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Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

• (1000)

[Translation]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 7(3) of the Auditor General Act, the spring 2025 reports of the Auditor General of Canada.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), these documents are deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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[English]

COMMISSIONER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 7(5) of the Auditor General Act, the spring 2025 reports from the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development.

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), these reports are deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY ACT

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-205, An Act to amend the National Housing Strategy Act.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce my private member's bill to amend the National Housing Strategy Act. I thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for seconding the bill. She is always a clear voice for making sure that human rights and the inherent rights of indigenous peoples are respected in action.

Canadian law states that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right, yet we know that is not happening. In Vancouver, homelessness has grown by at least one-third in the last three

years. In Halifax, homelessness doubled in the last year. When people do not have adequate housing or cannot afford rent, they are forced to live in danger on the street, yet the current government's plan to fund developers for more private-market housing would not solve the housing crisis, not when 30 years of market-based solutions have already proven a failure.

We need a human rights approach, and the government needs to build homes that people can actually afford. If we do not, encampments for unhoused people across the country will only keep growing. In Vancouver East, we have seen how forced encampment and eviction destabilize people, push them deeper into trauma and threaten the safety of encampment residents and the wider community alike.

The bill would amend the National Housing Strategy Act based on the federal housing advocate's advice to prohibit forced encampments on federal land. The bill would require the federal government to consult with other levels of government and to involve indigenous peoples and encampment residents so that they are able to access housing alternatives other than forced encampments.

I hope all members of the House will support the bill.

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

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• (1005)

NATIONAL STRATEGY ON BRAIN INJURIES ACT

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-206, An Act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries.

He said: Mr. Speaker, June is Brain Injury Awareness Month, so I am pleased to introduce a bill today that calls on the Minister of Health to develop a national strategy on brain injuries. The theme of this year's campaign is "Beyond the Injury", which aims to raise awareness about the impacts brain injuries can have on the lives of those who have suffered injuries, as well as on their loved ones.

Brain injuries can occur in a variety of ways, including accidents, illnesses and strokes. Each brain injury is unique, with the potential to cause physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects. It is estimated that 1.6 million Canadians are living with a brain injury.

Routine Proceedings

A national strategy on brain injuries would include measures to reduce brain injuries, improve training for health care professionals and identify challenges associated with brain injury, like problematic substance use and homelessness.

I want to thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for seconding the bill. Her sister, Gina Carradine, suffered a brain injury, so the bill is personal to the member. I would also like to thank the former member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, Alistair MacGregor, who championed the bill in the last Parliament.

In the previous Parliament, the bill passed unanimously in the House in June 2024, but did not get to the Senate due to the stagnation of Parliament in the fall of 2024. I am deeply honoured to carry this very important work forward, and I hope all members will support the bill again.

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

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CANADA PENSION PLAN

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-207, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be tabling my legislation, an act to amend the Canada Pension Plan. I am very grateful to the member for Vancouver Kingsway for seconding my bill.

The bill would strengthen the Canada Pension Plan act and give the millions of Canadians who contribute to and receive benefits from the CPP a say in the future of their CPP. It would protect the CPP from politicians who would gamble with their retirement security.

Canadians need and deserve financial security in retirement, and the Canada Pension Plan is a critical component of that financial security, but the CPP is at risk from Conservatives. Danielle Smith's United Conservatives in Alberta have passed legislation that would authorize the province to withdraw Alberta from the Canada Pension Plan.

While Albertans are very worried about their CPP and losing their access to CPP, the implications of Smith's plan go well beyond Alberta. Alberta's withdrawal from the CPP could harm millions of Canadians outside Alberta who rely on the CPP now and will rely on it into the future. The bill would change the CPP act to require approval of at least two-thirds of the provinces currently participating in the CPP, ensuring that Canadians impacted by the decision would have a say in the future of their pension plan.

New Democrats are committed to protecting retirement benefits for Albertans and for all Canadians, today and into the future. I hope all members will support my bill.

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

PETITIONS**GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME**

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to join Parliament virtually to present a petition on behalf of constituents who are petitioning the Government of Canada to take action to implement a guaranteed livable income.

The petitioners point out that this would be essentially a tax measure. It does not include administrative burden, as it would be relying on the social insurance number, and it would not be needs-based. The petitioners point out that savings would occur through decreased pressure on our health care system, criminal justice system and demand for social services.

Reducing poverty is to the benefit of all Canadians, and the petitioners hope the Government of Canada will respond favourably to the petition.

• (1010)

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by the health-conscious residents of my riding of Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke.

Last month, the Liberal government covertly adopted the WHO's so-called Pandemic Agreement, just prior to the opening of the 45th Parliament. This legally binding treaty that it has signed on to never received a single debate, nor was it brought to a vote in the chamber. By ignoring the consent of Parliament, which is elected by Canadians, the treaty will give unelected, unaccountable UN bureaucrats the power to override our laws, rights and freedoms.

The freedom-loving petitioners are calling for the government to immediately withdraw from the WHO's so-called Pandemic Agreement.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADA CARBON REBATE AND PAYMENT TO QUEBEC

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ) moved:

That, given that,

- (i) as of April 1, 2025, the government eliminated carbon pricing for Canadian consumers and that this pricing did not apply to Quebec,
- (ii) despite its elimination, the government spent \$3.7 billion to continue Canada Carbon Rebate payments that Quebecers do not receive,
- (iii) individuals in the listed provinces received the rebate cheque on April 22, 2025, during the federal general election,
- (iv) the rebate was paid for with government funds, and therefore by all taxpayers, including those from Quebec,

the House call on the government to pay Quebec, without conditions, an amount equivalent to its contribution to the \$3.7 billion in spending, estimated at \$814 million.

She said: Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that I will be sharing my time with my distinguished colleague, the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

Since this is my first speech in the House, I want to take some time to thank a few people who made it possible for me to stand here today. I will start with the voters of Saint-Jean, who have placed their trust in me for a third time and given me the privilege of representing them in Parliament. Of course, I would also like to thank the campaign workers. A campaign team can never work as effectively without them. Moreover, we are only as strong as our teams. I must not forget my office staff, who held down the fort during the campaign: Dave, Hugo, Diane, Huguette and Philippe-Olivier.

Of course, we must also acknowledge our family members, who support us on a daily basis, in good times and bad. There is my little boy, Léopold. I see smiles on my colleagues' faces. People in the House already know him. He was unfailingly patient and resilient during the campaign, and he remains so today. It is clear from the smiles that he brings to people's faces, particularly on the fourth floor. I would also like to thank my colleagues who are taking care of him while I speak in the House.

