost of living and keep our communities safe.

Just last month we implemented a tax cut for the middle class, a major investment that will support 22 million Canadians across the country. We are also getting rid of the goods and services tax, or the GST, for first-time homebuyers on homes valued at up to \$1 million, which will allow them to save up to \$50,000. We are also reducing the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued at \$1 million to \$1.5 million.

• (1520)

The government continues to work with its provincial, territorial and indigenous partners to implement a major \$10-dollar a day, Canada-wide early learning and child care system. We are giving more money to families through the Canada child benefit, which is lifting 1.5 million children out of poverty every month. We are providing meals to children who go without, through the national school food program, which, for Quebec alone, will help close to 100,000 children. In addition, roughly nine million Canadians who are now eligible will save close to \$800 on average through the Canadian dental care plan.

These are all things that put more money in people's pockets and help create healthier, stronger, more resilient and more unified communities.

[English]

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, today we are dealing with an opposition motion that speaks specifically to the heart of affordability. There are many Canadian families, single moms and seniors who cannot afford groceries. We have actually seen inflation on grocery prices increase by three times in the last couple months; by comparison, in the United States they have dropped by 2%.

Would the hon. member not agree with me that these inflationary causes are a direct result of policy-driven initiatives by his own government?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, no, I would not agree with that.

What I would instead add is that it is surprising for his leader, Pierre Poilievre, though I do not believe it would be the member's opinion, to unfortunately declare things such as that the Canadian dental care plan is a communist plan and to describe the school food program as a bureaucratic program, while it is a program that is going to help 400,000 school children in the years to come. I suppose, or hope at least, that this is not the view of the member, but it is certainly the view of Pierre Poilievre, and I would invite the member to have a conversation with his leader.

[Translation]

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague from Québec Centre, who did an incredible job with the Canadian dental care plan. I want to ask him a question about affordability.

Over the past few years, our government has implemented a number of programs to help families. I would like my colleague to talk more specifically about how the Canadian dental care plan has changed the lives of families in Canada and Quebec.

• (1525)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, it is always such a pleasure to hear my colleague from Acadia speak. Whenever she and I talk, I can sense the enthusiasm and dedication that she demonstrated in a few words just now.

Yes, the Canadian dental care plan is making people's lives a lot better. I believe some 15,000 seniors and children in my colleague's riding have already benefited from it, and another 15,000 adults between the ages of 18 and 64 will soon qualify for this life-changing plan. It puts more money in their pockets and, above all, it gives them the tools they need to take care of their oral health, which is extremely important, because then they can focus on the other aspects of their health.

[English]

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech indicates that the government is going to cap spending, the rate of increase of 9%, at 2%, so that is a 7% reduction. In light of the government's commitment to raising military spending to 2% of NATO, that is a \$20-billion gap that needs to be made up, so my question to the member is this: Is he at all concerned that there will be service cuts to Canadians, many of whom are vulnerable, from vulnerable populations, who rely on government services?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is correct. We have to protect the living standards, the well-being, of Canadians, and in particular those Canadians who rely on the benefits and services of the Government of Canada. That is why we have been clear, the Prime Minister has been very clear, that there will not be cuts to transfers to essential programs like child care, pharmacare and dental care, all these programs being essential to the ability of families to make ends meet.

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the motion we are dealing with today is very straightforward, recognizing that families in Canada are going to have to pay an extra \$800 for groceries this year. This is a direct result of 10 years of the tired Liberal government's policies. The motion is simply calling for a fiscally responsible budget.

The government has refused to bring forward a fiscally responsible budget. Is that because it has no budget to plan for or because it knows that it is not going to be fiscally responsible in that plan?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that the budget has to be fiscally responsible as well as socially and economically responsible. There will be a budget in the fall of 2025.

Between now and then, we have important questions to settle. One of them is whether the member will support the important investments in the armed forces that we announced just this morning. This is an issue that I look forward to hearing about from the member.

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise and participate in today's debate, and hopefully make some contributions to the discussion this afternoon.

I think we can all agree that on the tail of the last election, where our government presented a fully costed platform to Canadians, we were returned to this side of the House, under new leadership, granted, but it is not as if Canadians had no idea what the plan for the government was. We have been relentlessly pursuing the objectives of that plan by our actions since the House came back, which

Business of Supply

has been only about 10 or 11 sitting days, and we have made huge strides towards realizing that plan.

We should all agree that there is absolutely no value in trying to rush through a budget within a very narrow window. A budget document involves detailed analysis, policy checks and meticulous preparation. It would be challenging to prepare and present a spring budget with the remaining time left in the House calendar. In fact we feel it would be unwise and unfair to Canadians to rush through a major fiscal document in just a few weeks.

Rather, the government intends to deliver a fall budget which will outline its fiscal priorities and provide a more detailed financial road map for the country. In the meantime, we have announced plans to support Canadians by boosting affordability and economic growth. It is those plans I am very excited to share a little more about today.

Our government is taking immediate action to address the affordability crisis. Key to that plan is bringing down the costs that every-day Canadians experience, allowing them to keep more of their hard-earned paycheck and to spend it where it matters most to them.

The government will eliminate the goods and services tax for first-time homebuyers on new homes at or under \$1 million and lower the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. This tax cut will save Canadians up to \$50,000, allowing more young people and families, in my riding of Whitby, for example, to enter the housing market and realize their dream of home ownership. By our eliminating the GST, Canadians will face lower upfront housing costs and keep more money in their pocket. Eliminating the GST will also have a dynamic effect on increasing supply, spurring the construction of new homes across the country in the segments of the housing market where we need more affordable homes built.

We are delivering a middle-class tax cut, which I am very excited will provide relief for nearly 22 million Canadians and save dual-income families up to \$840 a year. Canadians will start seeing these tax savings on their paycheck as early as July 1, when the rate is reduced. We are also now formalizing the cancellation of the consumer carbon price, which took effect on April 1.

With these measures, we are delivering change to cut taxes, bring down costs and put money back in the pockets of Canadians. The measures send a strong and clear message to Canadians that they are and will remain our government's top priority as we build a strong, united economy for all.

Business of Supply

In addition to the measures I just mentioned, we are dedicated to protecting and strengthening the programs that have already been saving families thousands of dollars every year. First, we are dedicated to protecting and strengthening the child care program that we have introduced across Canada. Today approximately 900,000 children are getting high-quality early learning opportunities, setting them up for lifelong success. In only a few short years, the program has become a core part of Canada's social infrastructure and fabric, and we will not let it be taken away or weakened by Conservatives; we know they would cut the program down if they ever got to this side of the House, just like they would with the Canadian dental care plan.

In its first year, the Canadian dental care plan significantly improved access to affordable dental care. More than 3.4 million Canadians were approved to be part of the plan, while 1.7 million have already received care. In my riding of Whitby, I have heard seniors and many other community members, including children under 12, families and parents, tell me how much the dental coverage means to them and their family. In March of this year, the government announced that all remaining eligible Canadians aged 18 to 64 would be able to apply for the plan in May 2025, with coverage starting as early as June 1, 2025. The newly expanded program will cover about eight million Canadians, saving the average person more than \$800 per year.

• (1530)

As outlined in the Speech from the Throne, our government has a bold and ambitious plan for the future. The key to that plan is bringing down costs so Canadians can keep more of their hard-earned paycheques to spend where it matters most. We will do this while making the best use of our talented public service and new technologies to save money. We remain focused on outcomes for Canadians and making sure they get what they expect from their government.

It is time for Canada to have a government focused on maximizing investments that drive growth and delivering results. We plan to balance the operating budget by budget 2028, ensuring responsible fiscal management while making wise, long-term investments to build for Canada's prosperity in the future.

A federal budget is a critically important financial and democratic document. That is why budget 2025 must be delivered in a logical sequence that takes both national and international priorities into account. As we all know, there is economic uncertainty on the international stage. As Canada forges a new relationship with the United States based on respect and common interests, it must stay hyperfocused on reinforcing Canada's strength here at home while safeguarding our workers and businesses and defending their interests here and abroad.

These discussions are ongoing, and they are vitally important to our shared future. These uncertainties in U.S. trade policies and upcoming international events, such as the NATO summit in June, present broader challenges and opportunities. We want to take time to address defence spending and trade relationships in a more comprehensive fall budget.

In conclusion, our government has a strong mandate from the people of Canada to define a new economic and security relation-

ship with the United States, to build a stronger economy, to reduce the cost of living and to keep our communities safe. A comprehensive fall budget will allow our government to deliver a thoughtful, strategic financial plan for Canadians, a plan that is delivered within a timeline that is prudent, well calculated and not rushed, as the Conservatives would have us do.

• (1535)

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to express how disingenuous it is for Canadians to believe that Conservatives do not support tax cuts. Conservatives support tax cuts all the time and everywhere. The issue is always that the Liberal government never goes far enough. There is always a poison pill in the legislation, and we just cannot let these things pass. The Liberals have been very voracious with announcements of their spending promises, but there is just no verifiability without a budget.

How is the government planning to fund these expenditures? How is the government going to support this without tabling a budget?

Hon. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the question. It gives me the opportunity to point out that if there is any disingenuousness felt, it is on this side of the House with having witnessed time and again the Conservatives stand up and vote against affordability measures that will save Canadians literally thousands of dollars.

In this case, we encourage them to support our income tax cut and waiving GST on new home purchases. Obviously, reducing the consumer carbon price is something that they advocated for. We have listened to Canadians and responded in kind, and we hope that we will get the support of Conservatives this time around, but we are not that hopeful or surprised when they continue their long track record of voting against Canadians.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague how, considering our job description, we are supposed to be able to do our work when the government is so lacking in transparency when it comes to being accountable.

Before the election, he gave the Minister of Finance a mandate to prepare a budget. Before and during the election, it was ready. There was no issue. Now, after the election, the government is not sure it will be able to table a budget. However, the Prime Minister put on a big show during a meeting, and now it seems tax cuts will be rolled out by edict, as if that is how things work in Canada. The House of Commons must take a stand on this. This is not the Oval Office in the White House.

No one is going to turn down apple pie, but how can we do our job, question the government and demand accountability regarding these tax cuts when we have no idea what the budgetary framework is?

[English]

Hon. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, I wish my French-language speaking skills were a bit better, and I am working on that to answer in French in the future.

I do want to say that Parliament is in session. We are debating key pieces of legislation that would enhance our economy and make life more affordable. We have advanced, in just 11 sitting days, three or four major pieces of legislation and the ways and means motion. We are cutting taxes. We are making our communities safer and strengthening our borders. We are creating one Canadian economy by eliminating those internal trade barriers, which is so important for us to boost the economy, ensure that there are jobs and ensure affordability for future generations. I think Parliament is working well together, and I hope the member opposite will support our work.

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleagues have been talking about a budget. We have estimates before the House here. I had the opportunity to review some of them. I think the member for Whitby actually talked about the fact that MPs have the ability to look through the expenditures of government that are being proposed.

He talked about housing. I think that is really important. We are proposing to not only remove the GST for first-time homebuyers, up to \$1 million, but the difference is that we still have supply-side programs. The Conservatives, in the election, proposed to fund that commitment through taking away supply-side programs.

Could the member opposite comment on how that actually would have been a really restrictive policy that would not have allowed more Canadians to benefit from the GST measure we are proposing?

• (1540)

Hon. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, as usual, my colleague poses excellent questions in this House. I very much appreciate his pointing to the fact that we need a dual-pronged strategy to address the housing challenges in this country. Obviously, we can do things to help young families and new homeowners get into the housing market. If that is all we do, I think that our strategy would be lacking. In fact, we need to increase supply and increase supply of deeply affordable units. That is exactly what we are going to do. It is what we have done in the past, but we are going to do even more.

Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Newmarket—Aurora.

It is with deep humility and great pride that I rise in this chamber for the first time as the newly elected member of Parliament for Windsor West, a place I have lived in, served and raised my family in and now have the honour to represent right here in Ottawa. Windsor West is a riding with powerful identity shaped by immigration, industry, grit and community pride. We are a city of makers and movers. We do not just punch above our weight; we carry the ring.

Business of Supply

Before I go further, I want to begin with a few thank yous. I thank all of the volunteers who walked endless streets, made thousands of calls, hammered signs in the ground and occasionally fed the whole campaign team like it was a Punjabi wedding. I thank my beautiful wife, Michelle, who is the calm behind this storm. Her strength and endless belief in me kept me grounded. I thank my children, Aviana and Rohan, for their love, their patience and especially their hard work during the campaign.

My campaign was powered by the people of Windsor-Essex, neighbours, friends and even strangers, who believed it was time for change. I thank those who stood with me through the campaign, people like Mahadev Puri, Jagjit Varraich, Harinder and Gurmehar Randhawa, Navdeep Bhogal, Tony Bajwa, Bina Taylor, John Elliott, Sam Nizzer and Tony Francis, and their loving families. I thank campaign managers Maurizio and Sukhdeep, our CFO Gurpreet, comms lead Al Teshuba, and our sign warriors Adrien Bezaire, Rob and Mary Soucie, Rob Cheshire, Pierre Lacasse, who likes to call himself Pierre for Pierre, Dino and Linda for showing up, rain or shine.

Thanks also to to our office team, Patsy Copus, Guneet Baath and Elton Robinson, and to our community supporters: Manvinder Deol, Don Miller, Surjeet Gill, Sukhjot Singh, Harvinder Sran, Anil Sharma, Harmail Gill, Harry Sidhu, Mr. Chandi, Mr. Chohan, Mukhtiar Singh, Asim, Rafat, Arvind and Raminder, Dr. Aleem of the Ahmadiyya community, Rahul from the BAPS community, Panditji of the Windsor Hindu temple, Rohitbhai, Dhavalbhai, Mr. Grewal, Mr. Virk and the many members of the Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh diaspora communities of Windsor. With their amazing energy, belief and action, they showed me what community in motion really looks like.

Like many Canadians, my journey began far from here. I was born in Gujarat, India, and raised by my late parents, Didar Singh Gill and Surinder Kaur Gill, who instilled in me the values of hard work, service and sacrifice. Those values were further shaped by my teachers at Rosary High School and MS University in Baroda. My uncles Hargurdev and Kultar Singh Randhawa and my aunt Satwant Kaur Randhawa, who immigrated to Canada in the late 1960s and 1970s, sponsored me. Their families did not just open their hearts and their doors; they opened my future.

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When I landed in Canada in 1988 and came to Windsor, it felt like home. The people, the grit and the values all clicked. I am especially grateful to friends like Shawn Hand, Peter Ste. Marie, Viktor Burany and many others who welcomed me and helped me adapt. I went to study at St. Clair College and the University of Windsor and then served 29 years as a police officer in Toronto and LaSalle. Frontline service teaches two things: how to solve problems and how to spot people who are just pretending to. On the front lines of public safety, I witnessed this country's challenges but also its best traits: resilience, compassion and, yes, even some dark humour during tough moments.

Windsor has always punched above its weight. It has been a transportation and manufacturing powerhouse central to Canada's auto sector. When Windsor succeeds, so does Canada. Over 9,000 trucks cross the Windsor-Detroit border daily, carrying more than \$600 million in goods. A full third of our trade with the U.S. flows through Windsor. We are the beating heart of North America's just-in-time supply chain.

For us, infrastructure is not an abstract; it is essential. That is why the Gordie Howe international bridge matters. Initiated under Prime Minister Harper and the previous Conservative government, it was a vision of nation building, yet the Liberals took three extra years to break ground. Had they acted with urgency, the bridge would likely be up and running today, cutting congestion, boosting trade and fuelling economic growth.

● (1545)

We are also home to a major piece of Canada's EV future. A critical piece of the national EV supply chain is being built in our region, a project whose full potential will depend on delivery, not just announcements. Let us be clear: This battery plant is not a political trophy; it is a strategic necessity for Canada's future and competitiveness. Our auto workers, engineers and suppliers will make it succeed, but they need infrastructure, skilled labour and long-term planning to match that ambition. That starts with Ottawa finally treating Windsor not like an afterthought, but like the economic linchpin it is.

The people of Windsor are hard-working and hopeful, but they are feeling the squeeze. Food bank usage is at record highs. Shoplifting is up not just due to gangs, but because people are trying to get basic items like food, diapers and toothpaste. Rents are out of reach. Grocery bills are growing. I had to respond to calls at grocery stores where loss prevention officers had seniors in custody for shoplifting food. Those seniors told me they were stretching one meal into three and did not have the money to buy food. Small business owners are wondering if next month will be their last month in business.

This is not just a cost of living crisis; this is a crisis of dignity. Let me be clear. It is not the people who have failed. It is policies brought forth by the Liberal government that have failed.

This week, the Prime Minister introduced his first major spending bill, the 2025-26 main estimates. After taking over a bloated government, Prime Minister Carney promised to spend less. Instead, he has increased spending by 8%, nearly three times the combined rate of inflation and population growth. Worse still, there is no budget. The government is asking Parliament to approve over

half a trillion dollars in spending without a budget. It is the first time in over 60 years outside of COVID. If single moms, seniors and small businesses have to budget before they spend, a banker must do the same. The Prime Minister said he had a plan, but this is not planning; it is reckless spending. We have a phrase in policing: fail to plan, plan to fail.

Let us not forget that Parliament voted just a week ago to demand a full budget this spring. The Liberal government has ignored the will of the House. This bill defies not just math; it defies democracy.

To my colleagues in the Liberal government, I say this respectfully. Get to work for regular Canadians. Be bold. Do not just talk about a hinge moment. Turn the handle. Open the door. If plans are not working, take ours. Canadians do not care who gets the credit. They want results.

We believe in policies that reflect lived experiences, whether it is fixing gaps in public safety or reforming taxes that will hit working families the hardest. If members want to know what matters to Windsorites most, all they have to do is tune into AM 800 for Mike and Meg, catch Ms. Maluske on the evening news or listen to Mayor Dilkens or any of the many independent journalists on social media. Windsorites want affordability, they want accountability, they want results and, more than anything else, they want to be heard.

Windsor is a tough city. We have weathered border uncertainty, plant closures and more than a few broken promises from politicians, yet we always rise. We have union workers and entrepreneurs, new Canadians and fourth-generation families, and skilled tradespeople and students all trying to make it and make it matter, because they give a damn about their city and their country.

To me, being Canadian means working hard, believing in fairness, helping a neighbour, saying sorry when someone else bumps into us and standing up for what is right, even when it is difficult. This House, as we know, is the beating heart of our democracy. I am here to serve with respect, humility and dignity.

I thank the people of Windsor West for sending me up here. They welcomed a young man from distant shores, gave him the opportunity to serve and protect, and now have given him a seat in Parliament. I will honour their trust. I look forward to working with every member in this Parliament.

• (1550)

The Deputy Speaker: Before I go to questions and comments, I will just remind members, especially new members, that we cannot use the last name of the Prime Minister in the House. We can only refer to him by his title. That applies to ministers as well.

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue of affordability was raised a great deal during the election and even prior to the election. We have a new Prime Minister and a new government, and I believe the Prime Minister has been very clear on that particular issue. That is one of the reasons we have Bill C-4, which would provide tax relief in different ways. Twenty-two million Canadians would benefit by it, such as first-time homebuyers from the building of new homes. It would also put into law dealing with the consumer carbon tax, getting rid of it. It would make life more affordable for Canadians.

I am wondering if the member can be very clear in indicating not only that he supports this piece of legislation, but that he would like to see it pass before the House rises.

Harb Gill: Mr. Speaker, I support any genuine effort to leave more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadians, but the devil is always in the details. A tax cut helps, but when people are skipping meals or having to shoplift to feed their kids, they need more than incremental changes. They need leadership that fixes the root causes: inflation, broken supply chains, unaffordable housing and unsafe streets.

This tax cut is a start. Now let us see if the government has the courage to go further.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am not a banker like the Prime Minister, but something is not working. On the one hand, we are being told that the government will balance the budget in three years. On the other hand, the government is cutting taxes and abolishing the retaliatory measures that would have helped workers and businesses, even though it knows that it will also have to help them.

What is wrong with this reasoning?

[English]

Harb Gill: Mr. Speaker, it is hard to find logic, but let us talk about trade and tariffs, as the member pointed out.

We understand our geography better than most. Windsor sits right across from Detroit. Our economies do not just neighbour each other; they depend on each other. We cannot wish that away, nor should we want to. We share roads, railways, rivers and generations of family. We are related by blood, actually. Businesses and labourers cross the border daily.

Business of Supply

Partnerships require respect, not just handshakes and photo ops. That means standing up for our industries when they are under threat. It means negotiating from strength, not just sentiment. Canada must approach the United States with the full awareness that while we are the smaller partner in size, we are not small in value, principle or purpose. We are seriously talking about building a 21st-century North American economy, whether with EVs, energy or steel. It is time we acted like real partners, not pushovers.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Windsor West on an excellent speech today and on his advocacy.

My heart goes out to his community, because I noted in Friday's release from Statistics Canada on labour market numbers that there is sadly a very high unemployment rate in Windsor. Numbers are high throughout southern Ontario. Unemployment is 7% nationally and 8.8% in Toronto but 10.8% in Windsor. Windsor has really borne the brunt of Liberal economic failures. At a time when the whole country, and particularly his city, is dealing with such high unemployment, what a disaster that the Liberals cannot even present a budget. They have no plan and no budget.

I wonder if the member could share what the response has been in his riding to the high levels of unemployment and the failure of the Liberals to present a budget.

• (1555)

Harb Gill: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of anxiety in my riding, in the entire city, in fact.

I ran for office not because I had a lifelong ambition to sit in this chamber, although I am truly honoured to be here, but because I believe that Canada can do better and that Windsor deserves better. We deserve policies that do not pit the environment against the economy. We deserve border infrastructure that actually serves our community. We deserve a federal government that listens before it announces something. Above all, we deserve to be seen, not just on a map, but as a force in this country's future.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is said that inflation is cooling, but families are not feeling it. That is because the real cost of living is not measured on spreadsheets. It is measured at the grocery store, the gas station and the dinner table.

Business of Supply

Everywhere I go, I hear about it. The price of groceries has soared. Homes are out of reach. Mortgage renewals have doubled. Rents are breaking records. Families are living with constant anxiety, counting dollars, skipping meals and giving up on dreams. These are not statistics. These are real people with real struggles.

During the election last month, a man in my community said he had never cared about politics, but this election was different for him because he needed a break. He felt like he was treading water and needed something to change. He is not alone. According to H&R Block Canada, 85% of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque. That is up from 60% just a year ago. That is not just economic pressure; that is a national emergency.

This is what happens when a government spends without discipline, borrows without limits and governs without a plan. The legacy of Liberal policy is not progress. It is the slow undoing of a family's dignity. This year alone, the average Canadian family will pay \$800 more to buy the same amount of food. It is not better food or more food, but just the same. Food costs continue to outpace inflation, and every grocery trip feels more painful.

When I visited the Newmarket Food Pantry, I saw the shelves were being emptied just as fast as they were being restocked. The beautiful thing was that there were a lot of donations from the community, but when I was speaking to the staff, they shared that they do their record keeping at month-end, and every month is a record month. That is the trend.

It is not just the people we might expect using the food pantry. It is families, seniors and young people. In fact, young people are disproportionately represented among those using the Newmarket Food Pantry because they cannot afford food. It has revealed a quiet crisis gripping Newmarket—Aurora and other communities across the country. People from all walks of life are facing food insecurity. The Newmarket community has responded with generosity, but the demand keeps growing. The reality is that kindness is not enough.

Affordability is the number one concern I hear about from my neighbours, and we must urgently bring down food costs, not make them worse through inflationary spending. When a government floods the economy with borrowed money, it weakens our dollar. When our dollar is weak, everything is more expensive, including food. It is basic economics, and Canadians are paying the price every day at the checkout lines.

What have the Liberals done? They have refused to table a budget. They have refused to show a path forward. Now they are asking Parliament to approve even more spending than the last government, with more spending announcements expected in the months ahead. Today, for example, there was another announcement for an increase in military spending, with no budget and without a single plan to balance the books. Let us call this what it is: It is not just mismanagement; it is economic negligence. The government has gone from saying the budget will balance itself to the budget will not be balanced to there will be no budget at all.

• (1600)

By refusing to present a budget until the fall, the Liberals will have gone over a full year without a federal budget, which would

be the longest stretch since the 1960s, outside of the pandemic. What makes this even more insulting is that, while Canadian families are being crushed by an affordability and housing crisis, and communities are facing rising crime, the Liberal government sees no problem shutting the government down for the summer and walking away while Canadian families continue to struggle.

There was once a time, under both Liberal and Conservative governments, when fiscal responsibility was a shared national value. It was on that consensus that Canada built its prosperity. However, under Justin Trudeau, that consensus was shredded, and this Liberal government is taking it one step further. It is now not only continuing with the spending but also refusing to deliver a budget.

Yes, it is nice to see the Liberals, the NDP, the Bloc and the Greens finally catch up to ideas that Pierre Poilievre put forward years ago, such as lowering income taxes, eliminating the carbon tax and removing the GST on homebuilding, but let us be honest. The Liberals are showing up late and going only halfway. Pierre did not just talk about affordability, he also led with bold proposals. Therefore, if the Liberals now agree with Pierre, why have they not gone all the way? Why are Canadians still being crushed by a crisis the Liberals now admit exists but still refuse to address?

It is a moment for leadership, and leadership starts with a plan backed by numbers. It is called a budget. We must renew the generational contract, the idea that, if people work hard, play by the rules and give back, they can still get ahead. We cannot settle for timid consensus. We cannot govern with what makes the best headlines. We must act boldly and lead with principle.

The Liberals must do the right thing and deliver a budget, not in the fall, and not after another spending spree, but now. Let us build a Canada where no one fears the future, where food is affordable, where Canadian families can breathe again and where hope is not a luxury but a lived reality. I urge the government to stop the excuses, stop the delays and table a budget now.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Pierre Poilievre had a 100-day plan. In that 100-day plan, he did not commit to presenting a budget. He said that within that first 100 days, there was no commitment to a budget.

We have a Prime Minister who has been really focused on the issue of affordability. All one needs to do is look at the legislation that we have introduced, which would give tax breaks to support Canadians with respect to affordability. Can the member explain why Pierre Poilievre would not have had to produce a budget? We have a new Prime Minister and a new government actually providing tax relief that would come into effect on July 1. Does the member support that?

• (1605)

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the government stole three platform points from Pierre Poilievre's plan, one of which was cutting income taxes by 1%. We are talking about the budget here. Let us talk about numbers. This tax cut would save Canadians \$800, but the Liberals' inflationary spending is increasing the cost of food by \$800 a year. The simple math is that \$800 less \$800 equals zero. How are Canadian families going to be better off under the government and its plans?

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to my colleague's speech. I agree with a lot of the things she said.

I listened to what our colleague from Winnipeg North said. He seemed to be staunchly defending Pierre Poilievre for not tabling figures, for not critiquing or looking at budgets, for believing that it would be all right to spend tens or hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars without drafting a budget or making any calculations ahead of time, and for telling voters that even though he wanted to lower taxes and increase spending, everything would balance out. That seems a bit strange to me.

I remember the first thing I taught my children when they were very young. When they wanted to spend money on chewing gum or toys, the first thing I would ask them was how much money they had before they decided to spend it. I made them count their money.

I encourage our Prime Minister and all Liberal Party members to do the same.

[English]

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, the responsible thing to do is what every family, every business and every government must do, which is to deliver a budget at the beginning of the fiscal year, not after authorizing \$486 billion in spending.

Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have heard the Minister of Finance say that the Liberals will “take no lessons from the Conservatives”, but maybe they will take a lesson from Brookfield. I am pretty sure Brookfield has a budget.

I will ask my hon. colleague, why are the Liberals treating Brookfield shareholders better than they are treating Canadians?

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, yes, I wonder if the Liberal government would take a lesson from private industry, a lesson from Brookfield Asset Management, because Brookfield does prepare a budget before it spends. It is a basic practice, but the Liberals are refusing to put forward a budget, and they are taking the time to ask for \$486 billion in new spending. That is irresponsible.

Business of Supply

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling and many of them are turning to food banks for support, yet the member is silent on the tax rates and the excess profits big corporations are receiving. Since the 1980s, the corporate income tax rate went from 36% to 15%. In 2023, corporations recorded \$664 billion—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora.

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that inflationary spending causes our dollar to weaken because the government floods the economy with excess borrowed money and it weakens our dollar, raising the cost of everything.

• (1610)

Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

As I rise for the first time as the member for the new riding of Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, I would like to thank the residents of my riding for electing me to be their strong voice here in Ottawa. My pledge when I first ran in 2015 was that I would be my community's voice in Ottawa and not Ottawa's voice in my community. That is how I have governed myself for the last 10 years, and this will continue to guide me in all I do here.

I would like to thank all of the many volunteers who helped me knock on doors, make phone calls and put up signs. I thank them for their dedication and support. I thank my amazing campaign team and my staff, specifically Jeff Jedras, my campaign manager, and Nusrat Malim. Both have been working with me for the last 10 years and have worked hard to serve and fight for the community every day. I thank them for that. I also thank my family, my husband Salman and both my boys, Umaid and Usman. Nothing is possible without their love and support.

As we return to Parliament as a new government with a renewed mandate, let us pledge ourselves to not just work for those who voted for us. Let us pledge to work for all Canadians. This was my fourth election, and in many ways it was the most difficult. A record number of signs were destroyed, and volunteers were targeted and verbally abused. There was a level of anger and hostility that I have not seen before.

Business of Supply

While I will never condone harassment and abuse, we must recognize that many Canadians are hurting. They are finding it harder to make ends meet. They feel like, no matter how hard they work, they cannot get any further ahead. They worry about what they will leave to their children. We may have different ideas about how we solve these issues, but it is important to acknowledge that we see them too. We share these same worries. Their concerns are valid, and they are our concerns too. I hope, as we return for the 45th Parliament, we can listen more than we speak, try to understand where each other is coming from and work together on the things that unite us, such as wanting to build a better community and a better country, and do better for our next generations.

I am here today to speak to a Conservative motion that purports to be concerned with affordability, a concern my constituents and I share. Indeed, affordability was a major focus of our government's throne speech, which was recently delivered by His Majesty King Charles III. I had the brief opportunity to speak with His Majesty in the other place following the speech. I mentioned to him that I was born in England in Coventry. I was born there, as my father studied at the university there. I was born in England, raised in Pakistan and immigrated to Canada, all Commonwealth countries.

The Commonwealth, the sovereign and the values they represent have always been very dear and important to me, and I was gratified to see those values reflected in the Speech from the Throne. On the campaign trail this spring, I heard three key messages: stand up for Canada; build more homes people can afford; and make life more affordable for everyone. The government's agenda, as outlined in the King's speech, tackles all three issues.

The Prime Minister and his government have been clear that we will resolutely defend Canada's sovereignty. It is time for a reimagined, balanced relationship with the U.S. that prioritizes our economic strength and independence, and we need to broaden our relationships. That means building stronger relationships with global trading partners and working to tear down internal trade barriers. It should not be harder for an Ontario business to sell to British Columbia than it is to sell to Colombia.

Our plan for a more affordable Canada starts with a middle-class tax cut that would save the average two-income family up to \$840 a year, effective Canada Day. That is more money in the pockets of my constituents to help pay for groceries and other expenses. That is just one example of how we are helping Canadians cope with everyday expenses.

Enrolment in the Canadian dental care plan is now open to all eligible Canadians. With one in four Canadians saying they could not visit an oral health provider because it was too expensive, our plan is helping over eight million eligible Canadians without insurance get access to the dental care they need.

• (1615)

We are also helping with affordability by taking the GST off homes at or under \$1 million for first-time homebuyers. That is up to \$50,000 to help Canadians entering the housing market for the first time, meaning lower mortgage payments and more money to help cover other expenses. Our government will also continue to build on programs such as the Canada child care program, which is

saving Canadians thousands of dollars and allowing parents to return to the workforce sooner.

Let us talk about housing. In recent years, this has been the number one issue my constituents have raised with me. Whether it is apartments, townhouses, duplexes or detached homes, in my area and in many areas across the country there is a real lack of housing that people can afford. Simply put, Canada needs to build more homes that people can afford. How do we do that? It is time to think big, with the most ambitious housing program in Canada since World War II. We will double the rate of homebuilding while creating an entirely new housing industry. We will do it with Canadian lumber, Canadian technology and most important of all, Canadian skilled labour.

The housing crisis demands bold action. "Build Canada homes" is our plan to construct 500,000 affordable homes annually, doubling the current rate. By investing dollars in prefabricated housing and in low-cost financing, we will cut costs and build faster. We are eliminating red tape, halving development charges and using federal lands for affordable housing. Inspired by our postwar success, we will create jobs, train workers and ensure that every Canadian can afford a home in a community they love.

We cannot solve the housing crisis alone; "build Canada homes" needs provinces and cities to join us. By aligning zoning laws, streamlining permits and sharing costs, we can build 500,000 affordable homes every year. Provinces can reduce the bureaucratic hurdles, and cities can prioritize high-density projects. Together, we will ensure that every Canadian has a home. Together, we can build a stronger, fairer Canada for all generations.

We must be clear-eyed about the challenges Canada is facing. Our economy is under attack. The world is an increasingly dangerous place, and Canada is not an island.

However, with challenges comes opportunity. The true test of Canada will be in how we choose to meet this challenge, so let us seize this moment to think big and dream bigger, to not just build new alliances but to lead them, and to model not just Canadian values but Canadian ingenuity. Together, there are no challenges we cannot meet. Let us bet on team Canada, because together we are the true north strong and free.

Business of Supply

Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member on her recent election.

I agree with the member that we are all here for the right reason, which is to serve our constituents the best we possibly can. I know she now finds herself in a very unfortunate position of having to defend the very policies that created all these problems. I was just wondering how the hon. member will square that circle with her constituents.

Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, I have represented my constituents for the last 10 years and have always been their voice here in Ottawa, not Ottawa's voice in my community. I am proud that we have programs like the Canada child benefit, which has lifted hundreds and thousands of kids out of poverty. We introduced a \$10-a-day child care program, which is saving constituents in my area thousands of dollars every year. I am proud that we introduced a national school food program, which aims to improve children's learning and health by addressing food insecurity. I am proud of our Canadian dental care plan, which is open to all eligible Canadians and is really making a difference in the lives of families.

• (1620)

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, although my colleague's speech was very interesting and very good, I would like to address two things that she said.

First, she mentioned that old refrain from the election campaign, specifically “think big, be Canadian”. In other words, Canada has to be “big”. The President of the United States is a bad guy, and the situation is urgent.

Then my colleague regurgitated all the old measures that were in the budget presented six months ago by the minister who replaced the former finance minister, who resigned because the previous budget was so bad.

We keep hearing how serious the situation is. It was pretty obvious in question period today that the Minister of Finance has no interest in drafting a budget. He is interested in one thing: making announcements. When he is asked if there will be a budget, he replies that an announcement will be made in such and such a riding. The Minister of Finance is not interested in public finances. He is interested in making announcements. My colleague said in her speech that the government has made some great announcements. A government needs a budget to govern.

Does my colleague believe that her government should present a budget this spring, as any responsible government would do?

[English]

Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, as we have all seen, the estimates have been presented to Parliament, outlining the proposed government spending across different departments and for different programs. These estimates are a vital part of our fiscal process, and they deserve careful scrutiny. As we prepare for the fall budget, our focus remains on clearly building an economy that works for everybody, responding to the threats facing our country, and making life affordable for all Canadians. We are engaging in extensive consultations with Canadian provinces, indigenous communities and

stakeholders to craft policies that will deliver real results for all Canadians.

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I was listening, I could not help but be inspired by the member's personal story of growing up in the United Kingdom. She mentioned her interaction with the Sovereign. I, too, was fortunate to have a brief interaction. I appreciate her comments, her connection and the way that Canada's constitution runs through the United Kingdom, but also that we have diversity across this country.

I wanted to pick up on the remarks that the member made about housing. She rightly identified the fact that the government is removing the GST on homes up to \$1 million for first-time homebuyers. I think that is a really important policy. The Conservative Party, to its credit, actually did include this in its platform, but the difference is that it would fund that by getting rid of things like the housing accelerator fund and the rapid housing initiative, a lot of the federal support to build new houses. Yes, the Conservatives would have made a tax cut, but it would have been for a lot fewer people because the homes would not be there.

Would the member care to comment on the fact that she sees that as perhaps problematic?

Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, yes, while we were knocking on doors, I heard very clearly about this, and I have worked with my constituents on making sure that we have the ability to build more housing. Now we have the most ambitious housing plan since after World War II, and constituents are really excited that we will double the construction of houses. We will make sure that we construct 500,000 houses every year in our communities, and at the same time make sure that we give incentives to first-time homebuyers and are giving tax breaks to 22 million Canadians. We are working for all Canadians—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the chief government whip.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, congratulations to you on your new role. You command authority from the chair as though you had been doing it for years. Best of luck to you. What I am getting at is that you look very comfortable in the position.

Before I speak to the particular motion before us, I want to take the opportunity to first thank the constituents of Kingston and the Islands for sending me back here once again to represent their voice in Parliament. I am humbled by the incredible amount of support our campaign had over the last number of months, and I take that responsibility as I think any of us should.

Business of Supply

I want to very quickly thank some of the key people who played roles in my campaign: Ann Parker and Kelly Banks in particular, who led my campaign in a co-chair capacity; Nicole, who handled all of our get-out-to-vote coordination, as it takes a certain type of individual to do that job and she was extremely successful at it; Shawn, who managed all of our canvassing; Ryan, who was the official agent and made sure we stayed on budget and spent people's money wisely; Jill, who spent an incredible amount of time in the campaign office; and Larry, my fundraiser, who will tell us that his single best day of fundraising was the 24-hour period after Pierre Poilievre visited the riding, which did not go unnoticed, and people were very generous in the 24 hours following that.

I want to thank the volunteers who came out. This was my fourth federal election. I had two municipal elections before that. I have never before had that sheer number of people interested in volunteering and participating in a campaign. My wife and I started volunteer orientation sessions in February, and the number of people who came out to get involved in the campaign was truly inspiring. I have made some incredible connections and met some incredible people I did not know beforehand. I am so grateful for their participation.

This also gives me an opportunity to quickly mention the incredible people who work in my constituency office: Ann, Molly, Macla, Jennifer, Ashleigh and Nicole. As I think all members of the House would know, it is our constituency staff who are our voice back in our community. There was nothing quite as rewarding as when I would knock on a door during the campaign and someone would say that Ann or Jennifer in my office was able to help them out with a particular case. That truly is such an incredible feeling that I know all members of the House have.

Last but not least, I want to thank my family, including my incredible wife Vanessa, who was as much a part of the campaign as anybody else, not just for being there as an incredible support for me but also for just diving right into the middle of our campaigns and taking on so many key roles. I also want to thank our children: Mason, our oldest; Frankie, our middle child; and Vivian, our youngest. As today is Frankie's birthday, I wish him a happy birthday. He shares a birthday with my father, so I wish the two of them a happy birthday.

On that note, I thank my mother-in-law, Fran, and my parents, John and Assunta, who have always been extremely supportive. My dad never missed an opportunity to remind me of how many signs he put up throughout the election. I am pretty sure by the end he had put up three or four times as many as we had put up in total. Nonetheless, I am extremely grateful for their support.

Today we are talking about the opposition motion. In particular, after reading a bit of the preamble, I note that it stresses the desire of the opposition to have a budget introduced prior to the House's rising in a couple of weeks. I find it quite interesting that the proposal would come forward, given that I am pretty sure, if we look back in history, there has been no government that from election day to being sworn in has produced a budget. I do not think that has ever happened.

As a matter of fact, if we look back to Stephen Harper, who was the last prime minister of another political party, when he first came

to office, it took him three months before he was able to table a budget. Therefore it is extremely germane, and I guess a more proper term would be that it is extremely responsible, to make sure that when we introduce a budget we do it in a way that thoroughly reflects the needs of Canadians and does the proper consultation.

• (1625)

We want to make sure that we get it right. We want to make sure that we get feedback from Canadians in putting that together. That is why the Prime Minister has committed to doing it in the fall.

I will say this, as it relates to defence, and I am sure this will be part of that, given the announcement today: As it relates to the budget, our commitment will be to defence and getting our commitment to 2%.

I found the exchanges today in the House of Commons quite interesting. I heard the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman challenging the government about not investing in defence. He was the parliamentary secretary for national defence when Stephen Harper allowed our investment in national defence to drop below 1% of GDP for the first time ever in our history. The member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, the critic for defence, is challenging us on our commitments to NATO and how we can invest more and spend more as it relates to national defence. I find that to be extremely rich, given the history that he, in particular, has on that file and that Conservatives have, more holistically speaking.

The other thing I wanted to touch on, very briefly, is the number of times in this debate and in the debate on the Speech from the Throne that I heard Conservatives talking about our copying their ideas. Somebody got up earlier while I was sitting here and spoke about three ideas we stole from them. The opposition should know that this is its job. The job of opposition members is to come here and put forward ideas and say they think that, while we have an idea, this one is even better.

Rather than celebrate the fact that the government is listening to the opposition and perhaps incorporating some of the opposition members' ideas, they are asking, how dare we do what they were going to do? I would say to my colleagues in the Conservative Party that, as they say, imitation is the best form of flattery. I hope that they are flattered to know that we do like some of their ideas. They do have some good ideas. This is certainly not the first time I have ever said this while standing here.

More importantly, what I would say to my Conservative friends is that perhaps they should have spent more time developing policy and presenting actual policy over the last two years rather than standing up and just reciting three-word slogans time after time after time. That is what we heard. Remember “fix the budget” and “axe the tax”? They meant nothing. Canadians saw right through them.

If their criticism is to ask how we dare take their idea and articulate it in a way that resonates with people, I do not know what to say. We love good ideas. We love good policy. We will always look to see how we can improve upon the policies that we have, sometimes by working with the Conservatives. We all know that we did it in the last Parliament with the NDP. We were able to bring in some monumental legislation, policies such as dental care, pharmaceutical, \$10-a-day child care and a national school food program. If we can continue to invest in these programs and prop them up to be what they should be, these will be things that last a long time.

If the Conservatives want to come along and say that they have an idea too but ask how we dare steal it, I would suggest that they understand what their role is in the House. Their role in the House is to bring forward their good ideas and to push the government to improve upon various pieces of legislation with the ideas that they have in mind, not simply reciting three-word slogans ad nauseam.

• (1630)

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to be able to debate my friend from Kingston and the Islands in his non-Twitter persona.

I am wondering what it is that the Liberal government is hiding. Why will it not present a budget? Is it hiding the fact that it was counting on all this tariff revenue, and that is not coming? Is it hiding the fact that, last year, it was planning on various capital gains-related revenues, and that revenue is not coming? Of course, the government turned on that as well, because it was a horrible idea. Is it something else altogether, such as wanting to rewrite the books to make the deficit seem like something it is not?

Why is the Liberal government failing to present a budget? What is it hiding?

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the member might not be on Twitter, but he is certainly spreading the same conspiracy theories he was spreading there. The reality is that developing a budget takes time. I ask him, why did it take Stephen Harper three months to bring in a budget? The reality is that this Parliament was recalled after the last election in record time, and we will be bringing forward a budget in the fall, as the Prime Minister has indicated.

This member is just trying to create a false narrative so that he can go back and say we are hiding something. No, believe it or not, not everything is about hiding something, despite the fact that Conservatives want to make us believe that. Sometimes it is just about being prudent and doing the right thing before introducing a piece of legislation.

• (1635)

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his election. In fact, in another life, he was my own city councillor.

That said, my colleague argues that it is not at all customary for a government to get elected, open Parliament and immediately table a budget. He may be right about not tabling an entire budget, but it is customary to table an economic statement. It is customary to give information to the House.

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I see him writing on his sheet, and he is going to say that I am wrong. Let us suppose that I am wrong; even so, there are not many examples of governments that open Parliament, do not table a budget, but then, without presenting a budget, spend \$26 billion on tax cuts, \$38 billion on additional credits and \$9 billion on defence.

The whole situation is abnormal, as is the lack of a budget, the lack of an economic statement and the spending spree that the government is proposing here, without allowing us to do our job as parliamentarians.

Right now, the House is calling for a budget, but the first act of the new Prime Minister is to show a profound lack of respect for a request from the House.

[English]

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, although the member did live in Kingston, unfortunately, I did not get to represent him as a city councillor. He lived in the Sydenham district whereas I represented Portsmouth, but I digress.

The reality is that it takes time. In his question, he said it is not customary. I did not say anything about it being customary or not customary. All I am saying is that it takes time to properly bring in a budget, because we want to be thorough. We want to make sure that we are reflecting the wishes of Canadians and that we are properly consulting in advance.

In terms of a financial statement or documents, we have tabled the estimates. He had an opportunity to vote against those if he was discontent with them, but he chose not to. On Thursday of last week, he voted in favour of them. Therefore, by voting in favour of the money the government is asking to spend, he is de facto saying that he has confidence in the government. I want to thank that member for putting his confidence in the government.

Braedon Clark (Sackville—Bedford—Preston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague touched on defence, which is a significant announcement. As we all know, it has been many years in the making, and we are now several years ahead of schedule to reach our 2% of GDP target. I believe the member's riding includes Royal Military College. My riding of Sackville—Bedford—Preston on the east coast, of course, has many military families, many veterans who are really excited about today's announcement.

I wonder if the member could just comment on what impact he thinks this will have on our military, in his riding and across the country.

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Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, our military has been waiting long enough for this. I spoke earlier about how, when we came into office in 2015, the percentage of GDP Stephen Harper had brought the level of spending down to was 0.97%. Now we have a plan. By next March, we will be at 2%, per the announcement today. This is important. It is important to so many communities and to Canada as a whole. I am very happy to see this announcement today.

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member for Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

I am going to share with the House today some recent figures from the consumer price index, Canada's primary measure of inflation. Quite frankly, they are astonishing. As of April, prices of food purchased from stores have increased by 3.8%. This marks the third consecutive month in which grocery prices have risen faster than the general cost of living. Key contributors include the following: fresh or frozen beef, up 16.2%; coffee and tea, up 13.4%; sugar and confectionery, up 8.6%; and fresh vegetables, up 3.7%. These numbers are not just statistics. They represent real struggles for Canadians trying to put food on the table.

Let us break this down a little further. Ground beef has risen to \$14.17 per kilogram. Tomatoes have risen to \$4.69 per kilogram. Two kilograms of white rice is \$9.82. Are we ready for this? A pack of bacon is \$6.85. Let us have a look at just pure essentials: milk, two litres, is \$5.38; white bread is \$3.48 a loaf; and infant formula now costs \$48.24. For parents who are unable to breastfeed, whether for medical, physical or personal reasons, this is not a choice. It is a necessity. For nearly \$50 a container, how is the average Canadian supposed to afford the basic nutrition their baby needs to grow and thrive?

For many families across Canada, grocery shopping has become more than a routine errand; it has become a high-stakes strategy game. Parents are now forced to adopt tactics just to make ends meet, scanning for clearance stickers, timing their visits to catch markdowns and relying on discount racks where the freshness of the food is, at best, questionable. These are not just cost-saving habits. They are survival strategies, and they speak volumes about the growing cost of living.

I would like to break this down to one example of what many would consider a modest, affordable dinner, spaghetti and meat sauce with a salad: one pound of beef, \$4.72; two cans of tomatoes, \$4.22; two onions, \$2.00; milk for the family, \$5.38; pasta sauce, \$3.22; iceberg lettuce, \$3.07; salad dressing, \$3.29; and noodles, two packs, \$3.94. That is a total of \$29.84 for just one dinner. Now, we can multiply that by 30 days. That is \$895.20 to eat just the same basic meal every night for 30 days, with no breakfast, no lunch, no snacks, no fruit, no eggs, no bread, no cleaning supplies and no toiletries. That is just dinner. It is no wonder that more and more families are slipping below the poverty line.

I recently spoke with people at Extend-A-Family in Kitchener, which is doing incredible work supporting children and adults with disabilities. They shared with me that after being granted the disability tax credit, individuals with disabilities still struggle to meet their basic needs. Every month, they fall short on essentials such as

food, shelter and transportation. There is simply not enough. We need to do better.

I bring this up because we need a plan for Canadians. As a government, planning is not optional; it is our responsibility. At the heart of any meaningful plan is a budget. How can anyone, whether families, businesses or governments, make sound financial decisions without a budget? The answer is simple: They cannot.

Without a budget, there is no road map, no way to allocate resources, no way to prepare for the future and no way to ensure that the most vulnerable among us are not left behind. Some may ask, “Why should I care if the government releases a budget? How does that affect my life?” Here is how: The federal budget is Canada's financial blueprint. It outlines how the government plans to spend, invest and manage public funds to support our economy and our people.

● (1640)

It matters deeply. Here is why: It helps steer the economy by funding infrastructure, job creation and innovation, laying a foundation for long-term growth. It determines how much support goes to social services, things Canadians rely on every day. It sets tax policies and decides how revenue is collected and then distributed, impacting what Canadians pay and therefore what they receive in return. It manages our national debt and ensures financial stability for future generations. At the heart of today's discussion, it addresses cost of living and affordability. It addresses inflation, housing affordability and everyday expenses, issues that are hitting Canadians harder than ever. Therefore, yes, a budget matters. It is not just a document. It is a reflection of our priorities, our values and our commitment to the people we serve.

Navigating financial uncertainty is difficult under any circumstances, but when government plans remain unclear, it becomes nearly impossible. The absence of a clear, structured budget has created a ripple effect in uncertainties for individuals, families and businesses across this country. Without a financial road map, we lack the stability and direction needed to support Canadians effectively. A well-defined budget does more than allocate dollars. It provides transparency, ensures fiscal responsibility and empowers Canadians to plan their financial future with confidence.

As inflation continues to drive up the cost of living, we need more than vague promises. We need concrete measures. We need a budget that addresses economic challenges head-on and delivers real relief to the households that are struggling the most. There is a cost of living crisis in Canada right now. About 50% of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque, according to Equifax Canada. This year, Canadians will pay nearly \$17,000 for food, an \$800 increase from last year. There goes that tax cut. Two million Canadians visit food banks in a single month. Social media is filled with videos of people crying and struggling to make ends meet. According to the latest data from Statistics Canada, just over 106,000 people left this country in 2024, marking the highest number of departures in nearly six decades.

Will the Liberal government finally listen to the voices of Canadians, voices that have echoed and been voted on in this House, and present a comprehensive budget this spring, a budget that outlines clear plans for economic recovery, affordability and long-term financial stability?

Canadians are not asking for the impossible. They are asking for clarity and leadership, and for the confidence that the government has a plan. They deserve to know where this country is headed and how they are going to get there. When will the Liberal government hold itself accountable to Canadians and put forward a budget? Will it be this spring?

• (1645)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the Conservatives' 100-day plan. This is something Pierre Poilievre talked about in the last election. Nowhere did he give any sort of commitment to a budget. Many people watching this debate might detect a bit of hypocrisy. Pierre Poilievre is now saying that we should have a budget, when he himself was not prepared to have it brought in within the first 100 days.

What we have is a Prime Minister who has been very proactive on the issue of affordability, and that is demonstrated in Bill C-4. Will the member support Bill C-4 and recommend to her caucus that we pass it before the end of June so Canadians will get that tax break come July 1?

Kelly DeRidder: Mr. Speaker, inflation and food insecurity are pressing concerns in Kitchener. In 2024, one in eight households in the Waterloo region struggled to afford food. Local food banks are sounding the alarm, stating that food insecurity is at an all-time high, with a 25% increase in users needing food assistance.

When will the Liberals table an actual budget and stop the inflationary spending that is causing this cost of living crisis?

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is a banker turned Prime Minister who, when pressed about his lack of transparency, shuts us down, saying that he understands the issue, that he would not be in politics if not for the crisis and that he is going to do what it takes to get all workers and families through the crisis.

This is not a normal situation. We can all agree on that. It would have been great if we could at least have had an economic state-

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ment to help us understand how we can reduce taxes and balance the budget in three years, while helping businesses, families and workers without the revenue from the retaliatory tariffs.

That is a magic wand. Does she know what the banker Prime Minister's magic wand is?

• (1650)

[English]

Kelly DeRidder: Mr. Speaker, I agree that this is a crisis. Children in Kitchener are increasingly affected by food insecurity, with 14,418 children using the food bank in the last quarter of 2024. Every child in Canada deserves the fundamental right to grow up free from hunger. Food is not a privilege; it is a necessity. A transparent, well-funded national budget must reflect this priority, outlining clear, actionable plans to eliminate food insecurity and support families across this country.

Will the Liberal government table a budget this spring?

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned a few times the desperation and the hunger being experienced. My daughter lives in Calgary and belongs to social media groups like Moms and Tots, where moms are trying to find someone who can give them infant formula or provide diapers to get them through the week until their next cheque comes in. That is how bad the situation has gotten under the Liberal government. People cannot afford to raise kids anymore.

We have a government that will not present a budget to show how it is going to do that. Non-profit organizations have to provide a budget, a balanced budget; otherwise, they do not last long. I come from a non-profit background. Does the member think it would be appropriate that a government that regulates not-for-profit organizations should be held to the same standard and present a budget at an appropriate time?

Kelly DeRidder: Mr. Speaker, I agree. I just had a conversation the other day about someone having to put groceries back because they needed to buy formula, and so the other children in the family had to go without in order for the baby to have proper nutrition. This is a crisis we are in. Many households with employed individuals still lack sufficient income to afford food.

When will the Liberals be accountable and transparent to the residents of Kitchener Centre and Canada and actually table a budget? Will it be this spring?

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the residents of Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay to speak concerning the motion that the member for Calgary East has brought forward.

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As I have mentioned previously in this chamber, during the election the price of groceries was the number one issue I heard about from families in my region and at the doors. One conversation stood out. A young mom answered the door, joined by her two young children, wondering who was at the door on a Saturday morning. When I asked what was most worrying her, she did not hesitate: The soaring cost of food was her top concern. Later that same day, I happened to run into her at the grocery store. She wanted to explain to me that over the past year, rising prices had pushed fresh fruits, vegetables and meats out of her budget. While at this point she could still afford inexpensive items like pasta, boxed meals and processed cereals, she knew, as someone who worked in the health profession, that feeding her children this way could have long-term consequences for their health.

We are at risk of raising a generation of children who, through no fault of their own, will create a way of life leading toward obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Many families, if not yet having to turn to food banks, are being forced to make unhealthy choices to simply get by. Centre aisle and dollar store grocery shopping is increasing. The cost to our health care system and to our collective Canadian well-being will be profound if we do not act.

The “Food Banks BC Hunger Report 2024” found that “the rates of food insecurity have almost doubled since 2019.” It also says, “Since 2019, the number of individuals accessing food banks has risen by 32%.” Worse yet, these increases are not single-stop visits, with many British Columbians relying on food bank services several times a month, further proof of deepening dependency just to afford breakfast, lunch and dinner. Thirty-one per cent of all food bank users in British Columbia are children, and 11% are seniors. Many food banks are attempting to serve more clients with fewer resources.

The 2024 hunger report is very clear on the causes:

The increasing rates of food insecurity in BC can be attributed to the following recent shifts:

Sharp rise in inflation

Rapid interest rate hikes

The lack of available housing supply...

The loss of income supports...and...one-time affordability measures

Significant and rapid population growth without the social infrastructure [in place]

A slowdown in economic activity and a rising unemployment rate....

These all cross into the responsibilities of the federal Liberal government. Many of them are disasters that the Liberals spent years denying were ever occurring. It is a list of Liberal failures.

However, as the motion today is focused on the issue of food inflation, I will also highlight a report from the Salvation Army food bank in Penticton, my hometown, which says, “Since Covid ended, inflation has been the main driver, increasing visits by 40%.... We are seeing more homeowners and people who got out of poverty that have slid back into it.”

Communities across my region and Canadians across the country expect Parliament to address escalating grocery prices with every tool available, including countering inflationary pressures caused by a decade of wasteful spending from the Liberal government.