Although the Speaker read the motion we are proposing today, I am going to read it again. We can never be too careful, as they say. I want to be sure everyone understands exactly what we are talking about today. Our motion reads as follows:

That, given that, (i) as of April 1, 2025, the government eliminated carbon pricing for Canadian consumers and that this pricing did not apply to Quebec, (ii) despite its elimination, the government spent \$3.7 billion to continue Canada Carbon Rebate payments that Quebecers do not receive, (iii) individuals in the listed provinces received the rebate cheque on April 22, 2025, during the federal general election, (iv) the rebate was paid for with government funds, and therefore by all taxpayers, including those from Quebec, the House call on the government to pay Quebec, without conditions, an amount equivalent to its contribution to the \$3.7 billion in spending, estimated at \$814 million.

This request reflects a motion that had the unanimous support of the Quebec National Assembly on April 23, at the tail end of the election. That motion read as follows:

Business of Supply

THAT the National Assembly take note that the federal government is granting a total of \$3.75 billion in early carbon rebate funded by all Québec and Canadian taxpayers, despite the abolition of the carbon tax;

THAT it note that Quebecers are not entitled to these election cheques;

THAT the National Assembly ask the federal parties to commit to giving Québec its share of this payment, estimated at more than \$800 million, without conditions

When considered together, the two motions are pretty self-evident. Nevertheless, I want to go over the history leading up to today's debate on our motion.

This is about the carbon tax. What is the carbon tax, and where did it come from? The government created the carbon tax in 2018 to reduce the impact of climate change by incentivizing consumers to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The tax is a pollution pricing mechanism whereby a cost is applied to every tonne of CO₂ emissions to encourage businesses and consumers to adopt greener behaviours.

Ultimately, this led to a tax on fossil fuels such as gas, diesel and natural gas. That was the stick part of the approach, but there was also a carrot. The tax generated revenue, and 90% of that revenue was redistributed to people in the form of a quarterly rebate. Canadians who indirectly paid into the carbon tax system whenever they bought gas, for example, received a payment four times a year to offset some of what it cost them. Eight out of 10 Canadians received more than they spent on the carbon tax. The remaining 10% in unused tax revenue was supposed to fund energy transition programs.

● (1015)

Year after year, 80% of families received somewhere between \$190 and \$540 per payment. On March 14, before he was even elected, the Prime Minister announced that the carbon tax would be eliminated as of April 1. There went the stick, and, logically, the carrot should have disappeared too, but it did not. That is precisely the problem. That is exactly the issue at the heart of our motion today.

Business of Supply

Once the carbon tax was cancelled, and since the payments made to the public were advance payments, people should not have received any carbon rebates. Basically, taxpayers were given an advance on the amount that they would have paid to help them cope with the cost of living and so on. However, since we knew that this amount would not be collected—as of April 1, no more carbon tax would be collected—there was no reason to give any rebates. However, in what strongly resembled a vote grab, the government decided to take \$3.7 billion that did not come from collection of the carbon tax, but from taxpayer funds. The government then gave that money back to everyone, except for Quebecers. Quebec ended up being penalized by an obvious vote-seeking measure. The payment was made six days before the election, and it came straight out of Quebecers' pockets. Our opposition day specifically seeks to right this wrong.

During the election debates, the Prime Minister was asked whether he considered this to be an injustice. His answer was rather unclear. We hope that with this debate in the House today, he will have time to consider our proposal, understand all its ins and outs and, once and for all, rectify the situation by giving Quebecers the \$814 million they paid out of their own pockets, with absolutely nothing in return, to hand out goodies to other people.

The real question is whether we can have our cake and eat it too. Taxpayers outside Quebec wanted to receive the carbon tax rebate without having paid the tax. I am leaving out the rest of the Quebec expression because my son is listening somewhere in another room. Beyond that, abolishing the carbon tax still has its challenges and harms Quebec in different ways. We are in a trade war with the United States. We are talking about diversifying markets and the importance of finding markets abroad. For Quebec, Europe is one of the main gateways to economic diversification. We know that starting in January of next year, Europe is going to impose tariffs on the entry of goods from countries that have no carbon pricing. Quebec is not isolating itself. Canada is isolating itself by abolishing carbon pricing and removing the financial incentives aimed at reducing the impact of climate change. This undermines Quebec's market development potential with the European Union.

In the long run, that hurts all taxpayers. During the election campaign, the Bloc Québécois commissioned the Institut de recherche en économie contemporaine to do a study on the costs of climate change. It showed that, in 2023, food prices rose by 8.3% because of climate change, home insurance premiums went up by 4.8% and damage to homes cost all Canadian taxpayers \$2 billion annually. If nothing is done, the cost could hit \$13.6 billion by 2100. Repairing damage done by floods, fires, wildfires and all the extreme climate-related events we are experiencing costs an average of \$720 per person per year. By 2050, it could be as much as \$2,300 per person.

The purpose of our motion today is to correct an injustice that was done during this year's election, but we must not avoid the discussion about climate change. It is one that calls for a longer-term view, because if we do not tackle climate change, we are doing future generations an injustice. The debate must be had more than once, not just today.

I encourage people to follow the various efforts led by the Bloc Québécois to address the issue. Our hope right now is that the in-

justice spontaneously caused by the Prime Minister will be corrected today.

* * *

● (1020)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Rebecca Altj (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the House that Thursday shall be an allotted day.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADA CARBON REBATE AND PAYMENT TO QUEBEC

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it was responsible of the government to take a look at the provinces that were contributing directly to the carbon tax. Many families, specifically people on fixed incomes and low-income individuals in the provinces that were affected, would have budgeted based on the fact that they were getting the carbon rebate. I believe the government had an obligation to consider that in making the determination to go forward and make those payments. Had it not done that, arguably, many of the constituents I represent and those in the provinces where the rebate was being paid out would have ultimately been put to a disadvantage. Especially those who are low-income and also seniors, and the Bloc likes to talk about seniors a lot, would have been seriously disadvantaged.

Would the member not agree with that?

● (1025)

[Translation]

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, ultimately, the government decided to continue the payments even though it had been announced for some time that the carbon tax would be cancelled. The public already knew about it.

The injustice that is being created stems from the fact that Quebec, which continues to fight climate change, is being discriminated against because the measure that was announced is not a carbon tax measure. The carbon tax was abolished, and it was purely an election gimmick paid for out of the pockets of Quebec taxpayers.

Today's motion is not about asking the population that received the \$3.7 billion to pay it back. We are asking the government to compensate Quebec, which paid out of its own pocket for an amount it did not receive, even though it did everything right.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, which presented the truth and the facts known to all voters when it came time to vote.

As we know, the Bloc Québécois has suffered a number of election losses at the hands of the Liberals, particularly in the riding of Laurier—Sainte-Marie, where the member who spent his entire career standing up for the environment suddenly changed his mind on the carbon tax, yet was re-elected with a 17,000-vote majority in a left-leaning, proud and very environmentally conscious riding.

How does the member explain that?

Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, we know it was a unique election. Unless I am mistaken, it was not about the carbon tax, but more specifically about a certain president south of the border.

I daresay that was the most influential factor because, as my colleague kindly noted, we put forward a lot of facts. As everyone knows, one of those facts is that the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec.