• (1655)

We have heard much since Parliament began that this will be a new government, but what confidence can we have in the same old ministers to address rising grocery prices when they have failed on exactly that issue for years? In fact, the Minister of Finance was also the Liberal minister of industry who declared he had struck a deal with Canada's five largest grocery chains to take action to stabilize food prices by Thanksgiving. That was Thanksgiving 2023. The minister's office said at the time that “in the coming days and weeks[,] Canadians can expect to see actions such as aggressive discounts across a basket of key food products that represent the most important purchases for most households”. The minister's office also said at the time, “If we don't see results, we will take additional action to restore the food price stability that Canadians expect.”

Well, it has been 20 months since that statement. Let us check the numbers. In 2023, Dalhousie University's Agri-Food Analytics Lab did a food price report and estimated the average family of four spent \$15,595 on groceries. That has now risen to \$16,834 in 2025. That is an increase of \$1,239 a year in cost to Canadians since the Minister of Finance said that he would stabilize grocery prices as industry minister.

Most Canadians do not get promotions if they fail at their job. Apparently, this rule does not apply to Liberal ministers. Five months into 2025, food inflation has skyrocketed well above the normal inflation rate. Beef is up 12% to 33%, pork and chicken breasts are up nearly 6%, oranges are up 26%, apples are up 18%, rice is up 14% and infant formula is up 9%. These are not luxury items. These are basic staples that parents need to feed their children properly or we risk creating unhealthy food habits and severe health challenges for future generations. This will also lead many Canadians into poverty.

Liberal ministers will blame American tariffs for these increases, yet food price increases in France, Germany, Italy and the U.K. remain well below ours, and they all remain under the same threat of these tariffs. To counteract made-in-Canada inflation, Canadians first need to see a full accounting in a federal budget of how the Liberals intend to spend the half a trillion dollars in new spending compared to how much they are bringing in revenue. This new spending already represents the first broken promise of the Liberal government, as it increases spending by 8%, when the Prime Minister promised to cap it at 2%.

Without a full accounting of our federal spending in the House, we risk creating more inflation and more price hikes as Canadians shop for groceries. The Prime Minister said he would be held accountable for the prices Canadians pay at the grocery store. Every Liberal member supported a throne speech that, thanks to a Conservative amendment passed by my Bloc and NDP colleagues, called for a budget to be tabled before this House rises for the summer. We certainly hope that is not yet another promise the Liberals intend to break.

● (1700)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the member opposite for her election and for taking her seat in the House of Commons.

I heard her talk about the hardship a lot of Canadians are experiencing across the country. In the past, her colleagues have voted against the benefits that help children across the country like the child tax benefit and bringing food programs into our schools. They voted against dental care for seniors and children. There are 9,000 people in my riding who have benefited from dental care.

Perhaps the member opposite can tell us if she plans to support measures that actually create opportunities for Canadian families to have extra money for groceries and other things that they need to be able to survive. Those sound like things she really cares about. I want to hear whether she is going to support those measures.

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, a budget is important to everyone in this country. Households need to have budgets. Businesses need to have budgets. Local governments are forced to have budgets. A municipality in British Columbia has to work on its budget during the year and table it by the spring. The Community Charter forces local governments to do that.

As federal members, we need to be the leaders. I do not think anyone in this House believes that local governments should not table budgets. We need to act as responsible citizens because the same tax dollar is being spent locally and federally.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what my colleague would think if I suggested that she invest her savings in a bank whose CEO spent hundreds of millions of dollars without ever making any budget forecasts, without ever checking to see whether he had the necessary funds to pay for these expenditures, even though they are nice expenditures that make people happy. If I told my colleague to invest her savings in this bank, which spends money to make people happy, what would she think?

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Would my colleague agree to entrust her savings to a bank that is spending extraordinary amounts without checking whether it has the necessary funds to do so?

● (1705)

[English]

Helena Konanz: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it would be very difficult to invest money in any type of business, let alone a bank, if it did not have a budget.

However, I want to look back at the young families that we talked to at the doors. How are they going to handle their own budgets when, since the start of 2025, beef is up 33%, pork and chicken are up nearly 6%, oranges are up 26%, apples are up 18%, rice is up 14% and infant formula is up 9%? What am I supposed to tell these families that work hard to keep a budget so they do not end up at a food bank? What am I supposed to tell them about why our own government cannot keep a budget?

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it will have been 18 months since this country saw a federal budget. We all recall the fiasco when the fall economic statement was dropped in this Parliament.

Would the hon. member not agree that this is the time to have a budget so that Canadians can openly and transparently see what the numbers are? Of course, in the fall, we knew that the Liberals had blown through their fiscal guardrail and the deficit was \$60 billion. Does the member share my sentiment, perhaps a cynic might, that they are actually trying to cook the books and hide the numbers from Canadians?

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, I would like to believe that nothing is being hidden or that this is not some nefarious trick, but why would the government not put forward a budget when all the other parties in this House voted unanimously to have a budget tabled before the summer?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise and speak to an opposition day motion. I guess I am not supposed to heckle, but it kind of got the best of me. It was one of those great conspiracy moments from the members opposite. As they try to get an understanding as to why there is no budget being introduced, they come up with all these weird explanations, so they can breed fear among the population, as if there is something abnormal about this.

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Let us put the record straight. Let us talk about what the Conservatives like to talk about: the budget. I want them to reflect, and I say this to my Conservative friends, on Pierre Poilievre in the last federal election. They might recall that they had a 100-day action plan, and they had initiatives that they were going to be taking. Let me tell members about one of the initiatives that was not there: a budget. Pierre Poilievre had no intention whatsoever of presenting a budget. The election was on April 28; that was not that long ago.

An hon. member: It sounds like a conspiracy.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are starting to put on the tinfoil hats again. April 28 was not that long ago, and we need to respect the fact that it does take time to develop and put forward a budget that is reflective of an election platform. After all, we have a new Prime Minister and a new government, and through that, there are many different initiatives that will need to be brought into the budget.

There are other things happening, not only here in Canada, but in the North American economy. President Trump, tariffs and trade are a sample of that, along with other things. I believe having a new prime minister does warrant some time in order to bring forward a budget to Canadians, which has been committed to come in the fall. I am told that Brian Mulroney took almost 300 days to present a budget after he became Prime Minister. Stephen Harper was elected as Prime Minister in February, and he presented a budget in May.

As such, I believe that, as much as the Conservatives want to come up with these conspiracy-type theories as to why there is no budget, they are not going to be able to fool Canadians. There is an expectation that, at the end of the day, it takes time to put together a national budget to spend billions and billions of dollars. I was encouraged when we had a vote last week on the ways and means, which kind of said where the money is going to be spent, at least in part.

Members might not believe this, but the Conservatives actually voted in favour of the ways and means motion. In fact, it was unanimous. Every member of the House of Commons recognized it. The Conservatives were voting in favour of the government's estimates, and they recognize that there are things not only here coming out of an election, but that are happening around the world, in particular in the United States. Given the fact that it took other prime ministers anywhere from several months to 100 days, Pierre Poilievre did not even commit to a budget and Brian Mulroney took 300 days, I do not think it is too much to ask for us to be reasonable in recognizing that it is better to make sure that we put the budget before the House in such a fashion that we have had the time to take into consideration the election platform, among other initiatives.

What we have seen coming out of the election is a government that is focused in a very significant way on several issues, but the issue of affordability is there. It is real. It is tangible. We all know that. We all knocked on doors.

• (1710)

We do not need to be told by the Conservatives how difficult it is for Canadians. We understand it and we appreciate it. The Prime Minister knows that. That is the reason his very first initiative was

to indicate that he would give a tax break to 22 million Canadians. That is recognizing the issue of affordability.

The Conservatives pussyfooted around it. They did not know what they were going to do, because after all, back in 2015, they voted against a tax break. Then they realized that maybe it was a lesson learned from that time and that, yes, it is something they should be voting in favour of this time around. I am grateful. Seriously, I think it is wonderful.

There are other initiatives the government has brought forward, but before I leave the issue of affordability, members should be aware that affordability is more than just giving a tax break. Look at the number of initiatives this Prime Minister has reinforced we will continue with, such as child care. Child care has a very positive impact in every region of our country. We know from what took place in the province of Quebec, which pioneered it for the rest of Canada by developing and putting in place a child care program, that there will be more participation in the workforce, by women in particular. We have seen that and the benefits of it.

The Conservatives would argue that they do not support that sort of affordability issue. In fact, back in the day, they said they would tear it all up. There is a strong argument to be made, and I would make that argument, that it is in Canada's best interests to continue to support that program, because it increases the workforce, not to mention the social benefits for Canadians, to have that program. It is saving literally thousands and thousands of dollars for many individuals.

We hear Conservative after Conservative talk about the issue of inflation, and justifiably so. I am very much concerned about inflation, as I know the Prime Minister and all my colleagues are. If we do a comparison, we might not necessarily be the best, but looking at the G20 countries over a span of a couple of years, we see that Canada does reasonably well. We have put in place certain initiatives to try to give that even more strength, especially to protect food prices.

I think of changes that were made, for example, to the Competition Act. A good motivator for the Competition Act changes was food price instability, and one of the arguments back then was that we needed more competition in Canada because we have just five major grocery companies. It was felt that we needed more competition. We used to have six. We used to have Shoppers Drug Mart, which carried a good line of food products, but it was consumed under Loblaw's. Interestingly enough, Pierre Poilievre was part of the government that allowed that to take place. We brought in legislation to ensure that there would be healthier competition because we believe that more competition does have an impact on the issue of providing food. That is a very positive initiative.

The grocery sector code of conduct took a while to put in place, but for the first time, we have a grocery sector code of conduct. It is in the implementation stage, but there was a great deal of effort there. We have a Prime Minister who recognizes the true value of that and has it as a part of the overall package to ensure that consumers are not being exploited.

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● (1715)

The food file is a very important one. We need to recognize there are some factors, some issues out there that affect the cost of food that are beyond the government's control. Weather is a factor. The whole production line, I would suggest, is something we need to note, as are demand and supply. We all would like to see the price of food go down, but at a time of instability, we have to look at what the government can do to assist in ensuring people have food. The national school food program is one way we can ensure that children in Canada have nutritious food in schools. Again, we see it as a very strong and healthy program to advance.

There are opportunities for all of us to look internally within the constituencies we represent and talk about the types of things that could make a difference. I think of the issue of housing, which is of great concern to Canadians. I have made reference to the "build Canada homes" program, which is going to employ Canadians. It is going to take up Canadian technology. It is going to take up Canadian labour. It is going to expand the number of houses so we can get an increase in supply.

We can take programs such as that one, which has been proposed and will be funded, and complement them with some of the actions we have seen in Bill C-4, such as the first-time home builder tax break. If someone is building their first home, they will not have to pay the GST on it, saving literally thousands of dollars. There is a \$1-million cap on that, but it is taking a holistic approach to the issue of housing because we want to see more homes being built here in Canada.

From the federal government's perspective, we are prepared to lead on the file, but let there be no doubt that it is going to take more than just the federal government. Housing is a shared responsibility among the different levels of government and should be encouraged even with the many non-profit organizations out there.

I am glad to hear the Conservatives are going to be supporting the elimination of the GST for first-time homebuyers. That is great, but I think they need to look even deeper than that. Their track record is not really that good on housing. All one needs to do is take a look at Pierre Poilievre when he was the minister of housing. The first thing that comes to my mind is the number six. A lot of people are aware of the number six when it comes to housing. It is relevant because when he was the minister of housing, that is the number of affordable houses he built in Canada; that is it. Wow.

I always find it interesting that Conservatives will stand in their places and be critical of the government when we have done more to support affordable housing than the previous government by a long shot. Members of the Conservative Party will downplay the accelerator fund, for example. Publicly, they will do that, but privately, we have a dozen to 18 of them who go around saying they want some of that money; they want some of that fund. Privately, they support it, but publicly they do not because they do not believe the government should be directly involved or give a tax break. Listen to what they say to the cities and the municipalities. It is a completely different approach to dealing with housing. I believe that with the budget coming up in the fall, we will get a better appreciation of what kind of role the federal government can play in leading the housing file.

● (1720)

We have other issues that deal with affordability. The dental care program is an excellent one. How many children or seniors have benefited from that program? Another initiative by our new Prime Minister is to expand that program, recognizing the value of having it, as it is helping a lot of low-income individuals in every region of Canada. Being able to provide a program of that nature does make affordability much better for the average person having a difficult time.

It is interesting when Conservatives talk about issues such as inflation and affordability and try to give the impression that the government is not doing a good job. I always think about the issue of poverty. Over the last number of years, we have witnessed hundreds of thousands of seniors being taken out of poverty because of social program initiatives such as the enhanced GIS program and the enhanced and modified Canada child benefit program. These types of programs have had a profoundly positive impact in Canada, in every region of our nation, and we need to recognize them.

That is why when we read the throne speech, we find, and I will get to some of these core things, it highlights that the social programs we have are worth preserving where we can. This is really important. On the pharmacare program, think of the constituents each of us has who have diabetes. The pharmacare program will allow them to have more disposable income and keep more disposable income in their pockets.

When we think of the issue of affordability, we have to look at what is happening to and influencing inflation. The threats we are hearing from President Trump about the tariffs and trade in general are obviously going to have somewhat of an impact on employment, inflation and potentially interest rates.

That is why I think Canadians, when contrasting the Prime Minister to Pierre Poilievre, saw in the Prime Minister an individual who has a comprehensive understanding of how an economy works. He is one of the most able-minded individuals in North America, I would argue, who understands what it is going to take to make sure Canada is able to build a strong Canada, a Canada that works for everyone.

We have seen that in the legislation we have introduced, legislation we talked about during the campaign. I am referring to having one economy and taking down internal barriers, potentially achieving somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$200 billion in direct benefits by having provinces and Ottawa work closer together. There is also the security of our borders, not to mention additional investments. I have already talked about Bill C-4, but there are additional investments for the Canadian Forces. There are all sorts of initiatives.

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There is in fact a plan, and the plan is coming together. In due course, as the Prime Minister has indicated, come fall we will get a detailed budget. I remind my colleagues across the way that they voted for the ways and means motion, the estimates, and I was pleased to see that. We will go through the summer and come fall time, we will have that budget.

• (1725)

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and his government are refusing to table a budget. It is as if they are telling the world, "We have no idea what we are doing. We have no plan, and we are just going to hope that we can stumble along and figure things out as we go, not making too much of a mess as we do it." This is exactly why they have not presented a budget. They had better have an answer for Canadians for why they are not tabling a budget.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not know how much clearer I could be for the member across the way. The government had a ways and means vote on the estimates. The member had the opportunity to go through those estimates. In principle, all sorts of expenditures are going to be taking place. The member who just posed the question voted in favour of it. I just finished explaining to him, at the beginning of my comments, how even his own leader, Pierre Poilievre, was not prepared to commit to having a Conservative budget, had he been the prime minister, within the first 100 days.

It is better to get it right than to try to rush it through so that the Conservatives can be satisfied with the budget.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our colleague from Winnipeg North says that it is more important to first get things right and that it would be better to wait before coming up with a budget. I fail to understand how he can say that.

I respect him enough not to believe for one second that he would hand his money over to people who would announce all sorts of spending but promise to tell him how they would finance it only in the fall. No one would do that. My colleague from Winnipeg North is smart enough to agree with me.

On what basis is he able to tell us that it is fine to spend money now, that the government will try to figure out how to pay for it over the summer and that they will let us know what they came up with next year?

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there is an issue of priorities, and the Prime Minister has been very clear on those priorities.

The tax break, for example, will take effect on July 1. However, we have to pass that legislation. We look to the Bloc and other members to get the support to pass that legislation. We have other priority legislation. The government, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister continue to work on developing a detailed budget that will be presented in the fall. As I indicated, Brian Mulroney took 300 days to present a budget, Stephen Harper took months to present one, and the Conservative leader, Pierre Poilievre, said it would not happen in the first 100 days.

• (1730)

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Winnipeg North was talking about the number six; I am sure he was talking about Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre's record when he was a minister of housing and only six houses were built. In my constituency, even a small builder builds more than six houses a year.

My question is for the hon. member. He talked about the \$4-billion accelerator fund. Is it important that some of the Conservative members were also asking for that money?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as I had indicated, Pierre Poilievre was in fact the minister of housing under Stephen Harper. At the time, housing just was not even on their radar. In fact, while he was minister of housing, it has been reported that he actually built six houses. I have no idea where those six houses are, but I am told that he did actually build six houses, not him personally, but the Harper government did.

Ironically, my colleague and friend pointed out something else. We have the accelerator fund, and we have Liberals, the Bloc and New Democrats getting behind the accelerator fund. Publicly, the Conservatives say it is a bad idea, but privately they have been writing letters, asking for their communities to have access to that fund too.

I will let the people determine to what degree the Conservatives really understand, or have any commitment towards, housing.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite seems to be confused. He does not appear to know the difference between a ways and means motion and a budget.

There are Canadians across this country, young people, who are seeing a very bleak future for themselves. They cannot afford to buy a home in the community in which they are born. Seniors cannot afford to eat the same way they were eating just three years ago. Yet the Liberal government is refusing to present a budget. It wants a blank cheque of some \$500 billion, half a trillion dollars, to spend six months' worth of that money, and to come back sometime in the fall and say, "We have already spent half of this money. Here is a budget now." No Canadian would believe this is serious government.

My question to the member opposite is this: Why does he not stand up to his boss, the Prime Minister, and say, "Present a budget now before the House breaks for the summer"?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I thank the member for voting for the ways and means motion, along with his colleagues, last week. I suspect he knew what he was voting on, because there are a lot of estimates documents and so forth out there, literally hundreds of pages that talk about expenditures. I am sure the member likely read through those documents before he voted, which means, given that he voted for the ways and means, that he is very supportive of what the government is spending money on.

There will be a budget in due course, just like with Stephen Harper, just like with Brian Mulroney, and who knows how long it would have taken Pierre Poilievre, because he did not give any indication. All we knew was that it would not be within the first 100 days.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the start of this debate and since the start of the session, it is as though I have been listening to some pie-in-the-sky promoters of a start-up focused on nation building and on building the one and only Canadian economy.

I would like to know specifically when and how the initiatives to help businesses and workers will be implemented and how the budget will be balanced in three years. The member said that he has a plan, so let us hear it.

● (1735)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I truly believe that the number one priority is Canada's workforce and how we are going to not only maintain our many different industries that are so vitally important to the lifestyles we currently have, but look at ways in which we can expand them.

There are many industries that I like to think Quebec and Manitoba share in common, like our aerospace industries. There is a great deal of concern in terms of what is being said down south. I believe we have a grouping of ministerial cabinet positions who are there virtually on a daily basis working on that file, and I look forward to seeing some positive results. I think all of us should be working to build one Canadian economy that benefits every Canadian.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleague spoke truly about the six affordable homes that Pierre Poilievre built during his entire mandate. However, he did not mention the fact that Pierre Poilievre is against social housing because he says it promotes Soviet-style living. What does the hon. member think about that?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that is true. That is what Pierre Poilievre actually says. I found it amazing, as he talked about the accelerator program, amongst other things, yet we had progressive Conservatives who were looking to the government trying to get access to that program. A certain percentage, a dozen or 18, I am not too sure of the hard number, liked the program to the degree that they were advocating for it within their own constituencies.

We all know Pierre Poilievre is not a friend to non-profit housing. It has been clearly demonstrated, and he has talked about how he sees it with that whole communist type of conspiracy.

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by congratulating you on being selected as the Deputy Speaker for this Parliament. We wish you all the best. It is good grooming for the next session.

I rise today to speak about the Conservative opposition day motion regarding food inflation and the lack of a Liberal budget. As a businessman, I have always seen budgets as opportunities to provide a clear path forward, one that even shows priorities and what

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matters most to a company or organization. A budget builds consensus or direction and keeps us all on the same path. In fact, I have heard it said that a budget is a blueprint for freedom, and I would concur. A budget is like a map. It helps us prepare for the future so we can assess how much is coming in and how much is going out. However, a budget is more than just numbers. It is about making wise choices. A good budget takes care of the needs and saves a little for the wants. Let us break that down a bit here.

The Prime Minister, who went across the country claiming he was “the man with the plan”, is not providing the blueprint for his plan. Here we are, about to spend a half a trillion dollars with no budget. Look at what happened right after the throne speech. We were told that our new government would cap operating spending at 2% annually. Then, not even two hours later, a bill was introduced that boosted overall spending by 8%. That is 8% more than the Trudeau government spent in the last year of office, yet we were told the current government would spend less.

The Prime Minister is spending more not on investments but, oddly, on consultants. I remember reading about a senior policy adviser with the Treasury Board who said that when hiring consultants, it was hard to tell if the contract was successful or not. He added that he knew of numerous cases where consultants were hired to check the work of other consultants. In other words, we paid money to consultants to check the work of consultants. What an incompetent government. Here we are, with spending on consultants up to a record \$26.1 billion. That is more than a 36% increase in one year. To help us better understand how much that means for the average Canadian citizen, it is roughly \$1,400 spent on consultants for every single household in Canada.

As the *National Post* said, the Liberal government is spending more than the previous Justin Trudeau government did, with no plan on ever getting back to a balanced budget.

We need a budget. That is why Parliament voted for the Conservative amendment to the throne speech calling for a budget this spring. That is also why Conservatives are giving the Prime Minister another opportunity to produce a budget. Canadians need to see a plan that outlines how he will pay for all this spending. Members will remember how, throughout the campaign, we heard Mr. Carney promising that he had a plan ready to go, a plan—

● (1740)

The Deputy Speaker: The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member is not allowed to use names.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the member for Provencher that he cannot refer to ministers, cabinet ministers or the Prime Minister by their first or last names.

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Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, members will remember that, during the campaign, the Prime Minister promised that he had a plan ready to go, that “a plan beats no plan”. I ask this: Where is the plan?

By the way, I also want to split my time.

I have read arguments in some media against providing that plan, and none of them are compelling or convincing. What is interesting is that, in my reading, I discovered that the three longest times between budgets were during World War II, during COVID and in 2001. Do members know what I found out? All three of those periods were under Liberal governments.

As I explained at the beginning of my speech, a budget is a plan. It is a direction. It is a path forward that reveals and expresses what is important. As we heard from the National Post's assessment, right now, it appears that there is no intention of ever balancing the budget.

Let us ask that question: Why does rising government debt matter? According to Jay Goldberg in the Winnipeg Sun, “[multiple] studies have shown that an increasing debt-to-GDP ratio puts upward pressure on long-term interest rates, raising borrowing costs for [individuals, families and] governments”, all leading to an increased tax burden for families and the middle class, and creating “barriers to economic growth.”

The truth is that Liberal deficit spending also leads to higher prices at the grocery store. A recent Parliamentary Budget Officer report says the cost of servicing public debt, while currently sitting at \$49.1 billion for 2025-26, will rise to just under \$70 billion in the 2029-30 fiscal year. That means that, just to carry increased debt, we would be paying \$70 billion in interest on our debt alone. Members can imagine what we could be doing with \$70 billion, but it is going to go to paying the interest on today's spending.

We may recall that the Prime Minister said that we would judge him by the price Canadians pay at the grocery store. That being the case, let us look at some of those price increases for just this year to date. Beef is up 34%. Oranges are up 26%. Apples are up 18%. White rice is up 14%. Sweet potatoes are up 12%. Beef rib cuts are up almost 12%. Coffee is up 9%. Infant formula is up 9%. Meatless burgers, although I do not know who would eat those, are up 6%. Chicken breasts are up 6%. Pork rib cuts are up 6%. Pork shoulders are up 5%. Eggs are up 3.6%.

I find it very interesting that our supply management food processors have had the least increase. What is concerning is that the most significant increases are in the meat category, the protein that we all so desperately need, with 4% to 34% increases right across the board. Canadians are going to pay almost \$17,000 on food this year alone, an increase of \$800 from last year, all while two million Canadians visit the food bank each and every month.

How can Canadians afford this? Statistics Canada, in its latest report, looked at the annual income in Canada. The latest information shows that the median household income in our country in 2025 will be \$68,400. If we take 30% off of that in taxes, that leaves us with \$47,000. In other words, over one-third of a family's after-tax income will go to food alone. We heard in the House today that the cost of living in Ontario averages 52% of household income. That

leaves a whopping 13% of a family's income for everything else, including transportation, clothing, entertainment and miscellaneous.

Canadians need more than elbows up. We need to get our elbows down and get to work. The Prime Minister said that he would collect \$20 billion from the United States through tariffs, yet tariffs are, in effect, at zero for products coming from the United States. Only weeks ago, we were assured that there would be no more tariffs supplied to Canada, yet here we are. We are now facing a doubling of tariffs on steel and aluminum. With Canada being the world's fourth largest aluminum producer and top aluminum exporter, this is concerning.

In Canada, we produce approximately 3.3 million tonnes of aluminum every year, and all the projections say that production will increase. Demand is expected to increase by as much as 40% in the next five years. Aluminum mining supports 9,500 direct jobs and 20,000 indirect jobs. When we translate those numbers into the impact on working Canadians, in Canada, we are talking about 30,000-plus jobs that are going to be affected by these tariffs.

● (1745)

A 50% tariff was very alarming as the United States was Canada's largest export destination for a aluminum products, which accounted for 92% of total aluminum exports. From what we see, plans continue all around us. For example, I wonder which countries Canada may be talking to regarding the purchase of our raw materials. How are those conversations going?

When the President of the United States returned from a recent trip to the Middle East, he announced, upon his return, hundreds of billions of dollars in trade. According to the presidential announcements, the EGA plans to build a \$4-billion plant in Oklahoma next year. That smelter will have the capacity to produce as much as 600,000 tonnes a year of primarily aluminum. This will almost double the production of aluminum in the United States. We cannot be led by these promises without seeing the plan forward.

I remember very recently we kept hearing our friends on the other side recite that we needed to take their word for it, as they repeatedly claimed that the carbon tax was not causing inflation. Meanwhile, the Parliamentary Budget Officer explained that the total cumulative effect of the carbon tax, even after the rebates, meant that most families were paying more. All the while, we kept saying, when we tax the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who transports it, the store that sells it and the family who buys it, prices will inevitably go up.

Then, as soon as the Liberal government finally heeded the Conservative plea to remove the carbon tax, Statistics Canada announced that the decrease in inflation was directly related to the removal of the carbon tax. The very next month, inflation went down from 2.3% to 1.7% in one month.

To wrap it up, the Liberals need to take a lesson from our common-sense advice. I invite them to consider the wisdom of our opposition motion. Canadians are depending on a plan that shows them the way forward.

[Translation]

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since my arrival here at the start of the 45th Parliament, I have observed that all the Conservatives do is criticize. I have a question for the Conservatives. They are criticizing how the government is managing inflation, but instead of criticizing, could they finally propose some concrete measures for reducing the cost of living? Instead of criticizing, they should propose solutions. That is my suggestion.

[English]

Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, that must be one of the first questions the member has asked in the House, so I welcome him to the House.

The member talked about criticizing. Our role, as opposition members, is to hold the government to account and to criticize the things that we see as being bad for Canada and bad for Canadians. We have offered concrete solutions. What we are offering today is a concrete solution of presenting a budget so that the House can analyze and scrutinize the government's plans to tell it where we think it needs to change course or improve its plans, or perhaps, as we did with the ways and means motion, give it the nod of approval and say keep going. I doubt it, but that may happen.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing from the government benches is that negotiations are progressing and that there may even be direct negotiations going on between the Prime Minister and President Trump. However, in Canada, there is a total lack of transparency when it comes to trade negotiations. Agreements are negotiated behind closed doors. Parliament does not even get to vote on the substance, only on the implementation.

Although there are elements in the negotiation plans and the draft agreements that fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, delegates appointed by Quebec and the provincial governments are not invited to participate.

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I wonder whether my colleague can share his thoughts about that. Does he have an opinion about the Bloc Québécois's request that the Quebec government be allowed to appoint negotiators to sit at the table with the federal government? Currently, there is a complete lack of transparency in almost everything the government is doing, including on budgetary matters.