[*English*]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague cares deeply about what is happening when it comes to our environment and to taking action on protecting the environment and lowering emissions. Right now, there is a forest fire raging in my riding in Nuu-chah-nulth territory, in the Nahmint Valley.

I want to hear from my colleague about solutions, especially when it comes to carbon pricing and the role it plays in tackling climate change. I know the motion is about the money and Quebec, but I want to hear from her specifically about the important role that carbon pricing plays in terms of taking action when it comes to climate. This is a climate emergency, and I think she recognizes that.

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, there are several parts to my colleague's question.

The wildfires currently devastating civilian populations are human tragedies. However, from a dispassionate perspective, they are also economic tragedies. For example, it costs a fortune to send in the armed forces to evacuate civilians. There is a cost to environmental inaction.

When it comes to the green transition, Quebec led the way by creating the carbon exchange. It is a way to mitigate climate change and incentivize emissions reductions, and it is one of the ways with the fewest economic repercussions, as the OECD recognizes.

If the rest of Canada wants to take a page from Quebec's experience, it would probably come out a winner in the long run. It would also open up opportunities in new international markets, to the ex-

tent that Canada is dealing with a president south of the border who is giving it a hard time. Canada could engage more widely with the European market.

Business of Supply

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating my colleague for her brilliant speech. It was the first speech of the day, and I think we are off to a good start. I hope that the coming speeches will live up to the standard she set.

Today we are debating the Bloc Québécois's motion on the infamous carbon rebate. Why are we discussing this today? Because it is a major issue for Quebec and, more importantly, for Quebecers' wallets.

In the House, we often hear the other parties say that the carbon tax or the carbon exchange is costing us. I would tell them that climate change is costing us, but what costs even more is voting Liberal. The Liberals decided to take the money from the carbon rebate, send it out to every Canadian and have Quebec pay for it. That is a real scandal. This was not talked about enough during the election and that is why we are talking about it today.

In fact, as soon as he took office, to show he was not like the previous government, and, let us face it, in a bit of a Trumpian manner, the Liberal Prime Minister's first act of was to have himself photographed holding pen to paper in his office. That was his way of saying, "Look, I have power, I make the decisions", just like his counterpart south of the border. He was aping the U.S. President, who is not an example to follow, in my opinion, but who seems to be a source of inspiration for the Liberals.

On March 14, 2025, the Prime Minister signed an order eliminating the carbon tax. With the stroke of a pen, it was done. Carbon pricing for individuals fell to zero dollars. The order took effect two weeks later, on April 1. That means that citizens of English Canada no longer pay a carbon tax, while there is still a carbon exchange in Quebec.

What is important is that the federal government said that it would return 90% of revenues from the carbon tax to Canadians, and that their costs would therefore go down. According to the government, 80% of people who were paying the carbon tax were receiving more than what they paid. Financially, that might look like a good deal.

In general, people were receiving a cheque to offset the carbon tax they paid. The problem is that, in theory, when they eliminated the carbon tax, they should also have eliminated the cheque, because 90% of the revenues used to cover that cheque no longer exist. It made sense, it was logical. That is what should have happened.

Business of Supply

However, members of the government opposite are crafty little operators. During the election, the Liberals were trying to make themselves look good. The timing was perfect. Instead of cancelling the cheque after the tax revenue was abolished, they decided they would still honour payments that were due on April 22, since that would fall right in the middle of the campaign. Normally, one plus one equals two, or one minus one equals zero, in this case. However, the Liberals decided not to cancel the remaining payment on April 22. I would note that payments are made in advance for the following months. The Liberals said they were going to keep this payment so that people would be in a good mood during the election. As luck would have it, April 22 was six days before the vote and people in English Canada received \$3.7 billion regardless of the absence of revenue. In other words, those payments were directly added to the debt. Quebeckers were saddled with debt to enrich English Canada. That is exactly what happened.

The Liberals did not include that in their election expenses. At \$3.7 billion, I can say that they would have far exceeded the spending limit. That was during the campaign; it was an obviously political decision, and clearly acknowledged as such. In fact, when asked during the election, the Prime Minister said that, since they do not pay the tax, Quebeckers would not receive a cheque. However, Canadians, who no longer paid a carbon tax, still received the cheque from us. That is the reality. He must have thought we were gullible and tried to pull a fast one on us. At the end of the day, I think he succeeded. That is why we are coming back to this subject today. We hope the House will support us. It is not just the Bloc Québécois that should be outraged by this, but all Quebec MPs from other political parties, as well as all MPs outside Quebec who have even a minimal sense of justice and fairness, at the end of the day.

• (1030)

The cheques announced by the Prime Minister were supposed to cover the period from April to June 2025, during which there was no more carbon tax. This cost the federal treasury \$3.7 billion at a time when, as we know, the deficit is already astronomical. The Conservatives should take notice, since they bring this up all the time. We nevertheless made that expenditure and, since then, we have added other expenditures. For example, cancellation of the capital gains tax was supposed to be implemented; supplementary estimates were supposed to be tabled in the House, and individuals received a tax cut. All of this was done without a budget. We keep spending without knowing what our revenues are. We may get a surprise next fall.

Since the carbon tax was no longer being collected, we Quebeckers are the ones who paid for this. From coast to coast to coast, the federal government sent nice cheques to English Canada to show its generosity. Basically, what the government did was take our money, pay people with it and then pretend to be Santa Claus, while Quebeckers ended up being the Christmas turkeys. Everyone got a cheque except Quebeckers. In Quebec, not only did we keep the carbon exchange, but we also paid the carbon rebate to everyone who paid a carbon tax. Basically, we are paying for the carbon exchange, we are paying for the carbon tax in English Canada, and now we are also paying indirectly for all the impacts of climate change. Everyone pays for that, but like it or not, when we have

policies aimed at tackling climate change, we end up reducing the impacts of climate change. Basically, the Liberal government has just told English Canada that it is now party time, and it can pollute as it pleases. Quebeckers are therefore being forced to fund financial irresponsibility, but especially Canada's environmental irresponsibility. It is reverse equalization; it is a polluter-paid approach. Those who pollute less pay for English Canada. That is serious. What is more, we are paying twice; we are paying through the carbon exchange and through the carbon rebate cheque that English Canada gave itself.

Journalists have spoken out about this situation. For example, on April 10, Hélène Buzzetti was the first to raise this point in her *Coops de l'information* column. She said it made no sense and that, when she saw it, she checked to see if the story was true. She had to find out for herself, and it was confirmed. Another business reporter, Michel Girard, also said the same thing in *Le Journal de Montréal*. He said that it made no sense and that Quebeckers had been taken for a ride. Meanwhile, it was complete radio silence from the Liberals. There was no problem. Everything was fine. Later, many other journalists started asking questions and writing about this situation, because it was found that \$800 million out of the \$3.7 billion had indeed been taken from Quebeckers' pockets and sent to the rest of Canada. What is \$800 million? It amounts to about \$10 million forcibly taken from every riding in Quebec to write a cheque to English Canada, to make English Canadians richer. It has been said that Quebeckers are poorer. Now, there is no question as to why. In fact, we are less and less poor because we are in a good situation, but some people enjoyed saying it. This is proof of how the government is managing this situation. I would like to see the 44 Liberal MPs go to their ridings to explain to their taxpayers, constituents and fellow citizens that their government abolished the carbon tax in the other provinces and that, so as not to hurt the people who were getting cheques, it made every riding in Quebec send \$10 million to English Canada, even though Quebeckers were not getting anything and that all of this was perfectly normal. That is how Canada works, is it not? I am pretty sure that their constituents would not be happy to hear that, because it is outright misappropriation of funds. Quebec is becoming poorer because of this. Quebeckers are being treated like second-class citizens.