• (1750)

[English]

Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, we used to hear in the House that sunshine was the best medicine. We do not hear that anymore, do we? No, what we are hearing now is, "I have a plan. Trust me." There is no plan. The plan should be the budget. If we had a budget, we would know what we were doing.

When it comes to trade negotiations with the United States, we are kept in the dark instead of collaborating. The team Canada approach is what we heard so much about during the campaign. There is no team Canada. There is only "elbows up", now get those elbows down and get back to work.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been 18 months since we had a budget. Just a couple of weeks ago, Parliament voted, with a majority, for the government to present a budget. We have seen, over the last 10 years, a decline in our democracy, which happened long before Donald Trump became President of the United States.

Would the hon. member not agree with me that this constitutes a contempt of Parliament in a way that we have seen a pattern of from the government?

Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. The House was very clear last week. We were unanimous as opposition parties in saying that the government needed to present a budget. The behaviour and the actions of the current government and the current Prime Minister are absolutely a discredit to the House of Commons. They are operating in a way that is contrary to the will of Parliament. Parliament sent a clear message and gave the Prime Minister and the Liberal government an opportunity to work collaboratively with all the opposition party members in the House. They chose not to. They chose to take their own path of poor communication and a poor display of cohesiveness in the House.

The Americans see the way things are going, and I do not think that is going to bode well for the Prime Minister and his negotiations. What he needs to demonstrate is that he, at the very least, respects the will of Parliament and the wishes of opposition parties when they form a majority decision.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on the opposition motion, which calls for the government to table "a fiscally responsible budget before the House adjourns for the summer, that reverses [the] inflationary policies" of the past nine and a half years under the Liberal government.

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Let us be clear about a few things. The government most assuredly is not a new government. There has not been a change of government; it is a continuation of the existing government. There is a new Prime Minister; that is true, but there is not a new government, nor is his presence new. The Prime Minister spent the last five years as an adviser to the last prime minister.

Anyone attending question period can see for themselves that the front bench in the current Parliament is a lot like the front bench in the last Parliament. The new Minister of Transport is the former deputy prime minister and finance minister, as well as the former global affairs minister and trade minister. The new finance minister is the former industry minister, as well as the former global affairs minister and infrastructure minister. The new President of the King's Privy Council was the president of the King's privy council in the last government, and so on along the front benches.

Therefore the government is absolutely the same Liberal government that we have endured for the last nine and a half years. The same crew of ministers and advisers that has provided over nine and a half years of economic and fiscal vandalism is still in charge. In the timeless words of Pete Townshend and sung by Roger Daltrey:

Meet the new boss
Same as the old boss.

The government, with a bunch of the same ministers, came into power in 2015. It inherited a balanced budget and what the New York Times in 2015 called Canada's middle class: the wealthiest middle class in the world. I know that the Liberals would appreciate that as a newspaper of record.

The Liberals were elected on a promise to run modest deficits to fund "unprecedented investments in infrastructure" that would lead to the budget's balancing itself in 2019. None of that happened. The Liberals immediately plunged Canada into structural deficits without building any of the productivity-enhancing infrastructure they had promised, and they presided over a decade of zero per capita economic growth.

Every single year, they piled on more and more debt while claiming to be bound by various fiscal metrics, always moving their own goal posts. Fiscal anchors and guardrails were declared and immediately discarded. Their 2015 election promise to balance the budget was completely forgotten. By early 2020, some \$90 billion had already been added to the national debt before anybody had even heard of COVID-19. In early 2020, the country was on the brink of recession, and the Liberals were about to blow through all their budgetary projections and table a \$60-billion deficit. What followed in the years since was that another \$400 billion was added in deficit spending, the majority of which had nothing to do with pandemic relief.

Here we are today. After nine and a half years of uninterrupted inflationary spending, borrowing and money printing; after nine and a half years of the Liberal government's consistently exceeding every previously announced spending limit; and after nine and a half years of bloat, waste, insider dealing, sweetheart contracting, self-enrichment and smug, sanctimonious self-congratulations, we are in the midst of a full-blown affordability crisis of the government's own making and with no plan to get out.

Right now, millions of Canadians are thinking very seriously about how they are going to feed their family in the upcoming week. For some, that might mean substituting chicken for beef. For others, that may be going without fresh meat and substituting something they can find in the discounted "previously frozen" section. Many families will go without meat, fresh fruit or fresh vegetables, and are wondering how many boxes of mac and cheese it will take to get them through the week or how they are going to put nutritious meals together for their kids' lunches. Many Canadians are increasingly unable to pay for food at all and are turning to food banks, which have seen record use across Canada under the government.

• (1755)

Not helping things at all is a housing crisis, which has also emerged during the government's nine and a half years. Average rent and mortgage costs have more than doubled since the government was elected in 2015. That is why we are debating the motion. We are in a food inflation crisis long in the making. All the elements of the food inflation crisis, which is exacerbated by a housing affordability crisis, were here long before the trade war, but now there is even greater urgency. Last week's food inflation numbers are horrific: The cost of beef sirloin is up 34%, oranges are up 26%, white rice is up 14%, infant formula is up 9%, and the list goes on. Canadian families will spend an average of nearly \$17,000 on groceries this year.

We know that taxes, government spending, deficits and printing money all contribute to inflation; the government has admitted as much. We also know that the government once again claimed suddenly, during the most recent election, that it will do something to rein in its out-of-control spending, and we know that many Canadians appear to have believed the Prime Minister when he claimed to be different from the last prime minister and the other ministers who surrounded him in the last Parliament and said he was going to control spending.

The Prime Minister brandished his resume and boasted about his experience as a crisis manager, so where is the plan to deal with the crisis and bring down inflation, reduce food prices, increase housing supply and increase the productivity of the Canadian economy so Canadians who work hard can regain their place as the world's wealthiest middle class? It is nowhere; there is no plan to be found, because the Prime Minister refuses to table one.

The Prime Minister tabled an estimates bill, which appears to double down on all the failed policies and strategies of the past nine and a half years, but the government will not table a budget. In the absence of a budget, all we can do is judge the government by the estimates it has tabled, and the judgment is a terrible indictment of the new Prime Minister and the tired old government.

The estimates show that the government is on track to be even worse than before. The estimates show an overall spending increase of 8% at a time when the Liberals promised to restore fiscal discipline. It is an 8% increase in spending without concrete solutions for any of Canada's major problems. It is not fiscal discipline; it is just bloat. The massive 34% increase in the use of third party consultants is proof of both a refusal to deal with out-of-control spending and a clearly broken campaign promise.

I know there are some people in the press gallery or elsewhere who will say and have said that, no, the estimates are not comparable to last year, we cannot compare the main estimates from last year to this year, we have to wait until the supplementary estimates are tabled later in the year, and these are just the mains and not the government's full spending plan for the year. They ask whether we know the difference between the estimates and a budget. To those people, I say, yes, we do know the difference. The estimates are the money that the government will actually be authorized to spend. They are not a budget. That is exactly the point: There is no budget.

The Liberals campaigned on the Prime Minister's being a safe pair of hands in a crisis and the "man with the plan", and on just enough change that we might forget about how incompetent and unserious the previous government was for nine and a half years. Now it turns out that there is no plan at all, just a bunch of new spending that will have to be funded by taxes and borrowing, paid for by people who are literally struggling to put food on the table.

Parliament was adjourned, prorogued and then dissolved, since mid-December, so for nearly six months, Parliament sat idle. The last sort of mini budget was delivered by nobody. There was literally no name on the fall economic statement. No minister was attached to it during Justin Trudeau's last-ditch attempt to remain in power.

Six months later, Canadians are entitled to a detailed plan and at least some degree of honesty and transparency about how the government will tax, spend and borrow; how much the deficit will be; and whether there is any plan, even another phony plan, to eventually balance the budget. This is the absolute minimum owed by the government to Canadians. It was demanded by the people represented in the House last week, so let me add my voice to those calling on the government to table a budget before the summer. Canadians will not get fooled again.

• (1800)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I agree on one thing: that Canadians want a detailed plan. Canadians want us to really take our time to come up with a budget that is thoughtful and that responds to exactly what they sent us to the House to do, which was to make sure we can deliver on things like affordability. We have the plans to do that, and that is why we came back into government.

Can the member opposite confirm that he is going to support some of the bills that Canadians sent us to do in the House, like Bill C-5, which would remove the borders to make sure that we have one Canadian economy that works for all provinces?

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, this is so typical of what we saw throughout the entire last Parliament. A government that prorogued the House, dissolved Parliament and forced Parliament to sit idle

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for six months now demands to know whether we can we drop everything and just rubber-stamp its legislation. The member seems to suggest that the Liberals can ignore Parliament for months at a time, and that then somehow it is the opposition's fault if their agenda is not immediately adopted. Where was the government from December 2024 on, when a budget could have been tabled and Canada's urgent problems could have been addressed?

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a comment, which my colleague can share his thoughts on afterward.

Does my colleague not find it contradictory, or at the very least curious, that our banker Prime Minister called in King Charles to distinguish himself from the U.S. but that the first thing he did was sign a Trump-style order, implying that he did not need the House for it to be implemented?

At the same time, the House adopted a motion telling him that we want a budget or, at the very least, a serious economic statement. Is this Prime Minister not just another monarch, flouting parliamentary democracy?

• (1805)

[English]

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the member raises a great point. It was a disturbing and chilling bit of political theatre when we watched the Prime Minister sit down as if we were in a presidential system, and sign some paper. I do not even know what was on that piece of paper, but he felt that he had the power to usurp what is normally the prerogative of the House. Maybe it was just his ignorance of parliamentary process and our system, and his comms people thought it would look funny. I do not know, but it was not good.

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you are doing a great job up there in the new role, recognizing all the names. There were so many changes in the last election, such as my riding's name change. I really appreciate the knowledge.

I would like to ask my colleague whether he has ever experienced any level of government or large organization, be it nonprofit or for-profit, that has ever gone this length of time without presenting a budget that could be evaluated by anybody who might be opposed.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, no, I have not.

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John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to not having a budget, there have been rumours that the Liberals may separate operational and capital budgets so that we do not get a full reading of the state of finances in this country as they relate to revenue, debt and deficit. Does the member think that is a possibility with the government?

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the government has certainly signalled that it would like to do that, which is using accounting trickery to deceive Canadians about the true nature of the deficit. This has been tried at the provincial level. It does not work. It is a mistake if the government wants to go that route.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Ponoka—Didsbury.

I will warn the member now that he will have to be interrupted at 6.15 p.m.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping to split my time with the member for Barrie South—Innisfil, but you just told me that it is probably not going to happen. I am not going to get into some procedural wrangling with you about the close of the day.

I want to thank my colleagues in the Conservative caucus for using this opposition day to highlight a very serious matter about just how incompetent this start is for the new Prime Minister and the so-called new Liberal government.

However, because this is my first time on my feet in a speech scenario in this Parliament, I want to first of all express thanks and appreciation to everybody back home. As members may know, there was a redistribution in the last election. Ponoka—Didsbury is a new political entity. It did not exist in the previous three sessions. I was proudly the member of Parliament for the folks of Red Deer—Lacombe. I just want to say, to anybody back in Red Deer who is watching today, that I thank them so much for those three elections where they sent me to Ottawa to work on their behalf. I certainly enjoyed getting to know so many of them and working so hard on their behalf. I appreciate the good wishes and sentiments that many of them have sent to me in my new role.

Of course, there are the four bands at Maskwacis, whom I have actually represented since 2006 when the riding used to be called Wetaskiwin. I will certainly miss the conversations I have had up there with them. I am sure I will always be available if anybody there wants to have a chat with me. I am happy to continue to advocate for all people of Alberta, not just the people I represent or once represented. However, I want to thank them for the kindness they have shown me, the patience they have shown me and the goodwill they have extended to me for almost 20 years as the member of Parliament who represented that particular area.

When we lose about 50,000 people through redistribution, we have to gain another 40,000 or so back. With the good people in Mountain View County and in Red Deer County, we are just getting to know each other a bit through this election. To the people in Innisfil, Bowden, Olds, Didsbury and Benalto, I am very much looking forward to working very hard on their behalf and getting to know them all well. I am going to have to buy an economical vehicle. The riding has gone back up to a whopping 35,000-plus square kilometres, but they sent me here with a great endorsement. I want

them to know, the over 56,000 of them who put an X beside my name, that it is not lost on me. The only promise I ever make during a campaign is that I will do my best on people's behalf, and they have that commitment from me.

I also want to thank all of the volunteers who came out and helped on the campaign. There are too many to name them all, but I just want to thank particularly Angie, Alyn, and Al; they were great. Larry, Ross, Abigail and Onsy were invaluable to me, and numerous other people came out and knocked on doors, put up signs and helped with the campaign. I thank them so much.

Last, to my family, this is my seventh term in the House of Commons, and I would not have been able to do any of the things that I am able to do here on behalf of the good people of central Alberta over the last seven elections and 19-plus years, if I did not have the support and blessing of my family: my wife, Barbara; my children; my parents, Gord and Bev; my brother Tim; my sister Wendy; and everybody who has supported me. When we run for office, we can give as much time to this endeavour as we want. It is hard to maintain friendships and family relationships sometimes, but they have stuck with me. For that, I am eternally grateful.

Here we are, talking about the opposition day motion. Quite succinctly, to those who are watching back home, what are we talking about today? The House actually just voted very recently, last week, asking that the government reverse course on its decision to blow off the Canadian people and not table or present a fiscal budget this spring.

Mr. Speaker, I have been here for a long time, almost as long as you. We have had offices and have been acquaintances for quite some time. I do not remember ever not having a budget in the spring. Everybody else has a budget. The provinces and territories have budgets. Our cities, towns and counties have budgets. The Lions Club has a budget, for heaven's sake, but not the Government of Canada. For some reason, we cannot seem to get that done.

● (1810)

The man with the plan is seemingly turning out to be a man with a scam in mind, if people ask me. What could possibly be the reason the government would not table a budget? Is it because it is in a minority? That does not make any sense, because, like I said, the Speaker and I have been here for the last seven Parliaments. The Speaker might have actually come in 2004, in which case I have been here for seven Parliaments and the Speaker has been here for eight. Only two of those Parliaments were majority Parliaments. The other five, in my case, and six, in the Speaker's, have been minorities, yet every minority government up until this point in time has had no trouble tabling a budget.

As a matter of fact, in 2005 the Speaker was here when Paul Martin, the prime minister at the time, and Jack Layton were able to draft up a budget on the back of a napkin. It was not a problem at all. Does everybody remember the napkin budget? They were able to do that in a minority Parliament and bring forward these ideas in a budget in 2005 to Canadians. For some reason, the current government does not seem to be able to do that, so it obviously has something else in mind.

Is it because the government does not have any experience? Is this Parliament so new that the government does not have any experience? That cannot be the case, because the current finance minister was a member of cabinet the entire time the Justin Trudeau government was in office. He is a very experienced parliamentarian.

As a matter of fact, the previous finance minister is only a couple of desks down. Anybody could ask the previous finance minister, who, if people remember, so ceremoniously presented the fall economic statement last year. We would think that just the Liberal budgets would cause chaos, but no, we actually had a situation in Parliament where I think the government was in contempt of Parliament for not tabling the fall economic statement, if I remember correctly. That was the debate at the time.

The government had asked for the House resources for that entire day, so proud of its fall economic statement, and then of course we remember how that turned out. As a matter of fact, it is actually such that, I think, if I have the stats correct, 80% of the spending in the current ways and means motion is under the care and control of people who have been in cabinet before, so it cannot be a lack of experience.

Is it because the government has a scam? I think it is. I think it is going to cook the books on operational versus capital. We are going to see this in the fall.

• (1815)

The Speaker: It being 6:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

The Speaker: If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Tuesday, June 10, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6:30 p.m., so we could begin committee of the whole.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

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Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 27, the House will now resolve itself into a committee of the whole to study all votes in the main estimates and the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026.

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

• (1820)

[English]

MAIN ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2025-26

(Consideration in committee of the whole of all votes in the main estimates and supplementary estimates (A), Francis Scarpaleggia in the chair)

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 27, the committee of the whole convenes today for the sole purpose of asking questions to the government in regard to the estimates. The first round will begin with the official opposition, followed by the government and the Bloc Québécois. After that, we will follow the usual proportional rotation.

[Translation]

Each member recognized by the Chair will be allocated 15 minutes, which may be used both for debate and for posing questions. Should members wish to use this time to make a speech, it can last a maximum of 10 minutes, leaving at least five minutes for questions to the minister or the parliamentary secretary acting on behalf of the minister. When members are recognized, they shall indicate to the Chair how the 15-minute period will be used, in other words, what portion will be used for speeches and what portion for questions and answers. Members who wish to share their time with one or more other members shall indicate it to the Chair.

When the time is to be used for questions, the minister's or parliamentary secretary's response should reflect approximately the time taken to ask the question, since this time will count toward the time allotted to the member.

[English]

The period of time for the consideration of the estimates in committee of the whole this evening shall not exceed four hours. I also wish to indicate that, in committee of the whole, comments should be addressed through the Chair. I ask for everyone's co-operation in upholding all established standards of decorum, parliamentary language and behaviour.

In addition, pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 27, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

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[Translation]

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

[English]

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before we get started, I want to notify the Chair that I will be dividing my block up three ways.

Roughly 97% of Canadian oil gets to the U.S.A. by pipeline. Does the environment minister agree that Canada should build new pipelines to get Canadian oil to non-U.S.A. markets?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear as a government. Canadians want to see us build things. They want to see us build properly, taking into account the environment and making sure that we are consulting with indigenous peoples.

It is not for me, as the Minister of Environment, to choose which projects are there. That is something that is happening through conversations between the provinces and territories, and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, national consensus will be required from all provinces for pipelines to be built in Canada. Will consensus be required by all federal ministers as well?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, we have tabled the building Canada act. In that act, there is a process that is set out very clearly as to how decisions will be made. This is a moment to build on the unity that we saw last week between the Prime Minister and premiers from all across our country.

• (1825)

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, will the Liberal government require consensus from first nations for an environmental certificate to be issued?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, let us be really clear. Making sure that indigenous peoples are part of the process and that they are consulted is fundamental to the way that national interest projects will be chosen.

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, British Columbia has already said no to oil pipelines, and it seems the Liberal government will obey that demand, regardless of the tariff crisis. Is this a veto?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, once again, I will go back to the fact that, last week, we had a moment of incredible unity with the premiers and the Prime Minister together, sitting down and talking about how we build national interest projects. That is what we will be supporting, because that is what Canadians want to see from us.

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, I know the Liberal government does not believe in a first nations veto, but does this apply to the approval of an environmental certificate under the “one project, one review” model or even Bill C-5?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand where the member is going, because if he is trying to say that indigenous people should not be consulted as part of projects, I will say definitively that he is incorrect. Indigenous people must be part of the process and consultation—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government would reduce project approval from five to three years, but the environmental assessment already states that certificate decisions will be decided upon within one year of environmental assessment commencement.

Is there a reason that the one-year approval process laid out in the environmental assessment is being ignored?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what we have put forward in the building Canada act is a process by which national interest projects can be chosen, because we are in an extreme moment, facing the threat from the United States to our sovereignty and to our economy. We are meeting that moment through this act, and we will keep working to build.

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, decarbonization will be a requirement for oil exports in non-U.S.A. markets.

Will this decarbonization requirement be applied to oil exports going to the United States?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as a country, we have committed to getting to net zero by 2050. In fact, the provinces are all in that direction as well. This is something that we need to do to remain competitive as a country, as we are facing countries that are looking for clean technologies. Absolutely, I will not shy away from saying that we need—

The Speaker: We will now move on to the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does the minister still support the unconstitutional ban on single-use plastics?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are certain single-use plastics that have been listed in a regulation, and that is something that we absolutely stand by as we look to the world moving in that direction.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals lose the court appeal, will they abandon their costly war on plastics?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, this gives me a chance to flag that we are in global treaty negotiations around the world, looking to how we move away from plastic waste. That—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, speaking of global treaties, do you support a global maritime carbon tax on everything that we import to this country?

The Speaker: I would remind members to go through the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, again, what I support and what our government supports is making sure that we have a competitive economy that meets the global moment we are in.

• (1830)

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I agree that it is a great moment to reach, but according to Deloitte, the plastics ban the government is proposing would raise produce prices by 34% and increase food waste by 50%.

Given the rising food bank use and the cost of groceries right now, is that a good idea?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, the affordability crisis is in this moment that we have actually been working towards.

I have a question for the member opposite. Does he support a national school food program?

Branden Leslie: Minister, in your—

The Speaker: Through the Chair, please.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, in the minister's view, which is more environmentally friendly: moving oil by rail or by pipeline?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, my opinion on that is this: As we are moving towards a net-zero economy, we must always work to make sure that we are working towards national interest projects that take into account many different issues—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, it is a very clear question, pipeline or rail?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I will go back to my initial point: It is not my job to choose the project. My job is to make sure that when that decision is made, the environment is taken into account.

Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I will keep it brief. You are more than capable of keeping time. I am here to listen to what the minister has to say, and I think the Chair can keep time. We do not need hon. members screaming “time” when the minister is trying to actually respond to the question.

The Speaker: Keeping the time can be a challenge, but I thank the hon. member for Kings—Hants.

The member for Portage—Lisgar.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, does the minister believe the NDP premier of British Columbia has a veto over pipelines to the Pacific coast, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure why the members opposite are moving away from wanting to celebrate what Canadians wanted to see, which is the unity between premiers and the Prime Minister that we saw last week.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, speaking of moving away, I will go back to the previous question: pipeline or rail? The minister should pick one.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, it is the same question and same answer: It is not my job to pick. My job is to make sure we take into account the environment in every decision we make.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, as the environment minister, is the minister supportive of a new pipeline in Canada in any direction?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, the answer remains the same: My job is to make sure we take into account the environment

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when we are making decisions. My job as the minister of environment is not to choose specific projects.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said there must be consensus for any new pipelines. Can you define consensus for me, minister?

The Speaker: Again, comments must go through the Chair.

The minister of environment.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to see us working together, and I am going to say that this applies to the members across the way. They want to see us meet this moment when we are facing the challenges from President Trump. I hope they are willing to help us.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, are there any individual groups or individuals across this country who hold a veto that could break up that possible consensus?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what consensus are they referring to? They are literally speaking in the way of hypotheticals. I am not sure what they were referring to, so they might be celebrating—

The Speaker: We will go now to the hon. member for Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley.

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it appears the moment has already passed for consensus in the country. We heard it here today from the minister.

I have a separate question for the minister, though. Will the government remove the emissions cap, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, to be clear, what I said was I did not understand the consensus to which they were referring. As far as speaking about our being united, last week, when the premiers and the Prime Minister were leaving that meeting and saying that we were at a moment to build Canada together, yes, there was that agreement.

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, she is saying there is no veto, but we saw the Premier of British Columbia get up clearly and say he would absolutely not support any pipelines. How can she stand up here and say there is national unity when it has been very clear from the Premier of British Columbia that there is no consensus?

• (1835)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, is the member opposite trying to say that they would rather sow division in this moment when we are facing President Trump's threat to our sovereignty and to our economy, or are they willing to join us in building a strong economy together?

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, the division has already been sown within their cabinet. In fact, actually, there are two separate environment ministers around the table. Does she agree with that?

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Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, last time I checked, there is one minister of environment and climate change, and that is me.

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, the previous minister declared there would be no new pipelines, yet he is also saying he is still an environment minister at the cabinet table. How does the minister feel about that?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is for me to speak to any feelings anyone has, particularly the feelings I am hearing from across the way. The most important part is that we work in unity in this moment.

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, the minister says that they are working in unity, but the only unity that we are seeing is that the Liberals do not want to see another export pipeline built in Canada. Is there consensus, or is there not?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I hope that the member opposite will support the build Canada act, which gives us the opportunity to build projects in the national interest. We have a very important moment that we need to face. I do not hear that support. Are the Conservatives supporting it?

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, would the act build a pipeline in Canada, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, will the Conservatives support building projects of national interest, or will they not?

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, would the act build a pipeline, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, there are factors set out in the legislation, which I would be happy to read if the member would like. My question is, will they support the legislation?

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, would it build a pipeline?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, there are national interest projects that our entire country needs to see built. My question is, will the Conservatives be supporting the premiers from across the country?

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, the minister has not said the word “pipeline” once. I ask her one more time, would the bill build a pipeline, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, again, it is not my job to pick which projects will be built. My job is to make sure that the environment is considered as we make those decisions, and the legislation allows for that specifically.

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, the minister still has not said the word “pipeline” here in this House. Why will she not say the word “pipeline”?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I am choosing my words to go with the fact that we have national interest projects that need to be built. It is not for me to choose which ones they are, but I will be making sure we build in the national interest.

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, the minister is going off the facts. She is saying that there is no mention of pipelines in there. It sounds as though the Liberals are not going to get pipelines built. Now, if there is national consensus, if they are able to get it, will cabinet veto it as it was given to them in the Impact Assessment Act?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I find this rich coming from the Conservatives, who were unable to build any projects over their time, because they did not care for the environment and they did not do indigenous consultation.

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, what is the average wage in the oil and gas sector?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, it is not for me to start talking about average salaries or salaries. However, what I will say is that we are going to make sure there are well-paying union jobs right across this country in building a strong Canada.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute honour to be here this evening as the minister of immigration, refugees and citizenship.

I want to take a moment to really thank the constituents of Halifax West for placing their faith in me and electing me a second time as their member.

I am joined this evening by the deputy minister, Dr. Harpreet S. Kochhar. I want to take a moment to thank him and all the staff who have helped me in the very short few weeks that I have had a chance to be a minister in this government and go through the transition.

I have a number of comments to make, and they do relate to the estimates, which is why we are here tonight.

● (1840)

[Translation]

I am pleased to speak about the direct investments our government is making in immigration, refugees and citizenship in Canada through this year's main estimates.

[English]

We are here today so that Canadians know how public funds are being spent and are updated on the work we are doing to ensure a well-managed immigration system. The investments we make today are vital to Canada's growth and to our future economy.

[Translation]

As outlined in the Speech from the Throne, our government is committed to restoring Canadians' confidence in a strong, efficient and responsive immigration system.

[English]

We want our immigration system to be a critical part of driving economic growth across the country. Doing so in a targeted way, we remain committed to a previously announced reduction in overall immigration levels in the next few years. That reduction is reflected in the decreased funding requested in these main estimates. Simultaneously, these estimates reflect a variety of IRCC-delivered programs that set us up as we aim to attract the talented newcomers Canada needs the most, uphold our obligations internationally and provide them with the adequate resources needed to have a shot at success while here.

[Translation]

These main estimates will enable us to meet the urgent housing needs of asylum seekers, provide essential health services to newcomers, and establish a more stable digital platform that will modernize the client experience and better address global challenges.

[English]

To that end, we are investing \$134.8 million in platform modernization and digitization to deliver improved client services through online accounts, new support processes, as well as streamlining, processing and digitizing visa and permit applications. By investing and improving the client experience, we better equip ourselves to attract in-demand newcomers with skills that Canada most likes to have in high-need sectors such as health care and construction.

At the same time, we remain committed to restoring public confidence in our immigration system. Canadians and newcomers expect a sustainable and well-managed system with clear rules that meets our long-term economic needs and operates with integrity and fairness.

[Translation]

A key component is better management of temporary immigration so that the number of new immigrants we welcome is reasonable in relation to our capacity to receive them and ensure their success.

[English]

This government is committed to capping temporary immigration, which includes international students and temporary workers, to under 5% of the national population by 2027. That work has already started. These main estimates also fund integrity measures that will better protect all in Canada. Biometric collection supports us in managing identities and ensuring that anyone looking to remain in Canada is properly vetted. That is why we are investing \$55.5 million in a fully supported biometric collection service. To continue ensuring the safety of Canadians and all those in Canada, we will continue working with the Canada Border Services Agency, as further outlined in the strong borders act, which this government introduced last week.

Immigration remains integral to our country's long-term success. As such, we will continue working with provinces, territories and municipalities to ensure that both national and regional immigration targets and objectives are met. With local labour market demand in mind, dynamic programs such as express entry Canada and the global skills strategy will ensure those with in-demand skills can

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accept job offers and contribute to the Canadian economy more quickly.

Our relationship with Quebec is unique with regard to immigration. Through the Canada-Québec Accord, we will provide \$867.3 million to Quebec to support the settlement and integration of newcomers in the province, a \$92.3-million incremental increase compared to last year. This government recognizes the significant pressure that increased volumes of asylum claimants have placed on provinces, territories, municipalities and community partners, which is why we put forward significant investments via the interim housing assistance program. The renewed housing program model invests in more dependable and cost-effective solutions that help build long-term capacity nationally.

● (1845)

[Translation]

We have also proposed investments for the provinces and territories that are resettling vulnerable and protected persons through the interim federal health program. By ensuring that these clients have access to the basic health services guaranteed to Canadians, we are helping make the integration process smoother for them, as well as for the provinces and territories where they settle.

[English]

We have existing legal pathways to resettlement and to claim asylum, which is why this work goes hand in hand with ongoing efforts to reduce irregular crossings at the border. Canada's asylum system and refugee programs must be protected so they are fully responsive and operational for genuine claimants who need Canada's compassion and support.

Overall, it is important to note that any funding increase in certain programs is offset by a decrease in other programs, such as programs where we have met our commitments or whose temporary purpose has been fulfilled. This, coupled with the refocusing of government spending to other initiatives, has helped contribute to the recovery of certain costs.

Let me conclude by saying that immigration is essential for our country's economy and accounts for almost 100% of Canada's labour force growth. Our plan will build on support for the provinces, territories and communities while upholding our international obligations and humanitarian values.

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[Translation]

Because we are reducing our immigration targets and temporarily halting immigration-driven growth, spending will decrease in this program, allowing us to redirect those funds to other initiatives.

[English]

With our new government, we are supporting the integration of newcomers while giving them a fair shot in Canada. Canadians are telling us they want immigration to work for everyone and to ensure immigrants are adequately supported from the moment they arrive in our beautiful country. That is exactly what we are doing. We are listening. We are taking action.

Canada is a great place to call home. We are here to ensure that everyone in Canada has all the tools needed to succeed.

[Translation]

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister of Immigration on an excellent appointment.

Many immigrants and asylum seekers are very worried that they might be sent back to countries where things are unstable or dangerous. How will Bill C-2 protect the basic rights and the security of vulnerable people in such cases?

• (1850)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert for the question.

It is a very good question, a crucial question. My answer is that we are taking important steps to strengthen the integrity of our immigration system while honouring our humanitarian commitments. That is why we introduced changes to ensure that our immigration system can handle such challenges now and in the future. Our system will be more efficient and will be able to process the existing backlog faster.

Although people will not be able to seek asylum, they will be able to apply for a pre-removal risk assessment. That is a very important part of our system because these procedures ensure that people are not removed to a country where they could be persecuted, tortured or otherwise harmed.

[English]

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by again offering my congratulations to the hon. minister. We are very proud of her in Nova Scotia, and the Nova Scotia members of Parliament who sit in the Nova Scotia caucus.

I know we have not shared our time, but I wonder if she could provide a bit of reflection on her Lebanese heritage, her story and what it means to be the Minister of Immigration.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary is a member from my home province of Nova Scotia. He has been an absolute delight to work with since I was elected federally, but even prior to that when I was a member of the Nova Scotia Legislature. He reminds me often of how young he is, but there is no age in this place. We all come from such different backgrounds.

The member is quite right that I am of Lebanese origin, and I really do take pride in that. I feel the responsibility on my shoulders of being the new Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship in this beautiful country of Canada, which so many over generations now call home. This country is home, and many people have built their lives here, including my family. My father came here when he was in his twenties, a long time ago.

I was elected for the first time in 2021, and before becoming a minister, I had the privilege of putting forward a private member's bill to enact Lebanese Heritage Month in the month of November. I encourage all members to go back to their communities in November and celebrate the rich history of Lebanese people and of all people who come here from everywhere around the globe to call Canada home.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will use my time to question the minister. I congratulate her on her appointment. It will be a pleasure to have meaningful discussions with her.

My first question is on the oil and gas sector greenhouse gas emissions cap regulations that the government announced in 2021. When exactly will the government and the minister be able to implement these oil and gas emissions cap regulations?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that the member and I could work well together on the environment.

Capping greenhouse gas emissions is very important. In Canada, 30% of our emissions come from the oil and gas sector. It is very important that all sectors, all industries in our country work to help us cap and even reduce our emissions.

We are continuing our work by using all the tools we have so that—

• (1855)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, we recently learned in the Toronto Star that the Prime Minister might abandon a cap on emissions for the oil and gas sector, among other things, in exchange for the Pathways Alliance carbon capture project.

I would like to know if the minister could provide more information about that possibility.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is important. The government announced a cap on greenhouse gas emissions for the oil and gas sector last December. It held consultations, as it always does for this kind of regulation. It is one of the tools that we have in our tool box.

We remain committed to achieving net zero by 2050.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my first question to be very clear: Can the minister tell us when the draft regulations for the oil and gas emissions cap will be tabled?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I said, in December the government proposed regulations to cap greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas sector.

It then held consultations and conversations with the industry and Canadians. It continues to do that work. So—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I would almost like to call a point of order to get slightly more concise answers from the minister, if possible.

I am well aware that the draft regulations were tabled last December.

When will the consultations end and when will the government table its final, official draft regulations for adoption?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, after we complete the consultations, we will have to study what we have heard and then determine what we need to do, using all the tools that we have, to get us to net zero by 2050.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has become the new champion of pipelines in this country. He told the House, in English, that he was going to build pipelines.

What does the Minister of Environment and Climate Change think of the idea of a pipeline that would cross Canada from coast to coast?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, choosing projects is not part of what I do, but I always have to make sure that we consider the environment. That is my job as Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and I am committed to doing that.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, does the minister see a contradiction between Canada's emissions cap for the oil and gas sector and the idea of building new pipelines?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, once again, it is not up to me to decide what projects will go ahead for our country and to build Canada. That is something we will do together, as a country. My role is to always think about how we can achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, before assuming that role, the former environment minister once said that a pipeline like energy east was incompatible with the Paris Agreement.

Does the minister agree with the comments made by the current Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I will give the same answer to the same question. My job is to ensure that Canada achieves net-zero emissions by 2050 and that we always consider the environment when completing projects. That is what I am doing, and I am committed to doing so every day.

• (1900)

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, the minister is talking a lot about protecting the environment while developing the economy, but I

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would like her to explain to me how a pipeline can protect the environment.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, once again, what we have right now is a bill introduced in the House that we can debate and vote on. It is about determining how we are going to come together as a country and choose projects of national interest. When a decision like that has to be made, one of the factors to consider is how those projects will contribute to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my question.

How does the minister think a pipeline can protect the environment?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, it is not about choosing one project or another, and it is not up to me to do that. For all decisions to be made in the context of this bill to build Canada, the government will have to determine whether projects will help us meet our climate change objectives.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the idea of consensus on projects of national interest.

Does the minister believe that there can be consensus if a province opposes a project?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, last week, we witnessed a truly momentous occasion, something that Canadians want to see: the premiers of all the provinces and territories sat down with the Prime Minister of Canada to see how they can work together.

We must be united. We need to work together. That is something we are committed to every day.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I would like the minister to clarify whether she means to suggest that Quebecers would agree to having a project to build a pipeline across Quebec imposed on them.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I have already mentioned, there was a meeting with all the provincial premiers last week. I had the opportunity to speak with Quebec's environment minister, as I do with the environment ministers of every province, to really find out what they think. What Canadians want to see is a united Canada, given—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, if the Quebec government rejects a pipeline project, will the government commit to abandoning any other projects that might be imposed on Quebec?

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Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I think that Canadians want us to work together. When it comes to national interest projects, Canadians want us to work together, not sow division. That is what our government will continue to do.

As for the legislation related to such projects, I hope that the member—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that the government's bill on national interest projects does not give the provinces a veto over projects that could be imposed on them, such as pipelines?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, with regard to national interest projects, I would ask the member opposite to direct his questions to the Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs.

What I can say is that our government is committed to working as one with all the provinces and territories—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised that the minister is referring questions to the Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, because this bill affects several environmental laws and would weaken environmental protections and even the fight against climate change.

That said, can the minister confirm that the current bill does not include conditions requiring any national interest projects to respect our climate commitments and the country's clean growth targets?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, there are several factors in this bill, and I think it is important to take a look at them. While several factors relate to other areas, if we focus solely on the environmental aspect, it is clear that projects must "contribute to clean growth and to meeting Canada's objectives with respect to climate change". That is in the bill.

● (1905)

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to these factors. Is the minister saying that these factors will have to be respected?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that certain factors in the bill must be taken into consideration, for example, consultations with indigenous groups and environmental issues.

Personally speaking, I am wondering whether the member opposite will lend his support—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us whether the government will be required to respect the factors listed in the bill on so-called national interest projects or not?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what we as a government respect are the two things that Canadians asked us to do. Canadians want us to build a strong Canada with a strong economy while protecting the environment. This is not just about working together; it is also about getting it right.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, for the record, the member is refusing to tell me whether the government is required to respect those factors. From what I understand, and I am not alone in this, it is not.

The Prime Minister used the term "decarbonized" oil. Can the minister explain what that is?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, of all the actions we are taking, people need to pay attention to how we are capping emissions across all industrial sectors. That is very important if we want to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, once again, I am very disappointed that I am not getting answers to my questions.

Does the minister believe that decarbonized oil is a thing?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about is how we can become an energy superpower. It will take access to low-cost, lower-risk energy that is either zero- or low-carbon.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, the government talks a lot about consultations in connection with its bill on so-called national projects.

Would first nations simply be consulted, or would the government ensure that their free, prior and informed consent is obtained for any project that may potentially be imposed on them?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, it is important that indigenous peoples participate in all we do to build a united Canada and a strong economy for our country. We certainly do need to consult indigenous peoples while protecting the environment.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I would like the minister to explain the difference between consulting first nations and obtaining free, prior and informed consent.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I talked about the factors we need to think about when making decisions about national interest projects and the bill. I hope the member will support it. This includes taking the interests of indigenous peoples into account. That is where—

The Speaker: I thank the hon. minister. The time for questions has expired.

I now invite the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to deliver her speech.

[English]

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, fellow colleagues, I am happy to appear before you this evening as Minister of Environment and Climate Change to discuss the 2025-26 main estimates for Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and the Canada Water Agency.

• (1910)

[Translation]

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people, the first stewards of the lands, waters and air we share today.

It is a tremendous honour, both personally and professionally, to take on the role of Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Environmental protection has always been a passion for me. It was in this spirit that I served as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. I held both positions for four years. I sincerely thank the Prime Minister for the trust he has placed in me.

[English]

I was delighted to hear, in the Speech from the Throne, our promise to Canadians to build the strongest economy in the G7 and defend our sovereignty. It also reaffirmed Canada's promise to achieve net-zero emissions. All of these commitments are relevant because, as we stand here today, our world is shifting. Our sovereignty has been threatened. Our environment is being threatened. Canadians elected us to address both of these threats by creating one Canadian economy that is the strongest in the G7, while also fighting climate change and protecting Canadians from its impacts.

The 2025-26 main estimates that we will be discussing today play an important role in steering Canada in the right direction.

[Translation]

The funding will allow Environment and Climate Change Canada to continue providing national leadership while collaborating closely with the Canadian public and indigenous peoples. It will help us fight climate change, protect nature, preserve the health and safety of the environment and the Canadian people, and promote clean growth.

The department will pursue these objectives in several ways. As the official source for weather information and weather warnings in Canada, we will continue to provide timely and accurate weather information, including severe weather alerts, to help Canadians make informed decisions to protect their health and safety. We will also continue to provide national leadership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and short-lived climate pollutants in Canada, because we all know that climate change is real.

[English]

Under the previous Conservative government, Canada was on track to increase its emissions above 2005 levels by 9% by 2030. We have reversed that trajectory. We are now at our lowest emissions level outside of the pandemic in more than 25 years. As we diversify our trading relationships in light of the unjust American tariffs, our work to reduce emissions is more relevant now than ever. Maintaining strong industrial carbon pricing is a precondition for Canadian businesses to be able to access some of the world's largest economies. As a result, Pierre Poilievre's opposition to those policies would only weaken our ability to diversify our trading relationships. My hope is that, instead, the Conservatives will work with us to fight climate change and protect our environment.

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Countries around the world are looking to Canada to make sure that the energy we provide is low-risk, low-cost and low-carbon. That is the key to ensuring that Canada becomes the energy superpower that we have the potential to be.

There is no question that meaningfully addressing Canada's carbon emissions requires action by large emitters. The output-based pricing system, otherwise known as industrial carbon pricing, is funding innovative, job-creating Canadian technology projects that would leverage cleaner technologies and fuels, the clean electricity initiatives and a decarbonization of Canada's industrial sectors.

A terrific example of this is the \$25 million that Redpath Sugar Ltd. received to install new equipment and technology. This is a sweet story, so I ask members to please listen. This project will make the sugar-refining process more efficient and reduce thermal energy consumption while helping drive down carbon pollution.

We know there is no question that Canada's climate has changed and will continue to change. Because of that, we will carry on preparing properly and adapting to climate change to make Canadians and their communities safer, healthier and more resilient. We will continue to take strong action to help Canadians prepare for flood, wildfire, drought, coastline erosion and other extreme weather events worsened by climate change. We will also remain focused on preventing pollution in ecosystems, water and air.

There is also nature conservation. I have worked with communities to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity, including species at risk. The department will continue to build on its progress, conserving and protecting Canada's wildlife and habitat, recovering species at risk and, moreover, ensuring that indigenous leadership and perspectives remain foundational to meeting our goals for Canadians and the environment.

• (1915)

[Translation]

The time has come to look at the main estimates for 2025-26. The department's reference levels in this budget are just over \$3.127 billion. That is an increase of \$366.3 million, or 13.3%, over the main estimates for 2024-25.

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This difference stems mainly from \$300 million in new funding for a grant to the Northwest Territories project finance for permanence, statutory expenditures for the distribution of revenues from fuel charge payments to indigenous communities and the distribution of revenues from the output-based pricing system. This increase is partly offset by the transfer of resources to the new Canada Water Agency. Some funding was deferred as some programs reached their anticipated end date.

[English]

Let us turn to the grants and contributions in the 2025-26 main estimates. I want to highlight the most important part now, which is that it includes grants, such as a \$300-million grant to the our land for the future trust in the Northwest Territories, which will add almost 2% of Canada's land to protected land. This is an important project. There are also voted contributions to support the Canada nature fund and contributions for conserving nature.

I am not going to go through all of them. Members can look at the 2025-26 main estimates to learn more, but I will add that there is also funding for the Impact Assessment Agency and the Canada Water Agency, which are both doing important work to support our country and our community.

We will keep on working together right across our country to build a strong Canada.

• (1920)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will make one observation, then point out what I think is a very important contrast and then end with a question.

It was interesting watching as we got under way with the estimate process here. The Conservatives were trying to bait the minister to talk about the whole issue of pipelines. I could not help but reflect on the total and absolute failure of the Conservative government under Stephen Harper to even build an inch of pipeline to tidewater. They try to come across as not caring about the environment and just wanting to see pipelines being built, even though they failed so miserably themselves, and there is a good reason for that.

Sustainable development means working with the environment in the development of our economy, and that is where I think there is a big difference between Liberals and Conservatives. We are not prepared to abandon the environment.

My question is more related to the one Canadian economy act, as the minister made reference to it. She has been sitting at the cabinet table being a very strong advocate, and we have a Prime Minister who realizes the benefit of bringing forward this legislation and hopefully getting it passed.

The minister made reference to the premiers' conference. It was a week ago today when we had the first ministers in Saskatchewan, and I believe they achieved good consensus on a wide variety of issues. At the end of the day, it was very successful, and afterwards, I think all Canadians saw that it had been a success when the premiers went out to meet with members of the press and so forth. There was a good feeling that we need to build Canada together, one Canadian economy and nation-building projects.

I am wondering if the minister could expand upon that aspect, and if there is anything else she wanted to comment on, because I realize she was running out of time at the end of her remarks.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I would really like to thank the member for asking that very thoughtful question, which goes to the heart of what we are trying to do right now in Parliament. It is why I am really reaching out to the members opposite to see if they can help us with this project.

We are just coming out of an election where Canadians were very clear about what they wanted to see and what their concerns are. Let us be clear. Our country is facing unprecedented threats to our sovereignty and our economy from President Trump in the United States with the unjustified tariffs against our industries.

What I heard at the door, and I am sure members in all of the seats in this honoured place heard this, was that Canadians want to see us build a strong, unified country to support our sovereignty and to defend our country. They want to see us build to support this country, show pride in this country and do everything we can for a strong future. That is certainly what I heard at the door and what I continue to hear from Canadians as they reach out.

Canadians want to see exactly what we saw last week, which was the Prime Minister and the premiers sitting down at a table together to see how they could get things done. We are not going to play partisan politics, and we are not going to play to divisions, because we recognize the moment we are in. The moment we are in is that we must build a strong economy. We must build to protect our sovereignty.

At the same time, we need to do that while making sure that we protect our environment, that we keep moving to net zero by 2050, because the other thing I hear is that people care deeply about the future for the next generations. We have an obligation to the next generations, if we are going to say we have a strong, beautiful Canada, to pass on a strong, beautiful Canada to our children and the next generations.

The question was a very appropriate one to get to what Canadians are asking of us. They are asking us to build and to build properly.

• (1925)

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to share my time with the member for Leduc—Wetaskinwin and the member for Calgary Heritage this evening.

I wonder if the hon. minister would like Canada to be a world leader in oceans protection as Norway and Iceland are.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I absolutely support Canada being a strong country that protects our lands and waters, including our coastal waters.

I would say there may be more the member could hear from the minister and the Secretary of State, who are directly involved in the protection of nature.

Clifford Small: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, my hon. colleague is the Minister of the Environment right now, who is leading the charge on 30 by 30.

What percentage of Norway's and Iceland's oceans does she think is protected right now, because she indicated she would like Canada to be a world leader like Norway and Iceland?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, to be clear, I did not actually say I was supporting following any country's model. I said that I supported protecting our lands and waters, which I do.

We have a Secretary of State for Nature, who is specifically tasked with 30 by 30. She is the one who will be working alongside the government.

Clifford Small: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague what percentage of Canada's oceans are protected right now.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, the percentage is 15.8%. By the way, we have it much higher than they did.

Clifford Small: Mr. Speaker, how many square kilometres does that equate to?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to provide a numerical breakdown of the protections of our oceans.

There is a Secretary of State who is specifically tasked with a nature file. I would be happy to consult—

Clifford Small: Mr. Speaker, on a point or order, I think she has had enough time. She is running the clock.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Central Newfoundland may go ahead, please.

Clifford Small: Mr. Speaker, how many years has the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity been in effect?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Identity is in charge of the file with respect to biodiversity. He was actually at the UN negotiations in Montreal on biodiversity and would be happy to fill in the member and provide all those—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Central Newfoundland.

Clifford Small: Mr. Speaker, again, I would ask the Minister of Environment, how long has it been since the UN Convention on Biological Diversity came into effect? I think she should know that, as the Minister of Environment. It is very important.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the Minister of Canadian Identity has biodiversity as his file and has played a central role in the negotiations at the UN with respect to biodiversity. I am happy to provide that information to the member opposite at a later date.

Clifford Small: Mr. Speaker, it has been 33 years, as of June 6, since that convention came into effect, and that is where the 30 by 30 was spawned from, as we say when we are talking about fish in

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the sea. We have protected 15% of our oceans in the last 33 years under that convention. How does the minister expect to protect another 15% in just four and a half years?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, if the member has great ideas that he would like to share, I would welcome them. However, again, I will point out that the Minister of Canadian Identity is the one responsible, along with the Secretary of State for Nature, for biodiversity and land and water protections.

Clifford Small: Mr. Speaker, has the minister's department done a cost-benefit analysis on the 30 by 30? What will be the cost to industries that depend on our oceans, and what will be the benefit to coastal communities if 30% of our oceans are marine parks?

● (1930)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, Canadians love our proud heritage and proud nature coast to coast to coast. However, I will point out once again that there is a Minister of Canadian Identity and a Secretary of State for Nature who are responsible for those files. I am sure they will be happy to answer those questions.

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently, a commentator in Alberta had this to say: "If you look out east, I'll take Quebec. They import about 365,000 barrels a day of oil. All of it is coming from abroad. Seventy per cent of that is coming from the U.S., so we have an opportunity to displace there." He went on to say, "we should be using it all the time ourselves because we are going to use what I call conventional oil and gas for the rest of my life and beyond."

I am wondering if the minister agrees with these statements.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while I thank the member for providing a précis of that commentary, the truth is, as I have said before, that the most important thing is how we work to build Canada as an energy superpower that is low-cost, low-risk and low-carbon. That is a task that Canadians have given us to do, and that is what we will work on.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, the quote was, "we should be using it all the time ourselves because we are going to use what I call conventional oil and gas for the rest of my life and beyond."

Does the minister agree with those statements?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, we will need energy to be able to support our country, and we are planning for us to be an energy superpower. There are many forms of energy that our country can support, including using nuclear, hydroelectric, hydrogen—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Leduc—Wetaskiwin.

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Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, one of the minister's cabinet colleagues has strongly expressed a contrary opinion, saying, "Maybe as much as half of oil reserves, proven reserves, need to stay in the ground if we are going to get where we are."

Does the minister agree with her cabinet colleague?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I can say with certainty that the position of this government is that we need to build ourselves as an energy superpower, and to do that, we will be working to make sure it is low-risk, low-cost and low-carbon. We will look at all forms of energy that Canada is lucky to have as its resources.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, when the minister hears such disparate comments, does she realize how hard it is going to be to achieve consensus in this country around pipelines?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, most of the chatter I am hearing is from the Conservatives across the way.

What I saw last week was premiers and the Prime Minister sitting at a table and saying, "Let us work together." The only people who seem to be upset with that are the Conservatives.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that both of the quotes I just read came from her own Prime Minister? They are from the same person.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I will quote the Prime Minister, who said that Canada must be an energy superpower that builds low-risk, low-cost, low-carbon energy.

That is what we will do.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that he would take Quebec, as it imports 365,000 barrels a day, all of it coming from abroad, so we have an opportunity to displace there.

Does the minister suggest we should use pipelines or rail to displace that oil going to Quebec, which her own boss says we need to displace?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I said at the beginning of the evening, it is not my job to pick the project. My job, as Minister of Environment, is to make sure that we take into consideration the environment and how to get to net zero by 2050, which is our country's commitment, as it is in his home province.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, my home province will be listening very closely to the conversation that we are having tonight.

The National Energy Board, in its decision on Energy East, said that the NEB "will consider...upstream and downstream GHG emissions" in determining whether these projects are "in the public interest." This is effectively the government policy right now.

According to the Canada Energy Regulator, the former National Energy Board, in 2023, Canada imported 19.5 billion dollars' worth of crude oil. This included 2.5 billion dollars' worth of oil imported into Canada from Nigeria, and 2.1 billion dollars' worth from Saudi Arabia.

Is the \$2.5 billion of oil imported into Canada from Nigeria and the \$2.1 billion from Saudi Arabia subject to the same rigorous reporting on upstream and downstream emissions as oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador?

• (1935)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we need to make sure, as we build ourselves as an energy superpower, that the energy we are producing is low-risk, low-cost, and low-carbon. In fact, that makes us more competitive as a market to people who want to purchase our products. Countries are looking to us to be able to fulfill exactly that type of energy: low-risk, low-cost, low-carbon.

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question based on a quote.

"Energy is power. Energy is Canada's superpower". Does the minister agree?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is going to be an energy superpower in all its forms of energy. We have actually worked on projects with nuclear, with hydro and with hydrogen. We have what it takes to be an energy superpower, and that is what they are going to see us do.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, I have another quote: "We need to reduce our exposure to foreign energy".

Does the minister agree?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what we need to do is to build ourselves a strong economy and to position ourselves as an energy superpower. We can do that, and I am wondering if the member opposite will help us get there.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, I have another quote: "the imperative of making Canada an energy superpower in all respects has never been greater."

Does the minister agree?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, that is interesting because I feel like the member is quoting me. I said that Canada must be an energy superpower that is low-risk, low-cost and low-carbon.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, actually, that was the Prime Minister.

Let me ask another question, based on another quote: "Will I support building a pipeline?" Yes."

Does the minister agree with this position?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I have answered that question before, and I will answer it again. It is not my job, as the Minister of Environment, to choose the projects. We had the premiers and the Prime Minister sit down and talk about what national unity looks like. My job is—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Heritage has the floor.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, that was the Prime Minister in a CTV interview on May 14, 2025.

To the contrary, the minister's predecessor stated in 2019 that, "The atmosphere and our climate certainly don't need [pipelines]." The minister is somebody who has served Parliament for a long time. Does the minister still support that view?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, it is the same question I have been answering all night, and once again, my job as Minister of Environment and Climate Change is to make sure that we protect our environment. It is not to pick and choose the projects.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, these are two very different positions.

Let me ask another question. The minister's predecessor stated, "we can't help Europe with oil." Does the minister still agree with that view today?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what I cannot understand is why the member opposite refuses to consider Canada as an energy superpower, considering all the forms of energy we create. If we want to be a superpower, we need to be ready to step up with all the forms of energy that the world is looking for.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, I care deeply about traditional and transitional energy resource needs. The mix needs to be diverse. I represent a part of the country that provides the world with massive oil and gas potential. Let me ask about another quote: "half of [proven] oil reserves...need to stay in the ground". Does the minister agree with that perspective?

• (1940)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I have said it before, and I will say it again: Canada can and will be an energy superpower, taking into account all the forms of energy that our country can and will produce. We need to make sure that we are low-risk, low-cost and low-carbon when we are doing it.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, how about this quote: "At the core of that investment is the complete overhaul of our energy system."? Does the minister agree we need to completely overhaul our energy system?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I have said previously, we do have an important place right now. Canadians are asking us to step up as a united country, to build a strong economy and to be an energy superpower with energy security, but we need to do it in a way that is low-risk, low-cost and low-carbon.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, these are completely divergent positions held by the minister of environment over the last decade and into today. The quotes I have been referring to are from the Prime Minister himself. The minister says that there is a consensus, but there is clearly no consensus at the cabinet table, so what exactly does consensus look like?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what Canadians are looking for is unity, and the disunity that I am hearing is from that side of the House. That is the side that is sowing division. We saw premiers and the Prime Minister at a table, unified, and that is what Canadians want.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the proud federal representative of the riding of Waterloo to speak on one of the most urgent and defining challenges of our time: the environment and climate change. As members of the Liberal Party, we understand that addressing climate change is not only

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an environmental imperative but a vital economic opportunity for communities like Waterloo and all Canadians.

Waterloo is a dynamic riding, known for its innovation, education and growing industries, yet it faces pressing environmental challenges: urban growth, transportation emissions and the need for sustainable infrastructure. Waterloo, I believe, is the only riding in the country where the mayor of Waterloo, the member of provincial Parliament for Waterloo and my team, as the member of Parliament for Waterloo, are all located in one building. We are all located in Waterloo city hall.

The environment sees no borders and demands a comprehensive response across all levels of government, the private sector, academia and civil society. Our government recognizes the realities of climate change. I would like to highlight some key federal investments that are supporting Waterloo's transition to a greener, more resilient future.

Waterloo is a vibrant hub of innovation, education and industry. We are home to world-renowned institutions, like the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University; cutting-edge research facilities; and brilliant technology companies. In Waterloo, we are home to the Canadian Water Network, a hub for cross-sector collaboration to address Canada's water challenges and opportunities. It works with a wide range of organizations and individuals with diverse perspectives and expertise to solve today's complex water issues.

The Canadian Water Network's partners and collaborators include government decision-makers, water managers, public health practitioners, community-based and indigenous organizations, and representatives from water-dependent economic sectors, among others. It is located in the University of Waterloo, in the riding of Waterloo, in the region of Waterloo.