That is why, on April 23, 2025, the Quebec National Assembly voted unanimously in favour of a motion calling on the federal government to reimburse Quebec for the \$814 million it made Quebec pay. It is not just the Bloc Québécois that is speaking out against this. The National Assembly did so unanimously. We are talking about the Coalition Avenir Québec, which forms the government, the Parti Québécois, Québec Solidaire and the Liberal Party of Quebec, which often gets along quite well with the federal Liberal Party. Everyone was saying that it made no sense.

I really hope that the House will listen to reason and decide to pay back the money it owes Quebec.

• (1035)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have just introduced a bill that would help Canadians across Canada save more money. This bill would also refund the GST to all Canadians and young people who are looking to buy a new home. This bill would help Canadian families save money, including families in Quebec. However, my colleague failed to mention that.

Did he hear about that when he was out door-knocking during the election campaign?

• (1040)

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, which has nothing to do with the motion before us today. Perhaps she is ashamed of her party's position, because she would not be able to explain to her constituents why \$10 million earmarked for her riding was allocated to the rest of Canada.

To answer my colleague's question, yes, this proposal was acceptable to us. We voted in favour of the ways and means motion, if I am not mistaken. I would even add that eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers was part of our own election platform. My colleague cannot therefore accuse us of disagreeing with it and failing to talk about it. It was part of our platform, and we talked about it during the election campaign. We even voted in favour of the ways and means motion.

As for my colleague, will she vote in favour of our motion?

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Speaker.

Akiawenhrahk is the Wendat name for “river”. The Saint-Charles River runs through Wendake from north to south and throughout the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague on his election, which is not his first, second or third election, but his fourth.

My colleague summed things up very well. The debate took place in the middle of an election campaign. His leader, who is not my political friend but a man I respect, asked the Prime Minister a direct question in the middle of a debate. The Prime Minister was unable to give a proper answer in the middle of an election campaign. Despite everything, as he said himself, Quebecers elected 44 out of 78 Liberal members, a strong Liberal majority.

Why did Quebecers, who knew that, vote for the Liberals?

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, my colleague raised a very good question. In fact, I really think that Quebecers did not know about it. I think that is the first reason. It received very little media coverage. Very little was said about it because, during the election campaign, all the attention was focused on the American threat. We were told that Canada had to be united, that we had to set aside all our convictions and what we cared about, and that the important thing was that we vote red.

That is in large part what happened. I would not say that this was the case everywhere, because a number of ridings still chose to support other parties such as the Bloc Québécois, the Conservative

Business of Supply

Party and the NDP. That is why the government does not have a majority. It is a minority government. I hope that, together, we will make the government listen to reason.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I anticipate that I will be asking this question quite a bit, because Bloc members, over the years, have liked to say that they advocate for our seniors. I raised an issue with the first speaker, the member who introduced the motion, and I think it is a legitimate concern. There were individuals on fixed incomes, and I am thinking specifically of seniors and low-income families, who anticipated receiving a rebate. They had incorporated it into their budgets. I believe the government's decision to allow it to proceed was the responsible thing to do.

Would the member not agree that it was the responsible thing for the Prime Minister at the time to allow the rebate to go through for the provinces that were expecting it?

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I am glad my colleague opposite has asked that question again because I was championing at the bit to answer when my colleague from Saint-Jean asked it.

He is telling us that the rebate was planned and that the poorest Canadians might have needed it and that it would have been unfortunate to take that away from them. There is absolutely nothing stopping a government from implementing policies to help those in greatest need. That policy did not help the neediest, though; it helped everyone. Everyone in English Canada received a cheque. The only ones who didn't receive a cheque are the people of Quebec, and the poorest people in Quebec were once again left in greater need by the federal government.

For my part, I stand in solidarity with the poor in Quebec, not just those in English Canada, especially since Quebecers are footing the bill.

[English]

Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Whitby.

It is a privilege to rise today to address today's motion put forward by the member for Saint-Jean. The motion deals with consumer carbon pricing and the significant changes we made on day one. Those changes were the result of listening to Canadians who wanted a climate policy that moved past political divisions. As the motion clearly states, the Prime Minister indeed eliminated the consumer fuel charge for Canadians in jurisdictions where the federal carbon pricing applied as of April 1, 2025. It was what Canadians expected and what our new government delivered.

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Notably, the elimination of the consumer fuel charge did not apply in some jurisdictions, such as Quebec. That is because Quebec has been a leader in addressing climate change. In 2013, Quebec established its own cap-and-trade system to implement a price on carbon pollution. It controls the design of this system and all of the proceeds, which is why the Canada carbon rebate has never applied to Quebec and why Quebec has never expected to receive the carbon rebate.

Quebec's leadership in establishing a cap-and-trade system not only predates federal carbon pricing but has served as a model for jurisdictions across North America. Its linkages with California through the Western Climate Initiative is a testament to how provinces can lead in innovation and cross-border climate solutions.

Our government will always support provinces like Quebec that demonstrate ambition, innovation and accountability in fighting climate change. We on this side of the House respect and appreciate provinces and territories that have implemented their own climate policies that align with the common goal of fighting climate change.

When the Prime Minister made his announcement on March 14, he made it abundantly clear at that time that Canadians in those provinces where the federal fuel charges applied would still receive a final rebate in April. We recognize that Canadians in these provinces would have been expecting that rebate.

I would like to move forward on this issue and talk about the Government of Canada's renewed focus. There is no question that just as Canadians expected the removal of the consumer fuel charge, they also expect that large polluters must pay a price for the pollution they emit if we are ever going to meet our climate goals. This is essential to both our efforts to fight climate change and our commitment to making Canada an energy superpower, because a credible industrial carbon pricing system is a precondition to unlocking access for Canadian products in jurisdictions where carbon border adjustments are being applied.

This is especially important at a time when Canadians and Quebecers agree that we need to diversify our trade to become less reliant on the United States. Countries around the world, including the European Union, are moving quickly to impose carbon border adjustment mechanisms. Without a credible industrial pricing system, Canadian exporters would face tariffs that make our products less competitive. That is not just an environmental risk; it is an economic one. It is why our government is targeting efforts on its approach to carbon pricing on industrial emissions.