Waterloo is also home to Canada's first net-zero building, known as evolvl. Usually, office buildings are not energy-efficient, contributing to around one-third of greenhouse gas emissions globally. Originally, researchers found that zero-carbon buildings used more energy than predicted, yet evolvl is a unique, modern, 104,000-square-foot urban space designed for today's millennial tech-savvy workforce.

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It is a three-story office building in Waterloo, Ontario. It was designed by architecture firm Stantec; built by Cora, a development company; and located on the doorstep of our Ion light rail transit. It showcases an array of amenities and creative collision spaces. Evolv1 offers a perfect, light-filled new home for today's growing tech or professional services companies and garners much international attention. It was imagined in partnership with Sustainable Waterloo Region and was certified LEED platinum. This building is a net-positive energy building, meaning it produces more energy than it consumes. It incorporates energy-efficient design features, including high-performance envelopes, solar arrays and geothermal systems.

In Waterloo region alone, there are over 15,000 homes that were built prior to 1940, presenting a huge opportunity to take action. In Waterloo, we are part of the solution, and we turned a century home into a modern net-zero house, known as the Reep House. It has achieved an 86% reduction in energy use and a LEED for homes Canada platinum rating.

At Reep Green Solutions, they believe that, acting today, we can leave our children a community that is more resilient, vibrant, caring and sustainable. Their mission is to empower the community with the practical tools, knowledge and capacity for action to make sustainable living the norm. Constituents within the region of Waterloo can contact Reep, and Reep will help inform them of any tax credits, grants or programs available across all levels of government. Today, the minister referenced several programs that are available to Canadians.

Our community in Waterloo is poised to be a leader in the green economy. The blue box recycling system, a precursor to the modern recycling bin, was first developed and tested in the Waterloo region in 1981. In 1983, it was Kitchener, Ontario, that became the first community in Canada to include curbside recycling with blue bins in its waste management practices.

I often say that as much as the world needs more Canada, Canada needs more Waterloo. We are part of the solution. We are a barn-raising community. We work together with like-minded and not-so-like-minded people, because we know that everyone must be part of the solution.

• (1945)

However, to fully realize this potential, we require targeted investments. The federal government has been there for Waterloo with support that addresses the environmental challenges we face and leverages our local expertise.

First is investment in public transit and sustainable transportation. We know transportation is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. In Waterloo, we have seen significant federal funding directed toward expanding and electrifying public transit infrastructure. The Government of Canada has committed millions through programs like the public transit infrastructure fund, supporting the expansion of the Ion light rail transit system, a vital link, reducing traffic congestion and cutting emissions. This investment not only helps to lower our carbon footprint but also improves accessibility and connectivity for all residents, fostering inclusive and sustainable urban growth. It is an investment in cleaner air, less traffic and stronger communities.

Second is support for clean energy innovation and green jobs. Waterloo's tech ecosystem is a hub for clean energy and environmental innovation. Our government has partnered with local institutions and businesses through initiatives such as Sustainable Development Technology Canada and the innovation superclusters initiative to fund cutting-edge projects in renewable energy, energy storage and smart grid technologies. These investments are creating good, well-paying green jobs right here at home, while positioning Canada as a leader in the global clean economy. This is exactly the kind of forward-thinking approach we need, tackling climate change while building economic prosperity.

Third is enhancing natural climate solutions through conservation and green infrastructure. Federal funding has been allocated to protect and restore vital natural areas in and around Waterloo, including river corridors, wetlands and urban green spaces. These ecosystems act as carbon sinks, improve biodiversity and mitigate flooding risks, which are issues that are becoming more urgent as our climate changes. Programs such as the natural infrastructure fund and the Great Lakes protection initiative have supported local projects and enhanced water quality and habitat resilience, helping safeguard our environment for future generations.

Fourth is climate adaptation and resilience. Waterloo is experiencing the impacts of climate change first-hand, from extreme weather events to shifting seasonal patterns. The government's investments in climate adaptation through infrastructure upgrades and community resilience programs are helping our riding better prepare for and withstand these challenges. Recent funding for flood mitigation projects and stormwater management systems exemplifies a proactive approach that protects both people and property, reducing costs over the long term and ensuring that Waterloo remains a safe and vibrant community.

In closing, we have more work to do. The federal government's targeted investments in Waterloo exemplify our commitment to tackling climate change through practical, local solutions. These initiatives demonstrate that environmental stewardship and economic growth go together. By building cleaner transit, supporting innovation, protecting natural ecosystems and enhancing resilience, we are ensuring that Waterloo and all of Canada can thrive in a sustainable future.

In my opportunity to exchange with the minister today, I would like to emphasize that we must continue to make decisions based on evidence, not ideology. Waterloo deserves and expects that. I am proud of the leadership we are showing as a government and the concrete steps the government is taking.

Our community in Waterloo is home to some of Canada's most innovative research institutions, and local scientists are doing incredible work to fight climate change, protect biodiversity and improve air and water quality. I would like to know if the Minister of Environment and Climate Change can share how the federal government has supported these efforts in Waterloo through recent investments.

• (1950)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would really like to thank the member for Waterloo because I always learn so much about her community. She is a tireless champion for her community. It is really inspiring when we hear about all that is happening in her community, but also how much she listens to her constituents and makes sure they are heard in this place.

I cannot agree with her more that Canada needs more Waterloo. It is a community that leads with collaboration, innovation and bold ideas. The member rightly pointed to the city's track record, from pioneering the blue box system in the 1980s to driving cutting-edge clean technologies today. Our government has been so proud to support that leadership through targeted investments. We have invested in projects that enhance Waterloo's ability to innovate and respond to climate change.

For example, at the University of Waterloo, federal funding supported the project making Canada's Arctic data and observations publicly accessible. That helps advance environmental transparency and data accessibility. Another project led by the university modelled the impact of urban expansion on ecosystem services, which is critical research for cities like Waterloo to grow sustainably, which is something that I think a lot of people in this place care about: how to make sure our cities grow in a way that is sustainable.

Our support has also helped assess climate-related ecosystem vulnerabilities across multiple regions, work that strengthens the entire country's approach to biodiversity and climate adaptation. We backed the tall grass habitat creation and management through Natural Resource Solutions Inc. It is a practical example of federal dollars delivering on-the-ground conservation outcomes. Also, we supported advanced machine learning research at the university to improve land classification from satellite images, leveraging Waterloo's tech expertise for environmental protection.

These are examples of our values in action, investing in smart climate research, in evidence-based solutions and in partnerships with our most innovative communities. The member for Waterloo said it best. The environment sees no borders, and that is why we are working across all orders of government, alongside universities, non-profits and the private sector, to make real progress. As we look ahead, we remain committed to implementing our platform to protect the environment and fight climate change, which will put

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Canada on a path for a stronger, cleaner future, one where communities like Waterloo continue to lead.

On that, if I may also add, what is amazing is that Canada is home to nine of the top clean tech businesses. Out of 100 world-wide companies, nine are based in Canada. We see the work that is being done in universities like the University of Waterloo, which helps to build that knowledge and that expertise. That is how we will continue to grow a strong economy.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for those comments, and I find it really fascinating. The minister and I have had exchanges since we were both elected in 2015. It is a file that is really important to constituents within the riding of Waterloo. There is clearly a diversity of voices and a diversity of perspectives as to what the best approach is, but what I have noticed is that, more and more, people are recognizing the importance of having to act on the environment, accepting the realities of climate change. I would say that all parties in this House, except for the Conservative Party of Canada, would recognize the merits—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, they make noise as if they are surprised.

Parties recognize the merits of climate change, and even the line of questioning going back and forth. I will always say that there is definitely more work to do. We have to work across levels of government.

There are many young people watching. There are many families watching. What words or comments can the minister provide to reassure us that the government will continue to take the environment seriously, recognizes the economic opportunities and will continue to fight climate change because it is the right thing to do and we must do it?

• (1955)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I think about this question a lot. It is very important for young people to know that we are fighting for their future. That is not just about fighting climate change to make sure that we have a secure future but also about making sure that we are fighting so that they can have jobs that will help to support them in a clean economy of the future, which is where the world is very much moving. When we look at the different projects that are moving ahead, and when we are looking at how we manage ourselves, here on this side of the House, we will always stand up for future generations and a strong environment.

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am splitting my time three ways today.

Does the minister believe we need to lower the cost of living for Canadians?

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Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I absolutely believe that we need to put affordability at the centre of the projects we do. As I just said, making sure we protect the environment and building a strong job future for our youth are part of that.

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, how does taxing Canadian industries help affordability for families struggling with high prices?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I am happy the member opposite has asked this question because we need to diversify our trade right now. Countries around the world are putting in place border carbon adjustments. Having an industrial carbon price helps us to access those markets.

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, does the minister acknowledge that the industrial carbon tax raises costs for Canadian families?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, the industrial carbon price is an important piece for making sure that our industry stays competitive in a world that is moving toward border carbon adjustments. It is how we can access markets for a strong economic future.

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, if the minister is committed to tackling the cost of living crisis, will she remove the industrial carbon tax?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, in short form, I do not accept the manner in which that question was phrased, but, no, I am not in support of removing the industrial carbon price. It is important for our economy and it is important for our industry's competitiveness worldwide.

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, does the minister know which province has the highest rate of unemployment in this country?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite has questions for the minister of labour or the minister of skills and employment, I am happy to direct those questions to them.

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, does the minister know the unemployment rate of Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for naming my role. I am the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

If the member opposite has questions about labour or about employment and skills development, she can ask that minister those questions.

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador is important to me.

Is the minister aware that it is above 9%?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, once again, I am the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. I care about Newfoundland and Labrador too, and I am happy to have those questions directed to the minister responsible for employment and skills development.

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the minister cares about Newfoundland and Labrador.

Does the minister agree that the industrial carbon tax makes our industry less competitive and drives jobs and opportunities out of Canada?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, that is simply incorrect. As I mentioned before, in this moment when we are faced with unjustified tariffs from the United States, we are trying to diversify our trade. There are border carbon adjustments being put in place by other countries to access those markets. We need to make sure we have an industrial carbon price.

• (2000)

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, I am happy the minister is referencing the tariffs.

In the face of unjustified 50% tariffs from the U.S. on Canadian industry, why is the minister continuing to charge Canadian businesses an industrial carbon tax?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, does the member opposite care about the competitiveness of our industries, accessing trade with other countries to diversify our markets and at the same time fighting climate change? All of those are important, and that is why an industrial carbon price is important to maintain.

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, we can control the industrial carbon tax, unlike the unjustified U.S. tariffs, so why not remove it in the face of the threat?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, perhaps a better question for the member opposite is this: Why will she not join us in the fight to make sure that we are fighting against those unjustified tariffs and that we stand up for a strong, unified country that cares about building a strong economy while protecting the environment?

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, Canadian manufacturers pay an industrial carbon tax while competitors in China and the U.S. do not. Does this seem fair?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned, other countries, like the countries of the EU and the U.K., are putting in place border carbon adjustments.

Does it seem fair that the member opposite is suggesting we not diversify trade to those important countries? Does she want us to remain committed to only trading with the United States or does she want us to access those markets?

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Chair, the Liberals promised 100% zero-emissions car sales by 2035 in their platform. Does the minister intend to keep that policy, yes or no?

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Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Chair, let me begin by saying that, absolutely, it has been one of the worst things to see the unjustified tariffs from the United States against our auto sector. We will have our auto sector's back and will have the backs of the workers in that industry.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, does the minister intend to keep that policy, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, as I mentioned before, as we move forward, we need to make sure that everything we do—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, does the minister intend to keep that policy, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, the transportation sector is actually 27% of Canada's GHGs.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, is the government's target for 100% zero-emissions vehicle sales by 2035 mandatory or optional?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, the member is aware that the regulation sets us toward targets to increase the number of sales of EVs across our country.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, is the target mandatory or optional?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, it is a regulation that sets out clear targets for the sale of EVs and—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, according to the Liberal Party's website, the government set a “mandatory target” that all new light-duty cars and passenger truck sales be zero emissions by 2035. Is this statement correct?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, we do have in place a regulation that sets consistently increasing targets for EV sales, going to 100%, and there are flexibilities built within that regulation that, if we wanted to have a larger conversation about, we could speak about.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, do the government's regulations prohibit the sale of new, fully gas-powered cars in Canada after 2035, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, the regulations have been set out toward making more EVs available to Canadians, moving in different progressed stripes all the way to 2035. That regulation remains in place, but we are certainly looking at—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, will this regulation prohibit the sale of new, fully gas-powered cars in Canada by 2035, yes or no?

• (2005)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, EVs are actually a very strongly growing segment of the world economy for sales. We are making sure Canadians have access to them.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, does the minister trust her department?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, that is such a strange question. Obviously, I work with the public service, and we should all be very proud of the work that it does.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, did the minister take her department's advice?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, is the member opposite questioning the quality of work that comes from our public service? I believe we have a very strong public service that I am proud to work with.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, the question was, does the minister take her department's advice, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, what I said is that I work with the strong public service we have, which provides strong advice on which we base policy, absolutely, as we—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, has the minister read her department's regulatory impact analysis on the zero-emissions vehicle sales mandate, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, I have worked on the regulation specifically. I was actually the one who made the announcement.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, has the minister read it, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, I worked on that regulation directly, spoke with industry and understand the impacts in the RIAS as well.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, how much money will the government's zero-emissions vehicle mandate cost Canadians?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, we are talking about an industry that employs many in Ontario, which is my home province, and I work—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Chair, the minister's department stated that EV mandate regulations “are estimated to have incremental [zero-emission vehicle] and home charger costs of \$54.1 billion”. Why is the minister supporting a policy that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, I am proud that the rebates we provided allowed 546,000 zero-emission vehicle purchases to be supported.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Chair, the minister claimed that there is national unity and consensus, but the day after the meeting, B.C. Premier David Eby said no to a pipeline, removing consensus. Is this a veto?

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Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Chair, as I mentioned, the premiers and the Prime Minister came together at that table and had a strong meeting to talk about how we build national unity and national projects. I stand by that.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, does Premier Eby's opposition to this project mean a veto?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, the only people who seem to be concerned about divisions, increasing them and stating them, are the members opposite. The premier said there was unity.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, will the minister tell Premier Eby that his opposition does not matter?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, I cannot even believe that question was asked. Is the member opposite saying that there was no unity at that table? Is she not saying that Canadians want us to work?

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, premiers Smith, Moe and Kinew have all said yes to a pipeline to Churchill. Does this mean a yes?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, once again, I have said that it is not my job to select the projects that will be national unity projects, but it is my job to make sure that the environment—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, “From everything I've read about the Teck Frontier project, I don't think it should go ahead” were the words of the minister back in 2020 when she did think it was her place to pick a project. This mine would have created 7,000 construction jobs and 2,500 operational jobs. Is climate change more important than Alberta's economy?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, as Minister of Environment, I am standing in front of this House to say that we need to ensure we build our country as an energy superpower that is low-risk, low-cost and low-carbon, and we will do it.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, would the minister still oppose this project today?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, it is not my job to select projects or projects of national interest. It is my job to make sure that we take into account the environment.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, has the minister ever been to Fort McMurray?

• (2010)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, I do not believe I need to share my travel history with the member opposite.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, has the minister ever toured the oil sands?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, I am the Minister of Environment. I do not think I need to speak to the member about where I have travelled, but more to that space, if she has questions about the oil sands, she can ask the Minister of Energy.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, I have a really simple question: Does being an energy superpower include oil sands energy?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, being an energy superpower means that we support energy in all its forms from our country. We are a strong country. We should be proud of it.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, does this include the oil sands, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, as I mentioned, to build an energy superpower, it must be low-risk, low-cost and low-carbon.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, is it yes or no to the oil sands?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, it is not my job to pick the projects. It is only my job to protect the environment.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, I am not asking the minister to pick a project; I am asking whether she supports oil sands energy, yes or no.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, I have answered that question. It is not my job to select the projects. I will stick to my job, which is protecting the environment.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, does the minister agree that pipelines are a safe way of transporting oil, yes or no?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, to go back to that question again, I have the same answer. My job is not to select the projects in the national interest. It is to make sure that we protect the environment in making the decisions.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, does the minister believe that economic reconciliation is important?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, absolutely, economic reconciliation is important, which is, in fact, why we have an indigenous loan guarantee.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, In 2020, there was \$2.4 billion in procurement in indigenous businesses in the oil sands alone. Does the minister acknowledge that economic reconciliation is important in the oil sands?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, it is not for me to choose the projects or to decide for indigenous peoples what economic reconciliation looks like, but it is to provide support, such as through the indigenous loan guarantee from energy and natural resources.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Chair, there is \$2.4 billion in procurement, so shrinking oil and gas development will hurt economic reconciliation.

Does the minister not see that this is a step backwards?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Chair, indigenous peoples will be consulted as we build national projects, and I will rely on the advice we get through those consultations.

[Translation]

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Chair, before I begin my formal speech, I would like to take a moment to thank the people of Moncton—Dieppe, who have given me the privilege of serving them in the House of Commons for a fourth time.

I would also like to take a moment to thank my team of volunteers, who worked tirelessly to ensure that the election went well once again. I also want to thank my campaign co-managers, Jake and Dan, and the hundreds of volunteers who made calls, knocked on doors and put up signs throughout our wonderful riding. Lastly, I would like to give a special shout-out to my husband, Brock, who has been by my side for over 30 years. He is probably my hardest-working volunteer, and I want to thank him once again from the bottom of my heart.

[English]

This evening, I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's funding requests in the main estimates for 2025-26. Canada's ability to attract global talent, fill critical labour shortage and grow our economy depends on a well-run, forward-thinking immigration system. Whether supporting workers in health care and construction or helping businesses find people with the skills they need to grow, immigration remains a vital economic lever across our country. At the same time, the system must also be equipped to respond to growing humanitarian pressures. This dual responsibility is reflected in the main estimates that are before us.

More people are being forced from their home countries by conflict, persecution and climate disasters than at any time in recent history. At the same time, we are decreasing our immigration targets to more sustainable and responsible levels. This creates a challenge. As volumes grow and application streams diversify, the department must maintain timely and fair decision-making, while investing in tools and systems that support greater efficiency and long-term capacity. The investments the government is requesting are designed to meet urgent humanitarian needs, while creating operational improvements and long-term savings.

Today's main estimates reflect these realities. They include both critical funding increases in areas under acute pressure and reductions in areas where demand has stabilized or where the department has achieved efficiencies. Let me talk members through both sides of this equation.

First of all, the department seeks additional funding for the interim federal health program. This program provides basic but essential health care coverage to a range of vulnerable individuals, most notably asylum claimants, from the time they make their claim until they either transition to provincial health care or leave Canada. However, this is not just about managing current caseloads. The investments the government is making in system modernization and processing efficiency will reduce the time people spend in Canada's asylum system, which directly reduces per case costs over time.

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Faster, fairer decisions lead to a range of benefits, from more efficient use of interim health services to quicker outcomes for individuals and better planning for provinces as people transition through the system.

Second, the interim housing assistance program, or as we like to refer to it, IHAP, provides funding to provinces and municipal governments to address interim housing pressures due to increased volumes of asylum claimants. This program has evolved significantly from its original form, which was focused on emergency shelters and hotel placements. Crisis response is not only more expensive; it is less helpful for both claimants and communities. The renewed IHAP model prioritizes building reception centres and sustainable temporary housing. The shift represents a fundamental change in how we think about these investments. Instead of paying recurring emergency costs year after year, the government is supporting jurisdictions in building infrastructure that serves multiple purposes and creates lasting value.

Our collaborative approach with provinces and territories has enabled innovative solutions. Take the voluntary relocation initiative, for example, in partnership with Newfoundland and Labrador and my home province of New Brunswick. Supporting asylum claimants who choose to relocate from where they initially arrived is helping to address housing pressures in high-demand areas like Ontario and Quebec, while providing claimants with more stability and opportunities during their time in Canada. This program has been very beneficial in my home province of New Brunswick.

● (2015)

Both claimants and the communities that welcome them benefit. Claimants get appropriate housing and employment opportunities through access to temporary work permits, while communities get a chance to address their short-term labour needs. We certainly know, in Atlantic Canada, we are always facing labour force challenges. Crucially, the interim housing assistance program helps distribute the responsibility for supporting asylum claimants more equitably across the country. Rather than allowing unsustainable pressure to build in a few jurisdictions, we are creating a system that works for everyone.

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Third is digital platform modernization. This initiative represents exactly the kind of upfront investments that generate significant operational savings downstream. Through this initiative, IRCC has been introducing streamlined online platforms that offer clients simpler application processes and real-time updates. The online passport renewal service is a perfect example. It is proving to be a convenient alternative that reduces the pressure on clients to go to physical offices and endure long lineups. The efficiency gains go well beyond the client experience. Digital solutions like automation and smart technology reduce paperwork, speed up decisions and build the department's capacity to handle surges in demand without proportional increases in staff. These system improvements will pay dividends for years to come.

Finally, the department seeks to increase funding to sustain and expand its biometrics collection capabilities. This investment in secure identity verification would help prevent fraud and processing delays, which are far more expensive to address after the fact. As the department extends fingerprint and photo requirements to more programs, including citizenship, both security and processing efficiencies will be enhanced.

The necessary increases in funding requests are offset somewhat by reductions in spending in overall key areas. As expected, Canada's lower immigration targets mean the department can reduce its operational spending over the next three years. The cap on study permits and study applications, tightened controls on various permit streams and changes to the temporary foreign worker program are all reducing processing demands in these areas. This is not just about fewer applications. It is about more manageable and sustainable volumes that allow the department to maintain service standards under less pressure.

IRCC's crisis response programs are also maturing in ways that reduce costs. The programs supporting Afghan and Ukrainian nationals have evolved to require less operational support as the initial surge phase is behind us. The approach to new and ongoing situations, like in Gaza and Sudan, reflect lessons learned. These tailored approaches, combining family reunification pathways, work permits, study permits and status extensions, balance humanitarian needs with operational efficiency.

The pattern here is clear: IRCC is requiring less in the way of reactive, crisis-driven funding and more for strategic investments that build capacity and create efficiencies and savings over the long term. The interim housing assistance program is moving from expensive hotel stays to sustainable infrastructure. Digital modernization reduces the need for time-consuming manual processing as semi-automated systems become more reliable tools. Better biometric capabilities prevent problems rather than fixing them after they occur.

This is not just about managing the current situation. It is about building systems that will serve Canada well as the global landscape continues to evolve. Every dollar we invest in sustainable infrastructure and digital efficiency reduces the cost to Canadians in future years.

These estimates represent a responsible approach to managing unprecedented challenges when it comes to immigration. They are designed to maintain Canada's humanitarian leadership while build-

ing the efficient, modern and fair systems that Canadians expect and newcomers deserve. The investments the department is requesting would help Canada respond to global displacement pressures while creating the operational efficiencies that reduce long—

● (2020)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Order.

The time has expired for the speech portion. We will now go to the questions for the minister, if the member would like to pose a question.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Mr. Chair, when I look at the estimates before us, it is clear that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is focused on critical programs to support newcomers' success while restoring balance to our system.

Could the minister elaborate on why funding programs like the interim federal health program and the interim housing assistance plan are so important to the vitality of our programs?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, first of all, allow me to thank the hon. member for Moncton—Dieppe for her advocacy and for being a champion, not only for her community but for many members who have been here in Parliament, including me, for the last number of years.

Through budget 2024, the government invested \$411.2 million in the federal health program for 2024-25, topping up existing funding and ensuring that refugees and asylum claimants, as well as other uniquely vulnerable foreign nationals, have access to health care coverage to address urgent and essential medical needs. There was a further \$232.9 million provided through the 2024-25 supplementary estimates (B).

Taking into account all funding sources, the total interim federal health program allocations for 2024-25 were \$896.5 million. These covered the cost of basic health services like hospital and physician care, aligned with provincial and territorial health insurance, and limited supplemental health services, for example, mental health counselling and disability support. The coverage is also provided to specific migrant groups, including resettled refugees.

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● (2025)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Mr. Chair, as we all know in the House, immigration is certainly crucial to our communities. In Atlantic Canada, we certainly see that we are in need of a population increase, because we are seeing a population decline, but we also want to ensure that we set up our immigrants for success. I understand that we are stabilizing immigration levels in the next few years while also committing to reducing temporary immigration to less than 5% of total national population by 2027.

Could the minister outline the work we are doing to achieve this commitment and explain why it is so important for Canada?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, temporary residents enrich Canada's economy and cultural fabric, so the government is committed to reducing temporary immigration growth to better align with the needs of our labour market, housing supply and community capacity. In order to accomplish this, a study permit cap has been introduced, and eligibility requirements for work permits have been tightened, including a reduced intake of spouses accompanying workers and students. These measures emphasize quality over quantity, helping to ensure that Canada continues to attract the talent that it needs in order to grow and prosper. We are committed to sustainable immigration levels for Canada.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Mr. Chair, again, I have a quick question for the minister.

How are we striking the balance between slowing down temporary immigration while ensuring Canada has the talent it needs to build for success?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, the government is committed to sustainable immigration levels, so we are calibrating the volume of immigrants to help alleviate some pressure on the housing demand. As such, IRCC is stabilizing permanent residents as well as temporary admissions to less than 1% of Canada's population annually beyond 2027. We are focusing on attracting global talent from around the world in order to drive our economy and prosperity.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Mr. Chair, I would simply like to thank the minister for being here this evening and answering the many questions that we have for the main estimates.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time three ways.

I have an article here from the CBC wherein the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship asked the federal government to fully eliminate the cap on new immigrants, with no limit. Does she still believe that there should be no limits on how many people enter Canada?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have been the minister for a total of about three weeks already, and I do not recall saying statements like that.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, again, I have the CBC article right here. The minister asked for a full removal of caps on immigrants. Would she agree that the number of people coming into Canada must be immediately and massively reduced?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, we are managing our targets. We have committed to reducing both our permanent residents and our temporary allocations. We have 2025-27 levels—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, the minister has not. The government is letting in hundreds of thousands of foreign students and temporary foreign workers. Why is the minister persisting in letting in hundreds of thousands of people when Canada is in the middle of a health care crisis?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are working toward sustainable immigration by reducing our temporary resident numbers as well as our permanent residents. We have tabled the two-year levels plan, and it is there for the member to actually see.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, that is baloney. All the statistics show that the government has actually increased those numbers. Meanwhile, Canadians cannot get into an emergency room.

Why is the government persisting in bringing in hundreds of thousands of students and temporary foreign workers on temporary visas when people cannot find a job?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, let us use the facts here; the member's numbers are totally inaccurate. There have been 290,000 net new arrivals in Canada through the international student program. I do not know where she comes up with numbers. I would contextualize the numbers that she seems to read.

● (2030)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Let me contextualize it for you, Mr. Chair. The reality is that there were way fewer than 290,000 housing starts last year, and there are a lot more than 290,000 people waiting for a family doctor right now.

Why is the minister persisting in raising immigration levels when people cannot find a doctor or a job?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again I would say that we are working on sustainable immigration. We have committed to reducing the temporary numbers as well as our permanent residency numbers. Canada—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, what is not sustainable is that there are roughly 500,000 people, as of December 2024, who need to be removed from the country. How many have been removed?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, those numbers are taken way out of context.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, I would ask the minister to say that to somebody who cannot find housing in Toronto right now. There are 500,000 people, at least, in Canada who have no legal reason to be here. How many have been removed since the report came out in December?

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Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we recognize that there are challenges in our housing and infrastructure. That is why we have tabled the levels plan that works on sustainable immigration. We are reducing our permanent residency—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, let us talk about challenges. Our ERs are overflowing, people cannot find a home or a job and the levels report says immigration is going up.