According to the independent estimates, industrial carbon pricing is the climate policy with the single largest contribution to achieving our climate targets. It is important to note that we are not doing this alone. Our government is 100% committed to engaging provinces, territories, indigenous communities and stakeholders on how to strengthen industrial carbon pricing and make it work better so that industrial pricing systems continue to maximize emissions reduction. Industrial pricing is needed to generate investment in clean technologies and create well-paying jobs.

Getting back to the motion at hand, it is important to understand how carbon pricing works. Not only did it not apply in jurisdictions like Quebec that have their own carbon pricing system, but where the federal system did apply, all revenues from consumer carbon pricing were returned to the jurisdiction in which they were collected. For example, in my home province of British Columbia, the carbon rebate system also did not apply, but in the provinces where it did, Canadians were paying the fuel charge right up until mere weeks before the final rebate was paid. They were rightly expecting to receive a final Canada carbon rebate payment in April, and for that reason, the final Canadian carbon rebate was issued as a transitional measure following the phase-out of the federal consumer fuel charge. This payment was not a new benefit; it was the final instalment of a rebate tied to past costs under the federal fuel charge. Quebec did not pay federal carbon pricing, so it did not receive the federal rebate. This is just being consistent.

• (1045)

However, now the Bloc wants people to receive a rebate for a program they opted out of and never paid into. The fact is that the final rebate honoured a commitment to families who paid the fuel charge. I would like to emphasize that, especially right now, Canadians and Quebecers expect the federal government to work together to build a stronger Canada that brings us together while growing our economy and fighting climate change.

At a time when Canadians are looking for solutions and expecting actions, not slogans, we need to come together and focus on what works. That means respecting provincial leadership, standing by our commitments and investing in a cleaner, more competitive future for our country. Our government will continue to take serious, science-based and economically sound action on climate change, and we will do so in partnership with all Canadians, wherever they live, in Quebec or any part of this great country. That is how we will build a cleaner economy, that is how we will support Canadian families, and that is how we will meet this moment with ambition and unity.

• (1050)

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are still waiting. We are waiting for action from the government in my riding. The Liberals did their heat pump announcement out east, with the carbon tax, and then decided to divide Canadians, rolling the CMAs and the census data back to benefit Liberal ridings.

The member talks about indigenous Canadians. In York central, we have the Chippewas of Georgina Island, in the middle of Lake Simcoe, which was classified as Toronto, and they do not receive the rural top-up on the carbon tax.

The government admitted there is a problem with it, in budget 2024 and the fall economic statement, to make people whole. Now I have people in my riding who have CRA coming after them. They thought they were rural. They did everything by the book and filed with tax software called UFile that selected rural. The government divided Canadians based on geography. My people are entitled to the rural top-up, and I will fight for every nickel they are still entitled to.

Could the member comment on that, please?

Wade Grant: Madam Speaker, our government will continue to work together, looking for new and innovative ways to ensure that Canadians across this country, from coast to coast to coast, will have money put back into their pockets so they can live a very comfortable life, and so my first nation, the Musqueam first nation, lives a comfortable life.

[Translation]

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a correction to my colleague's speech. He said that Quebecers had not received the payment because they had not paid the carbon tax. We are not talking about all the payments, just the last payment that was made on April 22 and that was called an advance payment, meaning that it was made before expenses. The tax was no longer in effect as of April 1, but it was paid for April, May and June, a three-month period in which it did not even apply. The \$3.7 billion was not paid out of the money that would have been collected from the carbon tax. It was paid out by all Canadians for purposes other than this tax, and Quebecers are not entitled to it.

If they gave some people a gift covering three months of payments on April 22, during the election campaign, why not also give it to Quebecers?

I would like to know whether my colleague has a better understanding of the purpose of our opposition day this time.

[English]

Wade Grant: Madam Speaker, this payment was not a new benefit. It was the final instalment of a rebate tied to past costs under the federal fuel charge. This is not unfair. It is just consistent with what has happened over the last number of years.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about how it was important to make sure that people did get the final payment because they had planned for it.

Business of Supply

Maybe he could expand on some of the measures taken by the government to make sure Canadians actually have money to do the things they need to do, to feed their kids or do extracurricular activities. Maybe the member could talk about some of the projects we have tabled.

• (1055)

Wade Grant: Madam Speaker, the first thing we did was the income tax cut, which is going to put over \$800 in the pockets of families. We are going to eliminate the GST on new home builds, which would allow people to live in my riding for the first time in a number of years. Many more exciting things are coming down the pike.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, for years, the Liberals insisted their carbon tax was working, claiming eight out of 10 Canadians were better off because of the rebate, even as families struggled with soaring food, fuel and heating costs. Now, with no budget and no plan, they have scrapped their own policy, which took more money out of the pockets of Canadians, and have stolen the Conservative plan to axe the tax, pretending it was theirs all along. Just yesterday, a member opposite said that a federal budget has no value.

If the Liberal government spent years defending a tax that made life more expensive and now claims a budget has no value, how can Canadians trust it to deliver anything but higher costs, less transparency, less accountability—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Questions should not be speeches.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Wade Grant: Madam Speaker, we are looking forward to moving forward with this.

While I was outside of the House, I paid attention to what was going on, and it was the other side of the House that divided us on this issue. That is why we want to move forward for Canadians, families, children and seniors. We will continue to do that on this side of the House.

Hon. 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.): Madam Speaker, it is good to see you in the Speaker's chair. I am thankful for the opportunity to take part in today's debate.

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As hon. members are aware, one of the things the Prime Minister did upon assuming his responsibilities was to introduce regulations ceasing the application of the federal consumer fuel charge, effective April 1 of this year. As we also know, one of the first things our government did at the beginning of this parliamentary session was introduce Bill C-4, which would take a further step by completely repealing the consumer carbon price from Canadian law.

For the purpose of considering today's motion, it is important to bear in mind, however, that this is not the only thing that Bill C-4 would accomplish. Of particular relevance to today's motion is the fact that Bill C-4 would cut taxes for nearly all Canadians.

In our government's Speech from the Throne, we outlined our bold and ambitious plan for the future, and key to this plan is bringing down costs so Canadians can keep more of their paycheques to spend on what matters most to them. To make that happen, we introduced Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act, which is before Parliament for consideration. There are a couple of ways this bill would save money for all Canadians, including those in the province of Quebec.

Upon receiving royal assent, the bill would first legislate the delivery of our government's middle-class tax cut, providing tax relief for nearly 22 million Canadians and saving two-income families up to an average of about \$840 a year in the year 2026. More specifically, this would be accomplished by reducing the lowest marginal personal income tax rate from 15% to 14%, effective July 1, 2025. This would help hard-working Canadians all across Canada, in all provinces and territories, keep more of their paycheques to spend, as I said, on what matters most to them. It would mean more money for groceries, kids, housing-related costs and whatever matters most to those families.