How many people have been removed of the 500,000 who are on deportation orders announced in December 2024?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, to be clear, when a person's visa expires, they are expected to leave the country. That is a question for CBSA and the minister of public—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, they are not leaving the country, which is the problem. They are not leaving, and the minister will not tell us how many have been removed. What is the plan to get them to leave?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, we have rules in this country, and we expect people to follow those rules.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, they are not being followed. Does the minister not understand that if we do not remove people who do not have a legal right to be here, the system is meaningless? Will the minister admit that the Liberals broke the system and that it is out of control?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, CBSA is in charge of removals. I would suggest that the member should be asking the public safety minister the questions on that. Again I say to her that we have rules in—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Saskatoon West has the floor.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Chair, the government's entire immigration plan is based on temporary residents' leaving Canada voluntarily. How many non-permanent residents does the government expect to leave Canada in the next three years?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, people coming to Canada temporarily to work, to study—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, in the minister's plan, what is the number of people who are supposed to leave in the next three years?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, those people whose visas have expired are expected to be leaving.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, how many of them have voluntarily left?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, those numbers would be for the Department of Public Safety. People whose visas are expired, if they have not renewed them, and there are many people who renewed their—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, how can you set immigration targets, Minister, if you do not know how many people have left the country?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Members are to address questions through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, CBSA and the Department of Public Safety are in charge of those exit numbers.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, last year's annual immigration plan forecast that nearly 1.3 million non-permanent residents would leave Canada. How many have left so far this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I say again that for people leaving the country, the exits are managed by CBSA—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, let us go a different way.

The same report predicted a net decrease of non-permanent residents of about 450,000 people. Is the minister on track to achieve this number for 2025?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we know that for the first quarter, we have reduced our numbers at well below the targeted rate.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, in fact, Statistics Canada currently shows just over three million non-permanent residents in Canada as of March 31. That is a 10% increase over 2024.

What is the government's target for 2025?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, all the numbers have been tabled in terms of our targets. We are exceeding those targets for the first quarter of 2025.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, I beg to differ with the minister. I do not think she understands the question. There are three million non-permanent residents of Canada right now. What was the target for 2025?

● (2035)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have begun to decline for the first quarter of 2025, to 7.2%. The—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, the number is 7.2%. What was the target percentage for this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, we have met and exceeded the target for the first quarter of 2025.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, you have exceeded the number because, according to StatsCan, we have over three million people. Your target was 2.5 million people. How are you going to achieve a 500,000 reduction in the balance of this year?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Members are to address questions through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, our 2027 target is 5% of Canada's population. We are working—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, the October annual report estimated the total Canadian population for 2025. Can the minister tell me whether that number was higher or lower than for 2024?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, is the member asking me what Canada's population is, of people who live in Canada?

Brad Redekopp: Yes, Mr. Chair, I am.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we know it is 40-some million people. I do not have the exact number—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, I will help the minister. It was published in their report last fall, and it got a lot of coverage because it implied that the population of Canada was going to decrease. Therefore, the question is this: Are we on track to achieve that reduction in population?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are on track to meet the target that we have set for our immigration number, and that is to reduce the overall number of permanent and temporary residents in this country.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, just to help the minister, according to Statistics Canada, we are at 41.7 million people right now. That is 200,000 more people than at the end of last year, and 500,000 more people than the minister's plan. What is the minister doing to make sure that she achieves her plan for this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, it is a known fact that if we do not have immigration to this country, we cannot fill our labour gaps. Immigration is what drives this economy. It is the people who are coming—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, they are actually increasing the population. Is that what the minister is saying?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, what I have said is that the 2025 to 2027 targets have been set, have been labelled—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, would the minister ever alter reports to remove data?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I do not believe I alter reports. That is not my job.

[Translation]

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik-Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Chair, does the minister think that we should reduce immigration to Canada? If so, does she think that should happen soon? If so, by how much should we cut immigration? I would like the minister to give me a number.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, this is an important issue, and we are working with officials to reduce the numbers.

Bernard Généreux: Mr. Chair, what is the number?

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Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the numbers are already available. I also spoke with my colleague—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomik—Témiscouata.

Bernard Généreux: Mr. Chair, these two numbers are public. The minister must know what they are.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are talking about 5% of the population by 2027.

Bernard Généreux: Mr. Chair, earlier, my colleague asked what the population of Canada was, and the minister was unable to answer. Will she answer by saying how much this 5% decrease represents?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, it is 5% of the national population by 2027.

Bernard Généreux: Mr. Chair, the government is going to bring in hundreds of thousands of people this year when millions of Canadians do not even have access to a family doctor. Why?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, that is probably a question for the Minister of Health, but what I can say is that we are looking for doctors and nurses to come and help us here.

Bernard Généreux: Mr. Chair, it is funny how the minister is unable to answer our questions. She refers them to other ministers.

In any case, there is also a housing shortage in Canada. Quebecers are sleeping in their cars right now because they cannot afford to pay their rent. However, the government continues to increase its immigration levels. Why?

● (2040)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, once again, it is not the fault of immigrants.

Yes, there is an economic crisis, and we, on this side of the House, are working to reduce the number of temporary and permanent visas because we know that there is a crisis. We are continuing to work—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomik—Témiscouata.

Bernard Généreux: Mr. Chair, unemployment is rising across Canada.

According to some experts, there will be approximately 100,000 job losses by the fall. However, you keep increasing immigration. Why do you insist on pushing newcomers into unemployment?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, that is absolutely not my intention.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Comments should be directed to the Chair.

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The hon. member has the floor.

Bernard Génèreux: Mr. Chair, the minister is not answering my question.

Some economists are predicting a recession by the fall with the potential loss of 100,000 jobs, many of them in Ontario and Quebec. However, the government is bringing in immigrants. Why?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are working hard to manage immigration by 2027. We have already released all the figures. We will reduce the number of temporary and permanent visas.

Bernard Génèreux: Mr. Chair, what number is the minister talking about?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are reducing the number of visas for students and workers. We are working in every way possible to bring those numbers down.

Bernard Génèreux: Mr. Chair, how many people in Canada are currently subject to removal proceedings? Does the minister know? Can she give me a number, please?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, that is a question for the Minister of Public Safety.

Bernard Génèreux: Mr. Chair, she is referring the question to another minister.

Last December, 460,000 people were awaiting removal. That figure is equivalent to the population of the city of Laval, Quebec. However, the government has lost track of 30,000 of them. How many are actually going to leave the country this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, once again, the issue of people leaving the country is a question for the Minister of Public Safety. We are, however, in close contact with my counterpart.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be going ten minutes and five minutes, just for the record.

I believe the Prime Minister truly understands the economics of immigration. It is really encouraging, whether it is in the throne speech or the mandate letters, the degree that he incorporates the idea of sustainable immigration levels. That is not a new term to me; in fact, during the nineties, I often talked about it inside the Manitoba legislature.

To get an appreciation of the value of immigration, something that I do not believe the Conservatives understand, is to take a look at the overall numbers and figure out what is in the best interest of the country, making sure to get that mix correct. For example, if we take a look back at the history of Manitoba during the nineties, when I was an MLA, going into the 2000, 2006-07 era, we see that immigration changed a great deal. In the early nineties, our average numbers were probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of 3,000 to 3,500, give or take a few hundred. For many of us, that was too low. We wanted to see more immigrants coming to the province of Manitoba. In fact, it made our population somewhat stagnant until Jean Chrétien and Gary Filmon came to the table with the provincial nominee program.

That has been an economic gold mine for the province of Manitoba. It is a program that I am very passionate about. Manitoba needs the nominee program and is very much reliant on it. Through that particular program, what we saw was that for the first time, Manitoba's numbers actually increased, and increased quite dramatically. Back in the nineties, I was suggesting that we should have somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1% of our provincial population from immigration, figuring that if we were to get the mixture right, it is a sustainable immigration number.

That is what we were able to achieve because we used the nominee program as an economic driver, which then complemented the other streams that the federal government had in place. As a direct result of being able to manage that program, having that agreement between Canada and Manitoba, we were able to enhance our immigration numbers. If it were not for that nominee program, arguably, Manitoba's population would be nowhere near what it is today. In fact, some would argue that we could have lost our population.

When I listened to the Conservatives across the way during the first series of questions they asked, and I would invite people to read what they were asking, they did come across as very anti-immigrant. That concerns me because it was immigrants who helped build this country we have today. Taking a look at the last 20 to 30 years in the province of Manitoba, we have seen the substantial growth of our Filipino-heritage community, our Punjabi-heritage community and others, but those two have led the way. We can take a look at health care, which was being discussed a great deal, or our manufacturing industry or the new entrepreneurs who are opening up, developing and building homes.

I think we do need to be sensitive to the different regions, different provinces and rural versus urban. It is important to recognize that temporary immigrants play a critical role in food security. We need to have temporary visas that enable individuals to come and help us out in our rural communities so that we can provide the type of food we are providing, not only locally but to the world.

• (2045)

If we really want to get into the discussion about immigration, there are far more positives than negatives. When we think of the situation we are in today, we have to factor in the circumstances that brought us to this point. Whether it was the pandemic that ultimately led to more temporary workers, or the drive from universities and provinces in different regions of the country demanding more temporary residents, there is a reason it has taken place in the manner it has.

The system is not broken. Yes, we need to take actions to make sure we can continue in a sustainable way. As the Prime Minister has said, it is about having an immigration level that is sustainable and making sure we get the mixture right. We need to be sensitive about our rural communities that need those temporary workers. We need to be sensitive to those post-secondary institutions that are, often, trying to build a world reputation on the type of education that is provided in these facilities.

I recognize there was also a lot of abuse in that area. There are things we can learn. We need to work with provinces in a closer fashion. We need to recognize that there are some issues that need to be dealt with. However, to paint with one brush and to say this is an action that has to be taken, and it is universally applied across the nation, I do not think is fair.

Instead, I believe we should establish goals, as the Minister of Immigration has done. I do not know how many times she has said that we have these goals and we are moving towards these goals. I think that is a responsible approach. It complements what the Prime Minister is saying, and I will repeat it again: sustainable immigration levels.

We know we have many immigrants here who are permanent residents who will marry a spouse abroad, Canadian citizens who find partners from outside of Canada. This is a very important category, and we have to continue to allow those individuals to come to our country as permanent residents. We have to continue to allow temporary workers to come, to deal with those issues such as in our agricultural communities.

I would like to hear some of the rural Conservatives stand in their place and say, “No, do not allow any temporary workers to come to Canada.” Do members know the damage that would do to our economy? Immigration is there, if we can get a hold and have sustainable immigration levels, to complement our economy, to build Canada into a stronger, healthier economy.

Whether it is the Prime Minister or the Minister of Immigration, both of them understand that. Both of them understand that we have goals that have to be met, and in certain situations, it can be very difficult. Let us remember, when the Conservatives make these demands, that there is a face on the other side of that particular demand. We need to be sympathetic and compassionate in recognizing that. I would like to believe that through the years, as we have built a very strong nation, immigration has played a critical role.

The minister has been in there, I think, three, four weeks to date, and I have appreciated the discussions we have had. I appreciate the fact that she has been putting in the time and energy to make sure we establish those goals and work towards achieving those goals.

If I were to ask the minister a question, it would be on the importance of recognizing that a sustainable immigration level, as the Prime Minister has said, plays a critical role in building a stronger and healthier country. Can she provide her thoughts on how important it is that we achieve that?

• (2050)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North for all his reflections and accurate information.

Immigration is indeed key to growing our economy and strengthening our communities. I have talked to the provinces and territories since I have become a minister. They are all responsible for immigration, and believe me, they all agree on that.

Canadians rightly want a robust and sustainable immigration system that sets up Canada and all who come here for success. That is

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the reason the 2025-27 two-year levels plan was set and does exactly that. Prior to last year, these levels plans were yearly, so I was very proud to see the former government set the two-year plan.

We are reducing the number of temporary and permanent residents in the short term to alleviate the pressures on housing and infrastructure. That is the reality. That is a fact. After COVID, many people came to Canada through many ways, and there was stress and strain on our system. With the crisis happening globally, the asylum system, as we know, had strain as well. The measures we are taking will achieve long-term growth.

A well-managed, sustainable immigration system, where everybody has a chance to succeed, is what this government and I, as the new minister for less than four weeks, want. In fact, I was sworn in as an MP not even 15 days ago. My photo is not even up yet. We are doing what needs to be done and what Canadians voted for us to do.

• (2055)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Chair, one of the advantages of healthy immigration policy is recognizing how important it is to have diversity. Canada's diversity is one of the greatest strengths we have, and with it, we have the potential to continue to be the strongest nation in the G7, I would ultimately argue. We are at a time when we should be celebrating that.

A good example of that is the month of June. The Filipino community, the Italian community, the Portuguese community and the indigenous community are all celebrating their heritage in the month of June. I remember in April we were celebrating Sikh Heritage Month. I know the member has been a very strong advocate for the Lebanese community.

I wonder if she could provide her thoughts on how important it is to recognize the diversity Canada shows to the world and how the potential strength for building our nation on that diversity is overwhelming. It is something we should all be very proud of.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I am not sure how many minutes I have, but I absolutely love the question.

I cannot agree more. Diversity in Canada is definitely our strength. It is diversity in our culture, people and languages. I cannot wait to go back to my communities and celebrate Portuguese heritage and Filipino heritage. Actually, next weekend, in my home city of Halifax, the Filipino fiesta is happening. It is on June 21 and 22, all weekend long.

To celebrate all the diverse cultures every single month is something I believe that all members of this House are proud of. All parliamentarians, regardless of the political party we come from, share that with our communities. We are very proud to protect the residents we are here to represent, together with their cultures and their heritage.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Chair, Winnipeg is a wonderful city. Whenever the Minister of Immigration comes by Winnipeg, I would love to have her come to Winnipeg North.

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Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I would love to accept the hon. member's invitation. I just want to say that I have received so many invitations. I wish I had lots of hours in the day to be able to fulfill them, but I am going to do everything I possibly can.

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time three ways.

Canada's population keeps increasing at record numbers, and the Canadian Medical Association is quoted as saying, "our health care system is on its knees. We're not meeting the needs of our population." Does the minister think it is responsible to maintain the current immigration levels during this health care crisis?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have spoken about the pride that I have in the fact that we have tabled the two-year levels plan, which targets decreasing the temporary student population, as well as the temporary—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Oxford has the floor.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, does the minister agree with experts that a massive spike in immigration to Canada is putting pressure on health care in our country?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, we are working to stabilize the immigration numbers, but we also want to bring in talent.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, is it causing pressure on our system, yes or no?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the reason we are here today is that we recognize that there was strain on our system because of the immigration that is growing.

• (2100)

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, if that is the case, how come the numbers keep going up, with hundreds of thousands of people coming to our country?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have already exceeded the expectation that we are reducing it, so—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, what is the point of setting targets if we are not going to meet them? Why are—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. minister has the floor.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are meeting those targets; in fact we have more than met the expectation of the targets.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, one in five Canadians and one in two newcomers cannot find access to a family doctor right now. Why is the minister bringing hundreds of thousands of foreign students and low-skilled labour to Canada in the middle of a health care crisis?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are targeting the talent that we need, including physicians and people who work in construction. There are specific programs that were designed to target bringing those individuals to our communities.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, the Liberals' words are not matching their actions. Canadians are dying in ER rooms, and the wait times

keep going up. Newcomers and Canadians cannot find a doctor. We have massive shortages of support in the health care system.

Does the minister not think it is irresponsible to be piling hundreds of thousands more immigrants into our country when we are facing this crisis in our country?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, we have brought in physicians, nurses and health care workers, people to actually care for Canadians, through those programs, and that is something we will target and keep bringing.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, Canada is already short 23,000 doctors right now. How many doctors will we be bringing into the country?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have a dedicated stream that will work with the provinces and the communities. In fact, in my own province of—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, how many will there be, just a number?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, the provinces and the communities themselves are also working on these pathways. I know, as a former minister—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, clearly, the minister has no idea of who she is bringing into the country. There is a STEM program that is bringing in insurance brokers and agents. They have lost control of the system and have totally collapsed the system.

Can the minister tell us today how many highly skilled immigrants she is bringing into the country?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I do not think the member really has been here throughout the whole proceedings. Estimates were tabled. We have our levels planned. We have the numbers of the different categories of people who are being brought in. We have met those—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, hospitals are bursting at the seams. Frontline staff are exhausted. Doctors are overworked.

Why is the minister admitting more immigrants without even removing those who have overstayed their visa?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, let me be clear. The number of expiring documents is not the number of people. Anybody whose visa expired is expected to leave, and when they do not—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: There is time for a very brief final question.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, how many of those who have been ordered to leave so far have left Canada?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, when immigration documents expire, individuals are expected to leave the country, and those who do not comply, public safety—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan has the floor.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, it seems, listening to the discussion tonight, that the minister is acknowledging that the Trudeau government made mistakes on immigration. Is that correct?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, COVID caused the strain on our system. We had more people coming in throughout all of Canada. There was a lot of—

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, I wonder if the minister could just give a clear answer. Does she think the Trudeau government made mistakes on immigration?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Chair, I rise on a point of order. It is not appropriate for the member to just stand up, assume he is being recognized and then question the minister. He should be waiting until he gets recognized by you.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I am keeping track of the time, and I am recognizing members as they go at the appropriate time. I did see the member rise and acknowledged him. Maybe my mic was not on, but we have been going back and forth, so I will resume.

Does the member wish to carry on with the question?

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, I have a very simple question for the minister: Does she acknowledge, now that she has had extra time to think about it, that the Trudeau government made mistakes on immigration?

• (2105)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I was a minister of immigration provincially for eight years. I have seen what this country has gone—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, the minister does not appear to want to answer that question either way.

However, Friday's job numbers paint a really dire picture for Canadians. We have 7% unemployment, particularly growing in large urban centres. It is the highest it has been in Toronto in well over a decade.

Does the immigration minister think high immigration numbers have contributed to high and rising unemployment?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I believe economists and people say, in relation to the article he is quoting, that it is the United States tariffs that are driving these numbers.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, we have not gotten any answers from the minister so far. I asked if she recognizes that the Trudeau government made mistakes on immigration. She did not answer that. I asked if she recognizes that high immigration numbers have contributed to rising unemployment, which has been rising steadily for the last three years.

I will try again. I have a simple question for the minister: Does she think that very high levels of immigration, especially unskilled immigration, have contributed to high and rising unemployment in this country?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have a levels plan that has been tabled in this House. We have targeted numbers. Those

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numbers are very much in the public eye. Everybody can look at them. We are meeting those numbers.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, we are at zero answers so far in my round.

Ilona Dougherty, co-creator of the Youth & Innovation Project at the University of Waterloo, told CBC recently that evidence shows that a large influx of foreign workers depresses wages for young Canadians.

Does the minister agree with these findings, that a large influx of foreign workers depresses wages for young Canadians?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are concentrating on bringing the talent that Canada needs, and that includes people in the medical world and in the construction world. Those are the targets that we are concentrating on.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, that is not an answer. These are important questions, and the Minister of Immigration has an obligation to answer them.

Does she agree with experts that the large influx of foreign workers has depressed wages for young Canadians, yes or no?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I have done my best to answer the questions. There are times when the amount of time is limited. Members are asking very important questions, questions that Canadians rightfully asked when we went to the doors in the last campaign, which was only—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, it is a yes-or-no question. Does the minister believe that the large influx of foreign workers is depressing wages for young Canadians? It does not take time. It is just “yes” or “no”.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we will try this again. Immigration is our strength. The increased immigration number, because of COVID, because of the last—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, it is yes or no.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, managed migration growth is what this country needs at the present time, and this is the government that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, did the government consider the impact on employment before setting its immigration numbers?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I do not know how much time I have, but perhaps you would allow me.

When numbers are set in those targets, I know, as a previous provincial minister—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, every single one of my questions could have been answered with a yes or no, and none of them have been.

Did the government consider the impact on employment before setting the current immigration numbers?

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Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, when those targets are set, the IRCC has to consult all provinces, territories, stakeholders and communities.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Chair, fewer than 230,000 housing starts occurred in 2024, but the government allowed in over a million people in the middle of a housing crisis. Why did it do this?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, immigration is Canada's greatest strength, and it is important not to blame newcomers to Canada for the housing crisis.

• (2110)

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, with vacancy rates below 2% in many parts of the country, how can the minister justify bringing in hundreds of thousands more people to Canada this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, what I will say is, post-pandemic, had we not increased our immigration levels, our economy would have absolutely shrunk.

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, it was the minister's government, the Liberal government, that created this crisis. It created the housing crisis. It created the health care crisis. It created the infrastructure crisis.

Does the minister acknowledge that out-of-control immigration levels helped to double the cost of rent in Canada?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we recognize that we need to balance our immigration levels with the pressures on housing, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, the 2025 global cities index from Oxford Economics found that people in Toronto spend more of their income on housing than residents of nearly every other city in the world. Why is the minister and the Liberal government bringing in hundreds of thousands more people to Canada this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the figures I have been presented with have told me that, because of the work we have been doing in cities like Toronto, there is now a decline of 8.1% in rent.

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, Toronto has the highest housing costs in the world. CMHC says we need 3.5 million more homes by 2030 to provide shelter for the people who are already here. Why is the government bringing in hundreds of thousands more foreign students and low-skilled labour in the middle of a housing crisis?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the member mentioned foreign students, meaning international students. We have brought in 290,000 net new arrivals in Canada through the international student program. A lot of these students are here—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, the minister knows there are fewer housing starts than that. Rents have more than doubled across the country. Canadians cannot afford their mortgages or their rent. International students are sleeping under bridges or in tents due to the housing shortage.

Why is the minister issuing hundreds of thousands more foreign student visas this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have introduced student caps. We have also worked with the institutions. The provinces are very well aware, and they are working with their universities and colleges through the designated learning institutions. We have put all kinds of limitations and expectations on the universities.

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, asylum seekers have overwhelmed Toronto's homeless shelters. How much did taxpayers spend in 2024 for hotels for refugees? Can the minister give us a number?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, how much has the federal government spent? I did have that in my estimates actually, and I will get it for the member.

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, why is the government spending billions of dollars to house asylum seekers in hotels in Toronto when many Torontonians cannot afford rent?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the housing temporary relief that we have is long-term. We provided money to provinces in order to build infrastructure that is permanent. The number—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, experts have been warning for years that the Liberals' radical levels of immigration have been jacking up housing prices. Does the minister at least acknowledge that the Liberals' out-of-control immigration levels have made Canadians pay way more for housing?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I believe I already responded to that question when we talked about international students and housing. The facts show that rents have already started to come down in major cities, and we have—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member, for his last question.

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Chair, clearly that is not a true statement.

The minister has said that immigration must be sustainable. Are the tent cities, overflowing shelters and sky-high rents across Canada what her government—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. minister.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we believe in a well-managed, sustainable immigration system.

• (2115)

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, congratulations on your post. I know that you are from southwestern Ontario as well.

It is an honour to rise as the member for London North Centre and also as the newly appointed parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Peter Fragiskatos: I was not fishing, but I will take it.

It is certainly going to be an honour as well to work with the minister, members of the government and all colleagues in this House on this very important issue.

Mr. Chair, when we think of immigration, of course we think of many things, but at the core of it is finding a way forward to support our economy. That, I think, is central to this question: How can we support our economy?

The immigration system has always played a fundamental role in that regard, but it is also a source of pride and it is an example of how Canada can continue to foster the values that come with diversity, to foster a kind of society that is inclusive, with all of those benefits that flow from the multicultural society that is Canada.

In fact, I speak of my own background here, but I think almost every one of us in this House who does not claim indigenous ancestry can point to immigration. My mother's side of my family came here in the 1950s from Greece, and in my father's case, it was in the early seventies. He also migrated here from Greece to find a better path, to find new opportunities. That is what Canada certainly afforded him.

However, we do have to make sure that there is a balance, and in the throne speech that was recently given by King Charles in the name of the government, we did see that balance articulated. The main estimates reflect this, of course. There is going to be a decrease in the number of permanent residents, along with the number of temporary residents, and that is reflected in the estimates, because there is less funding that is being requested.

Let me just go over those numbers briefly. In 2025, 395,000 permanent residents will be in Canada; in 2026, there will be 380,000, and in 2027, there will be 365,000. The number of temporary residents, meaning international students and temporary foreign workers, will be capped at 5%, as we heard the minister articulate just a few moments ago. They will make up 5% of Canada's population by 2027.

There is a rationale to all of this. We heard from the Canadian population. We saw this government run on a platform that championed many things, but making sure there is that balance, as I mentioned before, in our immigration system was one of those issues. Housing capacity is a factor. Ensuring that public services are sustainable is another factor, and there is also the labour market.

Let me just point to that. I began my comments here tonight by talking about the importance of the economy. When we do that, we cannot ignore the labour market. It is central to the economy, and its needs can be met, in large part, by immigration. In fact, we see areas that are in need that are served by immigration, which will continue. I am thinking in particular of the health care sector and the construction sector. I will talk about residential construction as well.

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First of all, with regard to health care, immigrants account for no less than 25% of all health care sector workers in Canada. That is a little-known fact, but a very important one. It speaks to the issue that we are taking up here tonight. Let us break that down a bit: 25% of registered nurses and 42% of nurse aides and related occupations are immigrants, as well as 43% of pharmacists, 37% of physicians, 45% of dentists and 61% of dental technologists and related occupations. This, of course, comes from the website of the IRCC. It reflects, as I say, the importance of immigration in ensuring that labour market needs are met.

Certainly, our health care system is challenged in a number of different ways. We do hear from the provinces about the importance of making sure that roles are fulfilled. There is a continued need for nurses and doctors. I also mentioned pharmacists. There are many examples that the immigration system can serve. Of course there will be opportunities, and there are opportunities, for Canadian-born citizens, but the immigration system is vital as well.

Let us talk about construction and, as I said, residential construction. Prior to this role, I had the pleasure of working as the parliamentary secretary responsible for housing. Housing is an issue in my community. Housing is an issue, a challenge—a crisis, in fact—across the country. We have to do better to ensure that market-based housing in the form of rentals and ultimately home ownership is more affordable for Canadians, in particular young Canadians, but we also have to address the challenge of homelessness. We have to make sure that people are off the street and given a roof to live under and are provided with the wraparound supports that are so vital in ensuring the transition to something better and the recovery that comes along with that.

• (2120)

As far as residential construction is concerned, again from the IRCC's data, immigrants account for 23% of all general contractors of residential buildings. Let me break that down further: 20% of all roofers are immigrants, 16% of all electricians, 15% of all carpenters, 14% of plumbers and 12% of steamfitters and pipefitters. There are many other examples, but I choose to focus on just these. They are absolutely central to homebuilding.

There are home builders in the Chair's community and home builders in my community. I acknowledge the incredible advocacy of the London Home Builders' Association, which feeds up through the national Canadian Home Builders' Association. They have been absolutely instrumental in championing policies that will ultimately lead to more homes being built. Along the way, what they have said is that we have to make sure we have the labour needed to build those homes. That is why immigration can serve this need and why we see in the main estimates tonight that there are pathways to ensuring that particular outcome.

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Finally, before I ask questions of the minister, to ensure public confidence in the immigration system, I am glad to see the estimates fund integrity measures such as expanded biometric collection to help with identity verification. Of course, that is important to help counter fraud. We do have this focus in the main estimates. It is about fairness. This last point does relate to fairness. It is about ensuring that diversity, yes, is at the core of our country. The immigration system allows for that in spades.

Also, I return again to the point I began with about the economy. The economy is challenged around the world. We see headwinds not of our own making. What the United States is doing with respect to tariffs is completely unacceptable. I am glad to see in this House, and I hope it continues, that there is a spirit of unity, which I heard members speak of in and outside the House, in fact.

We see provincial premiers collaborating with the federal government in ways that, frankly, we have not seen in many years. We hear municipal governments wanting to work with the federal government. We need to continue to work in that vein, but the immigration system can be a fundamental part of that in making sure there is economic success, particularly by ensuring that labour market needs are met. That has always been the purpose of the immigration system. It needs to continue, as I said, in that kind of way.

To the minister, first of all, can she talk about labour market needs and in particular how the changes in the temporary resident numbers and the temporary foreign worker numbers help to focus on this issue of labour market needs?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, let me first of all thank the member for his hard work for his constituents in London Centre. We had the privilege of attending his constituency, I think two years ago, and we saw first-hand the diversity in the population he represents. I am very much looking forward to working with him as a parliamentary secretary.