To start with, this middle-class tax cut is expected to provide \$2.6 billion in tax relief to Canadians over the next six months and \$5.4 billion in the year 2026, which would be the first full year when the tax rate is 14%. Then, going forward, the middle-class tax cut is expected to deliver over \$27 billion in tax savings to Canadians over five years, starting in 2025-26. As we have made clear in the course of the debate on Bill C-4, most of the benefits of this tax cut would go to the hard-working Canadians who need it most. A core principle for the government, as it always has been for the Liberal Party of Canada, is to help those who need it most first and prioritize them in all of our policy development and work—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères is rising on a point of order.

• (1100)

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I have been listening to my colleague opposite's speech from the beginning, and I think you might point out to him that he gave the wrong speech, because he is talking about Bill C-4 and not the opposition motion before us today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry, I was not really paying attention.

[English]

I will remind the hon. member that we are discussing an opposition day motion. I know there is a lot of leeway in getting to the point, but I would ask the hon. member to get there.

Hon. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, as we have made clear in the course of the debate on Bill C-4, most of the benefits of the tax cut would go to hard-working Canadians. That is because the bulk of its tax relief would go to those Canadians with incomes in the lowest two tax brackets, which includes 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 are those who earned \$57,000 or less in 2025.

We can see how the tax savings from our middle-class tax cut would go to those who need it. What is more, these savings would also be realized when they need it most. That would start on Canada Day.

We would be able to deliver these tax savings to Canadians on a priority basis because, with the announcement of our middle class tax cut, the Canada Revenue Agency has updated its source deduction table—

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I again rise on a point of order. I do not think the member opposite understood you, because he is still reading his speech on Bill C-4. The government has many days and ample time to introduce and debate bills. The opposition, for its part, has just one opposition day per session. He should be discussing today's opposition motion, rather than a bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I will give the hon. member an opportunity to discuss matters that relate directly to the opposition motion. That said, as members know, they have a lot of latitude in raising topics during a debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary wishes to comment on the same point of order.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, in case the member was not paying attention, the parliamentary secretary talked about how Bill C-4 would eliminate the consumer carbon tax from the law. That is why he explained what Bill C-4 would do. If the member had been following the debate, I would suggest that he would see that the parliamentary secretary was, indeed, quite in order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We are not going to debate this.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Hon. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, it is true that we are discussing Bill C-4, which would repeal the consumer carbon tax. I am also referencing a middle-class tax cut that has benefits for Quebec, which is the subject of today's opposition day motion, and that middle-class tax cut would have a positive effect for Quebecers all across the province of Quebec.

We would be able to deliver these tax savings to Canadians on a priority basis with the Canada Revenue Agency updating its source deduction tables for the July to December 2025 period so that employers and pay administrators are able to reduce tax withholdings as of July 1. This means individuals with employment income and other income subject to source deductions could begin to have tax withheld at the lower 14% rate as soon as Canada Day.

However, this is not the only way Bill C-4 would bring savings to Canadians all across our provinces and territories. It would also provide for the elimination of the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued up to \$1 million, saving them up to \$50,000. It would do so while also lowering the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. In short, the rebate would be phased out in a linear manner for new homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. For example, under this linear phase-out, a new home valued at \$1.25 million would be eligible for a rebate of 50% of the maximum first-time homebuyer's GST rebate of \$50,000, which still means a savings of up to \$25,000, and that is significant.

With the making life more affordable for Canadians act, we would be providing a significant increase to the already substantial federal tax support available to first-time homebuyers through programs such as the first home savings account, which allows people to save tax-free for their first home purchase, the RRSP homebuyers' plan and the first-time homebuyers tax credit.

We all know that a home is more than just a roof over one's head. It is a place to build a family. It is a place to build equity towards priorities, such as retirement. It is the single biggest asset that most families own, and it is the financial security for many families. As such, it is the largest, most important purchase most people will ever make in their lifetimes. By helping people finance that purchase, we are helping more young people and more families achieve one of their most important goals in life.

At the same time, as I made clear at the outset, Bill C-4 would permanently remove the federal fuel charge from Canadian law. With the removal of the federal fuel charge, effective April 1, 2025, eligible Canadians did receive a final Canada carbon rebate payment, starting April 22. Our government decided to provide this final Canada carbon rebate payment to eligible households, but, and this is important, in provinces where the federal fuel charge applied, which does not include Quebec or British Columbia, by the way, it was especially important to us to ensure that families, especially low-income families that had been counting on those rebate checks, would be able to plan their family budgets on the assumption that they would be getting the rebate payment.

The federal fuel charge only applied in provinces that did not have their own systems in place to put a consumer price on pollution, and the majority of proceeds from the federal fuel charge were

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returned to households in those provinces via the Canada carbon rebate. As we know, Quebec does not have such a system in place. It opted out when it had the chance, and therefore did not contribute federal fuel charges to the federal government.

The Government of Canada continues to believe that a price on pollution is key to meeting our emissions reduction targets, which is specifically why we have kept the large emitter output pricing system in place. In fact, a price on pollution for large emitters will continue to be a pillar of Canada's plan to build a strong economy and a greener future.

Canada's emissions reduction plan contains a comprehensive suite of mitigation measures, strategies and investments, and that includes a price on pollution for large industrial emitters. With the elimination of the consumer fuel charge, we are able to refocus federal carbon pollution pricing standards on ensuring that carbon pricing systems are in place across Canada on a broad range of greenhouse gas emissions from industry.

● (1105)

In doing so, we will ensure that we have a system that is fair and effective, and competitive internationally, because of course we know that many of our products are going to be subject to carbon border adjustment mechanisms and that those will essentially penalize us if we do not have an industrial system in place for pricing carbon.

At the same time, we will continue to move forward with measures, such as our middle class tax cut, which will save all hard-working Canadian families hundreds of dollars a year, regardless of where they live. These are measures we have put in place in short order in this new session of Parliament after coming back and receiving a mandate from the people. I know the Conservative slogan was to bring it home, but there is only one party that brought it home, and that was the Liberal Party of Canada.

[Translation]

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, although he did not really relate it back to the motion at hand, except at one point when he felt compelled to do so.

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I would like to summarize in a few words what our opposition day motion is about. My colleague said that Quebec did not pay a carbon tax and so it is only natural that it did not receive anything. That is his understanding of the situation. In fact, it is an advance payment that some people received. It is an advance payment they received when they were no longer paying that expense. That would be like me telling someone that, in the next three months, it will not cost them anything, but I will give them more money because it will not cost them anything.

That money was not paid through the collection of the carbon tax, which no longer existed. It was given as an election gift on April 22, when people no longer needed it. I am not saying that there is no financial need, but it was not related to the carbon tax. This is also Quebec taxpayers' money. The member also mentioned British Columbia, which did not receive this money.

We do not just want to hear about Bill C-4. I would like my colleague to understand the real issue, because what we really heard from him was a monologue. My colleague is an experienced MP. He has been in the House, on the government benches, for a few years now. Out of respect for my colleagues, I would like him to tell us whether he understood and whether he agrees that Quebec should get its fair share. The government has discriminated against us yet again.