Going back to the labour gap demands in the country, we in the IRCC, with staff and officials, are working extremely hard to ensure that we create programs that will fit the needs of the Canadian population. In particular, the member talked about all the stats with the medical people, the doctors, nurses and medical personnel, who are coming. We are very proud of that.

I am also proud of the provinces and the communities within the provinces that have rallied for the last number of years not only to attract the medical personnel they need but also to retain them, to make them feel that they are home and to settle them and their family members. I am grateful for all the work they have done. I say that with pride and also humility, because I know how much work that takes on the ground.

To all the provinces, municipalities, settlement service partners and, really, the communities and residents of each community, I say thanks very much. Canada really appreciates all they are doing to attract and also retain people who are coming, people who are there to have a good life for themselves and to serve Canadians, whether they are health care providers or people who work in the construction industry.

• (2125)

Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Chair, I also want to ask about Bill C-2. The government recently introduced the bill. It focuses on a number of areas, but it is in many ways a bill that strengthens our immigration system.

Can the minister focus on particular aspects of Bill C-2 that she thinks really stand out for ensuring the integrity of the immigration system?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, Bill C-2 is critical for ensuring the integrity of our immigration and asylum system. We want to make sure that people around the globe know we welcome talent and welcome people to come visit, but when their time expires, we want them to go back home. If someone is a legitimate asylum seeker, we are here to protect them, but our borders are not a shortcut for people claiming asylum.

These measures ensure that those who need protection most have access to it. I invite all members in the House to help us and support this bill.

Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Chair, I know the minister brings a great deal of experience to this role, including as minister responsible for immigration in the province of Nova Scotia. Could she speak about the importance of the provincial nominee program, her experience with it and her vision for it going forward?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I have already spoken, in my very short few weeks as a federal minister, with the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for immigration. The provincial nominee program is key to a lot of provinces because it gives them the opportunity to make decisions as to where they believe they have labour gap needs. We are here, as a federal department, to work with provinces and territories to help them ensure they can meet those needs.

[Translation]

Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Chair, Canada is a bilingual country and I am very proud of that. I wonder if the minister could say a few words about immigration and francophone communities.

What is her vision for the future with regard to this issue?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I am passionate about francophone immigration. When I was the minister of immigration and responsible for Acadian and francophone affairs in Nova Scotia, I worked very hard to increase the number of francophones in Nova Scotia.

I am very proud that Canada has exceeded the targets it set for itself. We have a plan here. We have set a target of 12% francophone immigration outside Quebec by 2029.

[English]

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Chair, I am going to split my time three ways.

Does the minister know what the average time is for vetting each person admitted to Canada for security risks?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, vetting security risk is something—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

• (2130)

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, what is the average time spent vetting each immigrant who comes here for security risks?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have service standards. From my briefings, in the very short time that I have been a minister, I understand we are actually meeting and exceeding those standards.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, can the minister tell anybody in this House about any part of the process of vetting immigrants for security risks in Canada?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we actually spoke about that and it is in the estimates. We have biometrics that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, the government committed to letting hundreds of thousands of immigrants into Canada. How many of these people will be allowed to come here without comprehensive vetting and interviews?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, all immigrants who come here, whether they are international students or temporary foreign workers, are screened by biometrics. Comprehensive screening is done.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, is the minister confident that the amount of time spent on vetting immigrants before they come to Canada, for security risk, is sufficient to keep Canadians safe, yes or no?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we work very hard at IR-CC with our partners around the globe to ensure that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, is the minister confident that the time spent on vetting immigrants is sufficient to keep Canadians safe?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the safety of Canadians is of prime importance, which is why we have also introduced Bill C-2 to strengthen our borders, ensure the immigration system and visa—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, maybe the minister is not familiar with how much time it takes to vet, but is she confident with the amount of vetting that takes place to keep Canadians safe? It is a yes-or-no question.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, there are biometrics, even in the estimates. We have funding allocated for those, which is \$55.5 million in the estimates. There are—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, does the minister think the amount of time spent on vetting Muhammad Khan, who was the

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student arrested last year for plotting an ISIS attack in New York whose social media had extremist content, was sufficient?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I mean, the CBSA would be the department that would be able to answer questions like that.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, the minister is responsible for vetting and letting in Canadians. Does she think that sufficient time was spent on vetting him?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, these questions are better suited to Public Safety and the Canada Border Services Agency.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, does the minister of immigration understand her job?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I do have a mandate letter from the Prime Minister, and he has made it quite clear as to what the expectations are.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, does the minister believe that non-permanent residents should be deported if they are charged with and convicted of a criminal offence?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, these are security matters and security fissures, and of course, Public Safety and CBSA take control of that.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, these are immigration questions. The minister decides who comes into Canada. Does she believe that non-permanent residents who have been convicted of a criminal offence should be deported, yes or no?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have a robust criminal justice system, and there are roles in place. Again, people who are charged—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, can the minister tell me what colour my shirt is?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the member would probably know more than me the colour of her shirt. She is wearing it.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, is the minister capable of answering a simple question?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I believe I have been answering the questions.

Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, Ahmed Eldidi was the 2008 Syrian refugee who was charged in 2024 after appearing in an ISIS torture video, which was missed by initial screenings by this government. Did the Liberal government spend enough time vetting him? Just a simple yes or no.

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• (2135)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have robust measures in the main estimates that deal with biometric collection, with security, but again, CBSA and CSIS are the ones that are in charge of that.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Chair, there is no question that the Liberal government's failed policies have destroyed the student visa system. The previous minister was supposedly going to clamp down on fraud among student visa holders. How many migrants are currently in Canada with fraudulent student visas?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, when we talk about international students, I can say that in my own province of Nova Scotia, for the last over a decade, they come to the province and really do enrich the lives—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, how many students are currently in Canada with a fraudulent student visa?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are taking vital steps, and we have already done that, to ensure that students are supported and that we protect—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, what is the number of students in Canada with fraudulent student visas?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have tightened the visa integrity measures. We have instituted financial requirements—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, what is the number?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, what I can say is, in 2024, we had approved—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, the minister has no idea how many students are in this country with fraudulent student visas, and that is the direct responsibility of her department.

How many foreign students who came to Canada with fraudulent visas in 2024 became permanent residents?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, there is a robust system, and we have tightened those systems. We have updated the postgraduate work permit program to better respond to the needs, and we have limited the number off campus. We are working hard to ensure the international—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, what number of fraudulent visa holders became permanent residents in 2024?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, we are taking steps to ensure that students are supported but at the same time that they are not being taken advantage of, and we are restoring—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, the minister has no idea how many fraudulent student visa holders became permanent residents in this

country last year. The minister's foreign student visa system is a mess.

How many fake college acceptance letters were caught in 2024?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, what I would say is, in 2024, IRCC approved 292,431 new study permits. That is 41% fewer than what was approved in 2023.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, IRCC flagged over 10,000 foreign student acceptance letters as fraudulent in 2024.

Why did the oversight of the minister's department fail so badly when these letters were issued?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have instituted stronger integrity to prevent any student fraud, particularly when students are taken advantage of by fraudulent partners that—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, can the minister give one example of a policy she has implemented to prevent 10,000 fraudulent foreign student acceptance letters?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, yes, of course I can. We have implemented an enhanced letter of acceptance verification system to protect these students from fraud.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, did the 10,000 people who were granted a fraudulent acceptance letter last year come to Canada?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, students who were granted letters fraudulently did not come to Canada.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, the minister is confirming, on the record, that none of the 10,000 students who received flagged fraudulent acceptance letters came to Canada last year.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, what I have said and will say again is that we have implemented stronger integrity to prevent students from being taken advantage of. We have also clarified that programs delivered through—

• (2140)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has a final question.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Chair, how many fraudulent study permits have been identified in 2025?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we have a robust system, but it is not a 100% tool to prevent fraud, which is why we are working to secure and protect our system.

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Chair, the Liberals' #WelcomeToCanada and open borders have led to the highest asylum claims in our country. How many asylum claims are pending right now?

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Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, we have introduced Bill C-2 to ensure that we protect our integrity on the borders and—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, that was not the question.

The question was how many asylum claims are pending right now. What is in the inventory?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, between January and April 30, which is the first quarter of 2025, I can say that total asylum claims across Canada had fallen by 36%.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, what is the number?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the asylum numbers have—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, let me do the minister's job for her. The number is 281,000 as of March 31. That is a record. Can the minister tell me what the average time is to process this claim?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I met with the IRB chair and board, and they have advised me that they are working on their time—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, these are basic questions. How long does it take to process an asylum claim in our country? I would like just the amount of time.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, it takes between 14 and 18 months.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, that number is way off. This number is right from her ministry. It is about four years to process the claim.

In the four years to process a refugee claim, the Government of Canada provides a work permit, health care, legal fees, housing, dental care, eye care and prescriptions. Is that true, yes or no?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, as of today, the average time to process these claims is 14 to 18 months.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, that was not the question. The question was this: Are these services provided to asylum seekers while they are waiting for their cases to be heard?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, as I referenced in my opening remarks, when we talked about our estimates, we have interim housing supports. We also have—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, what is the average cost per refugee per year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we will get that information before we leave today, but again, as I said to the member—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, under the Liberal government, fraudulent refugee claims have skyrocketed, making it a backdoor entry to stay in Canada. The minister's predecessor himself has called this “gaming”.

Does the minister agree that under the Liberals' watch, there has been gaming happening in our asylum system?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the measures in Bill C-2 were introduced for the fact that we are seeing a high number of asylum claims, some of which are not legitimate, and that is meant to ensure—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, the Liberal government is requesting over \$800 million for an interim federal health program. This is up almost 15 times since 2017, and the asks keeps going up. Why?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, those numbers are given to provinces and communities to help support the people who come to their provinces as well.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, who is on the hook for this \$800 million? Is it federal taxpayers or provincial taxpayers?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the last I heard, the taxpayers were the Canadian population.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, is the over \$800 million for the interim federal health program sustainable, yes or no?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, as I explained, in the estimates, when there is a rise in part of the estimates, there is a correlation decrease in another estimate.

• (2145)

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, does the minister think it is fair to add hundreds of thousands of asylum claimants, many of whom do not have valid claims, to Canada's already strained health care system?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, that is exactly why we are working to reduce our numbers, and those numbers are decreasing.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Chair, does the minister think it is right to pay asylum claimants social assistance payments for years when they might not have a valid claim in the system?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, that is why the ineligibility requirements in Bill C-2 are there. It is to ensure that we deal with the people who do not have legitimate claims. My—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chair, I want to reassure the minister that I am not here to put on a show or to impress my leader or the House leader of the Bloc Québécois.

Business of Supply

I would like to ask the minister some questions and have a constructive debate with her. In any case, not many people are watching this evening, and I am not looking to get any sound bites from our discussion.

I will begin with the following question. When the estimates were tabled, the government said that the departmental plans would be tabled in June. Is that correct?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, to begin, I would like to thank my colleague. I greatly appreciate his co-operation. We have met once already, and I look forward to working with him to improve the situation, not only in Quebec, but also across Canada.

Could my colleague repeat his question?

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, when the estimates were tabled, the minister said that her government would also table the departmental plans for her department in June.

Is it correct that the government was supposed to table the plans in June?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, departmental plans for my department are due in November. They are always due in November.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, as of today, June 9, 2025, the ministerial plans have still not been tabled. Normally, they are tabled after the estimates.

My understanding is that the minister will not be tabling a departmental plan in June. Normally, there is a departmental plan, a kind of forecast that is presented after the estimates. Someone needs to get their ducks in a row.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I really appreciate that question. It is a very good question.

I can tell my colleague that I will talk to departmental officials about it. I will keep my colleague posted.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, the 2024-25 budget committed \$4.1 billion in spending. Ultimately, \$6.3 billion was spent. For 2025-26, \$5.1 billion in spending is projected.

The Liberals were off by \$2 billion last year. How many billions of dollars does the government think it will be off by this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, what I can say is that estimates have been established for now. I cannot predict what the future will bring.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, in February 2022, the minister's predecessor announced an \$85-million investment to improve the client experience and modernize the immigration system. That plan was in the 2021 economic and fiscal update. It would have reduced processing times and addressed difficulties encountered during the process. The plan also called for 500 new officers to be hired.

In 2024, her department announced that it would be cutting 3,300 officer positions. I would like to know how the department spent \$85 million in 2022 to hire people and reduce processing times, only to reduce the number of officers and increase delays in

2024. What happened to that \$85 million? Is her department's way of doing business productive?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, this is very important. What I can say is that the department's plan is coming. My colleague is right. However, when he talks about modernizing the immigration system, we are at \$134.8 million for this year.

• (2150)

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, in 2022, the government invested \$85 million to hire 500 officers and reduce processing times. In 2024, those times increased and the department laid off 3,300 officers.

Can the minister explain the logic behind all that? Is that what we should expect in the coming years?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I really appreciate these questions.

I must point out that I have only been minister for a few weeks. It is important for me to answer my colleague's questions. I understand these issues. They are important. I think the processing time is probably related to Ukraine and Afghanistan.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, we will try again in committee.

I believe the Conservative member asked the minister earlier about processing times for asylum claims.

What is the government's target? I am told that the government wants to reduce processing times. By how much? Do they have a number in mind? What should the processing time be for an asylum claim in Canada?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I know there has been a 71% reduction in visitors who have—

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, it is not complicated. I want a number. Are we talking about six months, a year, two years, three years, four years or two months? What is the government's target processing time for asylum claims? The government must have a target for how long it should take to process an asylum claim. What is the target?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are working on reducing processing times. I have already met with representatives of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, who assured me that they are working very hard and efficiently.

I think that Bill C-2 will help a lot.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, from what I understand, the government has no target processing time. Is that right?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, as I said, I really appreciate my colleague's questions. They are important.

What I am saying is that we are working to reduce processing times—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, if they are working to reduce processing times, that must mean they have a target. Without a target, reducing processing times is absolutely meaningless.

It is not complicated. It is a yes-or-no question: Is there a target? Reducing is not a target. Is there a target of six months, a year or two years for the time it takes to process an asylum claim?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, as I understand it, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada processes 85,000 claims a year.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, I will drop that question.

Does the minister believe that asylum claims fall under federal jurisdiction? If so, does she believe that asylum seekers are being divided evenly throughout Canada?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I think that the member is talking about the Canada-Quebec accord. Is that right?

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, asylum seekers fall exclusively under federal jurisdiction, pursuant to the international conventions that Canada has signed. No province has authority over asylum seekers.

Does the minister think asylum seekers are currently being distributed evenly throughout Canada? Does she not think that they are concentrated in certain provinces, such as Quebec and Ontario?

• (2155)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we understand and recognize the role that Quebec plays in welcoming asylum seekers. We have always supported Quebec.

The number of asylum seekers in Ontario and Quebec is very high. That is why we are working with the provinces to—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, the minister just admitted that Quebec is doing more than its share and that its intake capacity has in fact been exceeded, yet she says she supports Quebec.

Quebec is asking for \$500,000 to cover the social assistance cheques it sent to asylum seekers in 2024 alone. Asylum seekers are actually a federal responsibility, but the \$500,000 is not included in the appropriations.

Why is that?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the federal government has paid the Government of Quebec \$750 million in consideration of the challenges associated with temporary accommodation and asylum caused by irregular border crossings. We always work with the Province of Quebec—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, I am talking about social assistance.

Quebec is asking for \$500,000 for the social assistance it paid. This is not included in the appropriations. Will Quebec get that money?

Business of Supply

Furthermore, I do not think Quebec received \$750 million for asylum seekers. If we had, we would be very happy. I think the minister meant \$750,000.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we remain committed to doing our part and working with Quebec to fulfill our national and international obligations towards people fleeing violence.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, the minister says she is helping and supporting Quebec, but the Quebec government has spent \$500,000 providing social assistance to asylum seekers. This is not included in the appropriations. When will the government reimburse Quebec for that social assistance?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, yes, the Quebec government received \$750 million, not \$750,000, for temporary housing for asylum seekers.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I understand now, Mr. Chair. It was \$750 million. However, Quebec has not received anything in terms of social assistance. There is nothing in the estimates. Why is it not in the estimates?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, since 2017, Quebec has received \$590.8 million under the interim housing assistance program. That represents nearly 50% of all funding allocated under this program.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, last fall, the previous government implemented measures for temporary foreign workers.

Those measures are currently having an extremely negative impact on businesses in Quebec's regions. For example, in the housing sector, if a company builds roofs on site, 20% of its workers can be temporary foreign workers. If the roofs are built in a factory, only 10% of them can be temporary foreign workers. The measures that were adopted last fall are extremely detrimental.

Will the government change this so these companies can survive? Right now, they are in big trouble.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, that is an important question.

The two levels of government jointly administer the temporary foreign worker program. Quebec controls more than 50% of the immigration for this type of worker, but we are here to work with Quebec, regardless.

• (2200)

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, will the government amend the changes that were made in the fall, yes or no? This is very important to people, especially business owners and foreign workers in the regions, who are feeling scared and anxious right now.

Business of Supply

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I have only been here for three and a half weeks, and I want to continue working with all the provinces, including Quebec, but also with my officials. We are going to come back to this. There have been many changes to many programs.

[English]

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Chair, the minister said tonight, referring to the levels plan, “we have met and exceeded the target”. I want to dig into that a bit.

By the way, I will be splitting my time three ways.

What is the population of non-permanent residents expected to be at the end of 2025 according to the plan?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, let me welcome the colleague to the House to ask me questions tonight.

As I have said, we tabled the levels plan for 2025—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, could I get the answer to the question of how many non-permanent residents are expected to be in Canada at the end of 2025?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the plan that we tabled is that, by the end of 2027, we will decrease—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, I will advise the minister that, actually, her plan has more than one year in it. It has three years. Does she not know the number for the end of this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, we have tabled the levels plan. It is a levels plan that had been consulted on by provinces—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, the number seems to be eluding the minister. I will help her. It is two and a half million. As of right now, Statistics Canada knows that number of non-permanent residents in Canada. Does the minister know how many are actually here right now?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I really appreciate these questions from the colleagues across the way. I very much look forward to working with them to enhance our immigration system—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, we have the preamble, so that is great. Now, you can just move right into the number. What is the actual number of non-permanent residents in Canada right now?

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I think if we could allow the minister to actually have the answer, maybe they could get an answer.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Order.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, we will be reducing the number by 5% of Canada's population.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, I will help the minister again. The number is just a bit over 3 million. It is three million compared to two and a half million, that is 500,000 people over. Does the minister acknowledge that is the current state, and that that is what she means when she says they have met those targets?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, these are important questions. Canadians are watching. Canadians are looking. We all campaigned a short month ago. Canadians deserve to have—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, I will ask again. There are three million actual versus two and a half million planned. Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are reducing the number by 5% of the population. This is in our levels plan, and we are on track to meet that.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, the actuals are higher. They are higher. How can that be achieving the plan? How is she going to achieve this plan by the end of the year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the first quarter of 2025 figures I have been provided meet and exceed the reductions that have been targeted.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, let us look at it a different way. The current population is 41.7 million according to Stats Canada, which is 200,000 higher than it was at the end of last year, 500,000 higher than the government's goal. Is the government on track to hit their population target for this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, population targets are not simply due to immigration, asylums and so on. There are people who also give birth who are Canadians and people who die.

• (2205)

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, the last report provided by the government actually included a number, and that is where I am getting it from: 41,232,000. Does the minister not know this number?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we are getting there. We are reducing our immigration targets. We have Bill C-2 in front of us to deal with the large surge of asylums—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, would the minister ever alter reports to remove data?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I do not understand where these questions are coming from. I do not know if it is something these members think—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Business of Supply

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, I can answer that. The report to Parliament in October had these population numbers, but now they do not, so I am wondering if the minister was trying to hide the data of the population numbers.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, I have been in this seat for about three and a half weeks. I think the questions being posed on the other side are either totally misplaced or they are wrong.

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Chair, I would like to know if the minister thinks she has any responsibility for the department prior to her time, or is it all just new since she came here?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair. I have been receiving briefings daily. Prime Minister Carney convened—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: This is just a reminder to use titles and not members' proper names.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Chair, the minister claims she has been on the job for only a couple of weeks, but she was the minister of immigration in Nova Scotia for many years, close to a decade, I think. During that time, the Auditor General, in 2022, found that there was no process to determine labour market needs.

The minister also asked for no cap on the number of people coming into her province. Is this what we can expect from the minister in her tenure as federal immigration minister: no cap and no process to determine labour market needs?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am proud of the work that I and the government at that time did in Nova Scotia.

In 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017, we were living in different times. Right now we have an economic crisis in the country overall. We need to manage our immigration numbers.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, we were living in different times. It was a Conservative federal government and we had a balanced budget. I am thankful to the minister for acknowledging that. That is wonderful; it warms my heart.

Earlier, the minister said that the economy would have collapsed if it had not been for immigration during COVID. Does she want to stand by that statement?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, immigrants have built this country. Most members of House, unless they are indigenous, are immigrants, either—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, during COVID, the federal government asked everybody to give up their civil liberties, and it shut down the economy to bend the curve to lower the impact, supposedly, on emergency rooms. Then the government added a hockey stick curve of immigrants to the strain on the emergency rooms. Why did it?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, during COVID, my recollection is, our borders were all closed.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, the minister said earlier that they brought immigrants in because of COVID. All right, there is a lot to unpack here.

There are 500,000 people, as of December 2024, who should have been removed from Canada. How many were removed?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we need to contextualize the numbers when we present them in the House. There are facts.

The public safety minister was here, on Thursday I believe, and he is in charge of answering those questions.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, how many of the 500,000 people who are not supposed to be in Canada have been removed? I would like just the number.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, people whose visa expires, or people who should not be here, need to leave. If they do not, that is a CBSA—

• (2210)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, here is the thing: The minister cannot set levels if she does not know how many people have left, so it is her job. I need to know how many people of that 500,000 have left. How about this: Does the minister even know? Does she have any clue?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, my role here tonight is not to talk about people leaving and the people who are here with an expired visa and so on, in terms of how many have left. That is completely a CBSA function, and public safety takes care—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, Canadians literally pay the minister's \$100,000 top-up and give her a car to know the numbers. How many of the 500,000 people who were supposed to leave in December actually left? This is pretty simple: How many is it? Does she know?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I have answered that question a number of times. I will try one more time. People leaving because of an expired visa or deportation, or anything of that matter, is the purview of the Canada Border Services Agency, which is not—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Business of Supply

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, however, the minister's purview is to set the levels plan. If she is setting levels with hundreds of thousands of foreign students and low-skilled labourers but does not know how many low-skilled labourers and foreign students who are not supposed to be in the country have left, how can she set levels if she does not know that number?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, that question gives me the opportunity to talk about our immigration levels plan, which does set permanent resident numbers. For the first time, this past year, temporary numbers have been set. I am proud of the work that was done prior to my becoming a minister. It is working.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, if the government does not remove people from Canada, why do we have an immigration minister to begin with?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I need to thank the Prime Minister for having faith in me and selecting me to be the minister. I would say the answer is known as to why we would need somebody at that helm, because we—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, does the minister at least agree that the 500,000 people who are here but should not be here, as of December, should leave immediately? Can she say, yes, she agrees?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, my message to the member and to those listening is that people who have expired visas and are not to be in Canada should leave. If they—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, what is the minister's plan to get those people to leave?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, we work with the CBSA, or the CBSA is there to take control of those circumstances.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, how many more people is the minister going to let into the country while those people stay here?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, again, we have set the targets for permanent residents. We have set the target for temporary residents, which would include the international students—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, tonight we have heard the minister not know how many people have left the country. She has claimed that the processing time for asylum claims, while people with potentially fraudulent asylum claims claim social benefits, is 18 months. Her department said it was 44 months in committee just a few short months ago. She will not answer basic questions about the file. She does not take responsibility for these jobs.

After being an immigration minister in a different jurisdiction for over a decade, the minister knows the job. She is just not doing it. When the minister does not know how many people have left and whether there should be an immigration minister or not because people are not removed, that devalues Canadian citizenship. It makes a mockery of the process.

There are so many immigrants in Canada. The minister is right: Immigrants have built this country, and it is not the fault of people wanting to come to Canada in terms of who started this mess. What she has done here is admitted that this system is out of control. The Liberal government has completely debased our immigration system and the value of following the rules to come to this country, as so many other immigrants have done before. That is unacceptable. There are so many people who want to come to Canada. People who have come here through legal pathways want to bring their families and cannot because of backdoor loopholes that have abused the asylum claim system, #WelcomeToCanada.

I just want to close with this: Given all of these failures and given the minister's failure tonight in question period, in debate this week and her failures in Nova Scotia, does she think she is going to make it past December? Most of her predecessors have averaged a tenure that is less than the asylum claim processing time.

• (2215)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I will tell you one thing that I agree with the member on: Immigrants did build this country. I congratulate her for getting that one right.

Our temporary targets were developed to achieve the objective of reducing the proportion of non-permanent residents to 5% of the total population by the end of 2026.

Supporting the Canadian economy continues to be our priority. We will work on bringing the talent that we need here, including those who are doctors and construction workers to build homes. Canada welcomed over 483,000 new permanent residents in 2024, and over 58% of those were from economic programs. That is something we are very proud of. More than 30,500, about 7.2%, were French-speaking immigrants. I know they do not care about the answers, but—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Order, please.

Time has now expired for that block, so we will move to the final block of the night.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has the floor.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Vancouver East. How much time do the two of us have to share?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: There are four minutes remaining.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, there are two minutes to each of us then.

I begin with the Minister of Immigration. At 9:27 p.m., Minister, you said, "Legitimate asylum seekers, we want to protect you." Minister, can you reconcile that with the expert opinion of Amnesty International and the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, who say that Bill C-2 is an attack on the human right to seek asylum?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: We have a point of order from the hon. opposition leader.

Business of Supply

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Chair, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands asked a question directly to the minister. You have, correctly, reminded colleagues this evening that they should be asking their questions through the Chair. This is an important principle in our system because it provides some separation between members directly, so there is a bit of separation there. I just want to make sure of that.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The member is right. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands should go through the Chair.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, through you to the minister, how does the minister reconcile her claim with the expert opinion of the experts I cited?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I know the member works very hard for her constituents, and I appreciate that. She spoke about the borders act, which is Bill C-2. What I will say, and this is what I have said, is that the integrity of the immigration system is critical to supporting border security and assuring Canadians that the system is well managed, including protections against fraud and misuse. The border bill would provide Canada with—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, in an earlier exchange with the member for Repentigny, the Minister of Environment misinformed this House. I would like to ask if she has read subsection 5(6) of the bill, which says all the factors for consideration are purely discretionary and the cabinet may consider them.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have specifically referred to the factors that are in the bill. They are the factors that are in the bill, and I stand by that.

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Chair, in light of Trump's travel ban that came into effect today, does the Minister of Immigration agree that the U.S. is still a safe third country?

• (2220)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Chair, yes.

Jenny Kwan: Mr. Chair, has the department done an assessment, and will she table that assessment?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, these are very important questions, and I take them seriously—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Jenny Kwan: Mr. Chair, well, will the minister table the assessment?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, the 2024 assessment was done.

Jenny Kwan: Mr. Chair, no, the travel ban was put in place today. Has the minister, and her department, done an assessment on whether or not the U.S. is still a safe third country?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, as I already replied, yes, we do consider the U.S. as a safe third—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Jenny Kwan: Mr. Chair, from that answer, the minister's department has not done an assessment on the U.S., whether or not it is a safe third country, with the travel ban being imposed today.

My next question is this: Will the minister grant Jimmy Lai honorary Canadian citizenship?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, I cannot discuss personal or individual cases on the floor of the House, for privacy reasons.

Jenny Kwan: Mr. Chair, it is not a personal question. It is a simple question on whether or not the minister is willing to grant him honorary citizenship.

The government put in the program for caregivers, and many of them were actually unable to finish the process when the system crashed. Will the minister provide alternatives for those applicants?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Chair, it is an important question. I will go back with my officials, and we will work through details on that particular program.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: It being 10:21 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 27, it is my duty to end the proceedings. The debate in committee of the whole will continue on the next designated day. The committee will now rise, and I will now leave the chair.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:21 p.m.)

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