• (1110)

[English]

Hon. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, with deep respect to my colleague on the opposition benches, I understand very well the argument the Bloc is trying to make, and I do not agree with the argument. Quebec and the Bloc need to realize that Quebec opted out of the federal backstop when it created its own carbon pricing system at the provincial level. That means that it never contributed fuel charge payments to the federal government and never received rebate cheques.

The federal government decided to continue to rebate the fuel charges collected on behalf of Canadians in provinces that had a federal backstop, so why would we now, all of a sudden, not respect Quebec's autonomy, which it always wants us to do, by providing a rebate payment it did not pay into and a system it opted out of?

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member opposite spoke at length about tax cuts. While we support all tax cuts, in today's economy, it is just not enough. The average family in Kitchener is spending \$800 more a year just to put food on the table. That completely cancels any benefit from this tax cut.

What real, lasting solutions will your government offer to help families struggling with this rising cost of living? Will it perhaps table a budget?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I will provide a little reminder to the hon. member to ask questions through the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Hon. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, it is interesting to note that, for two years in the House, the Conservative Party of Canada

and its members claimed the consumer carbon price was the only cause, and did not allow for any other factors, of food price inflation. We have now removed the consumer carbon tax, and food prices are still going up, but the Conservatives are still making the same argument, which does not make any sense.

The other thing is that we, as a government, have moved forward with an income tax cut worth, on average, \$840 a year. The truth is that we understand that Canadians are struggling, but we are the ones in government doing the things that are helping Canadians, driving affordability measures and putting more money in their pockets. We have many examples of that. Just in the last 12 sitting days of the House, we have moved forward on numerous tax cuts and measures that will build a stronger economy. The best way to assure Canadians—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The member for Shefford has time for a brief question.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be brief and I will go back to my colleague's previous question.

As far as I know, as a Quebecker, I pay taxes to Ottawa. My colleague does not understand that the Liberals' vote-buying cheque, which was paid using the so-called carbon tax as a pretext, was actually funded through taxes that I and other Quebecers pay. Everyone says that Quebec is not part of it and has its own system, but that is not the issue, and my colleague does not get it. Those cheques were paid for with income and sales taxes that I paid.

[English]

Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the member opposite's passion, I still respectfully disagree with her argument. I think it is a deeply flawed argument. The Bloc asks us every day in this House, and in every committee meeting that I have ever been in, to respect Quebec's autonomy. Quebecers did not pay federal fuel charges to the federal government, because they opted out of the system that would have been backstopped by the federal government.

Jim Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière.

It is an honour and a privilege to rise in this House and deliver my first remarks as a newly elected member of Parliament for the riding of Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt. Please allow me a few minutes to acknowledge the individuals who helped me make this possible. First, I would like to thank all the constituents of Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt for their support and for putting their trust in me. A heartfelt “thank you” goes to the incredible volunteers who, under the direction of my campaign manager, Diane Suski, worked tirelessly to get me here today. I was overwhelmed by the support from family, friends and even people I had never met. From all regions of the riding, they believed in hope and change. Their hard work was instrumental to the success of the campaign.

My wonderful wife of 35 years, Sylvie, makes me the best version of myself. If not for her and her love and support, I would not be standing in this place today. My thanks go to Sylvie. My three children, Shanel, Jesse and Carly, make me the proudest dad on earth. I love them all. Their generation and the next generation are the reasons I decided to participate in this election. I believe that becoming a member of Parliament for the Conservative Party of Canada will enable me to make a difference.

• (1115)

[Translation]

I am very proud to be francophone. It is a culture that must be preserved. There are over one million francophones outside the beautiful province of Quebec. I encourage Quebec to think about solutions rather than separation. Canadian unity is as important as ever.

My great-grandparents, Joe and Azilda Bélanger, left Saint-André-Avellin in search of a better life in Ontario in 1886. Azilda was the first pioneer woman to settle in the village of Rayside, which is now part of the city of Sudbury and was renamed Azilda in her honour in 1901. *L'écho d'un peuple*, the theatrical extravaganza that retells the story of 400 years of French culture, paid tribute to her in one of the scenes. I still live on the same land that was cleared by my grandfather.

[English]

For those who are not familiar with the geography of the riding, let me say this: It is big. It stretches from West Nipissing north to Mattagami, south to the French River and then west along the Trans-Canada Highway to the edge of the town of Spanish and the entirety of beautiful Manitoulin Island.

The people in my riding are as diverse as its geography. We have people from all backgrounds, starting with the proud indigenous people. Their knowledge and traditions are a crucial part of our communities. I look forward to developing strong relationships with them.

Like many other Canadian communities, many residents of our riding are descendants of European immigrants, families just like mine, hard-working Franco-Ontarians who came to Canada generations ago in search of a better life.

The people of northern Ontario are skilled and resourceful people who work in the industries that drive Canada's economy. Forestry, mining and the support services that supply these industries are some of the major drivers of the economy in northern Ontario. However, many might be surprised to learn that northern Ontario has a significant agricultural industry as well. There are approximately 700 farming operations in the area, ranging from cattle and dairy to cash crop operations that produce high-quality products for Canadians. We also have a thriving tourism industry that draws tens of thousands of people every year from around the world to enjoy the beauty and majesty of our land. We have camping, hiking, snowmobiling, fishing and hunting. Our region is also home to some of the best fall agricultural fairs in the country.

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[Translation]

I will now turn to the Bloc Québécois opposition motion. Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt is a region where affordability is no longer a distant political concern, but rather a daily crisis that hits families at the gas pump, in the grocery store and in their monthly heating bills.

We are here today to debate a Bloc Québécois motion that raises real concerns about fairness, transparency and the use of taxpayers' money. While we do not share the goals of the Bloc Québécois, I do believe that we can agree on one thing: Regardless of their province, Canadian taxpayers deserve a government that respects their contributions and treats them fairly. This is not about fairness or principles; it is simply a matter of policy.

I would also like to remind the House that, even before I was a member of Parliament, I remember that the Bloc Québécois voted against all Conservative opposition motions to repeal the carbon tax. The people in my riding will not accept that either.

The Bloc Québécois will realize that the province of Quebec has done very well with Canadian taxpayers. Every year, the Government of Quebec already receives \$29 billion in transfer payments from the rest of Canada. It receives \$13.6 billion through equalization, \$11.9 billion through health transfers and \$3.8 billion through Canada social transfers.

Canadians are generous and compassionate people who believe in sharing the wealth of our great country. However, this Bloc Québécois motion is nothing more than theatrics and will only serve to divide Canadians at a time when we should be coming together. I guess that is their goal. This is what happens when politicians focus more on appearances than results.

In Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, people are not asking for more bureaucracy, more cheques or more discount games. Let us start building a government that works for everyone, in every province, with the same respect and the same accountability. I thank the House for its attention.

• (1120)

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his election. I am glad to see that, in his case, he still speaks French. We all know what often happens to francophones outside Quebec. The assimilation rate is quite disturbing, after all.

My question for my colleague is about today's motion specifically. His lack of solidarity is disappointing. Perhaps he will understand if I put it this way: Does he think it would be right for the federal treasury to send out cheques to everyone in Canada except people in Sudbury, even if the people of Sudbury helped fund those cheques?

Jim Bélanger: Madam Speaker, the people in my region are very glad that the carbon tax is gone because it made everything in our part of the country more expensive. The cost of everything went up because of it.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do appreciate a number of the comments that the member opposite has put on the record, and I especially agree that the Bloc's motivation, in terms of moving this particular motion, is to be very divisive. At the end of the day, we recognize that some provinces, whether it is B.C. or Quebec, and I believe the North-west Territories but I am not 100% sure of that, did not contribute into the consumer price on carbon.

In fact, the measure that was taken was to support low-income seniors, in particular, and others to ensure that if they had the budgeted amounts of money in April, they would in fact continue to receive that rebate. For the Bloc today, it is more of a political manipulation to try to score cheap political points.

• (1125)

Jim Bélanger: Madam Speaker, I feel that the rebate that was sent to most Canadians was a method of buying votes for the Liberals.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague on his election.

I would also like to congratulate him on his French today. It is nice to hear members from this big beautiful province address the House in French, despite some minor errors that are not worth noting. I heard some murmurs about a French error at one point, but we should be encouraging people to speak French and not pointing out the little mistakes that can happen when people do not use French every day. I congratulate him on that.

In his speech, my colleague talked about the size of his riding. I imagine it must cost a fortune in gas to travel across his entire riding. Are the member and his constituents very happy about the elimination of the carbon tax, something the Conservatives have been proposing for years and the Liberals have finally implemented?

Jim Bélanger: Madam Speaker, yes, people in our part of the province are very glad to see the consumer carbon tax gone. That is really bringing expenses down. If the industrial carbon tax is not removed as well though, that cost will be passed on to consumers in the region and it is going to hurt. That is why all carbon taxes have to be removed.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, as a proud Franco-Albertan, I was very interested in what my colleague said about the vitality of the French language in northern Ontario. In Canada, there are many rural francophone communities that are really suffering as a result of the carbon tax. It has not been eliminated as the Liberals would have us believe; rather, it has simply been reset to zero. Could my colleague tell us about how it is affecting communities in his riding?

Jim Bélanger: Madam Speaker, the carbon tax did indeed have a major impact on our region. I would like to thank my colleague for addressing the issue of French in our region, because we need to protect the French language.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, since this is my first speech in the House, I would like to take a few moments to thank the people of Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière for placing their trust in me and for giving me the privilege of representing them for a fourth term. It is nice to see that the support from my constituents has continued to grow since I was first elected in 2015. I am extremely grateful for that.

I want to personally thank my campaign manager, Isabelle Laplante, who has been my right-hand woman since almost the very beginning of this great adventure in Ottawa, and Anabel Grondin, the newest member of my team, who quickly learned what to do in an election campaign. I also want to thank my official agent, Serge-André Tardif, for whom this was a brand new experience. Finally, I want to thank the president of my riding association, Marc Nolin, along with all of leaders and volunteers who worked hard to ensure that Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière remains a great Conservative riding.

This election was unlike any other for me. It was a very emotionally difficult time that I would not wish on any of my colleagues. To wrap up my remarks about the election, I want to thank my wife and my two daughters, Marie-Soleil and Justine. We have always been a close-knit team in good times and in bad, and we have just been through the worst with the loss of my son, David, four months ago today. He was with us in our hearts every day of this election campaign.

Once again, I want to thank everyone for their messages of solidarity and support. I am motivated to continue my work as the member for Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière and to bring all of my experience and determination to that task. I know that David will always live on in my thoughts and in my heart.

During this election campaign, people told me how concerned they are about the future and the direction taken by the Liberal government over the past 10 years. Although President Trump wormed his way into our election debates by creating economic chaos around the world, the everyday priorities of the people I met, whether in their homes, at the grocery store or at events, have not changed. Issues such as the rising cost of living, lack of housing, skyrocketing home prices, rising crime, weak justice system and out-of-control immigration were top of mind for everyone. As we saw again this week, Canada has the second-highest food inflation rate among all G7 countries.

During the election, the Liberal leader presented himself as the man with a plan, yet he cribbed freely from other parties' platforms, notably from Pierre Poilievre's Conservative plan. He even happily and unreservedly condemned Justin Trudeau's Liberal team for the disastrous state Canada is in today.

It seems that he finally listened to the Conservatives' call to axe the carbon tax. As the unelected prime minister designate, he even dipped into public funds to give all Canadian citizens a nice little present—all, that is, except those in Quebec and British Columbia. As far as election goodies go, it rivalled Maurice Duplessis's refrigerators.

We might therefore have expected the Prime Minister to ditch all the ministers who had blasted the official opposition all these years for having the colossal nerve to demand an end to the carbon tax. Trudeau's cabinet ministers used to rise one after another to vilify the nasty Conservatives, accusing them of being willing to stand by while the planet burned with their loud demands to axe the carbon tax. The minister of environment and climate change at the time never missed an opportunity to tout the carbon tax as a cure-all for every climate ill and every wildfire, and to warn us that evil oil and gas users would have to pay, pay, pay.

We were also expecting the man with the plan, this Liberal banker, to come forward right away with that plan and to be fully transparent, as promised, about what he was going to do to address the housing crisis, to end inflation, to prepare for the recession being forecast by more and more economists and to get public spending under control.

The man with the plan actually promised to limit government spending increases to 2% a year. However, we have heard nothing but radio silence since he was elected. He is no longer talking about that.

First, we learned that government spending will increase by 8% this year. The government is adding \$500 billion to the bill that future generations will have to pay. That is four times more than he promised.

Second, everyone will remember the epic series of contradictory remarks that the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and the Prime Minister made to the media shortly after the election. First they said there would be no budget, but there would be an economic statement. In the end, they said there would be a budget, but it would not be presented until the fall. Basically, it was a bit chaotic over there. That said, it was all of a piece with the last 10 years of the Liberal government.

Finally, we realized that the man with a plan did not have a plan ready this spring and that he would not be tabling a budget this spring. There is still time for him to make good on his own throne speech, which calls on him to table a budget this spring. He will have the opportunity to do so this afternoon by voting in favour of the Conservative opposition motion. The opposition is reaching out and asking the government to end food inflation, come clean with Canadians about the state of public finances and table a budget before Parliament rises for the summer.

● (1130)

Third, his new cabinet brought back the main ministers responsible for the chaos that Justin Trudeau caused over the past 10 years. It is just terrible to see these ministers defending the same Conservative ideas today that they fought against for 10 years. Their titles have changed, but what about their values, their ideals and everything they said for 10 years? All of that has evaporated. It is gone. We know it is just smoke and mirrors. A thirst for power may have blotted out the last 10 years of their lives, but as the saying goes, "what's bred in the bone will come out in the flesh". Let us see who will be the first to show their true colours.

I would now like to speak to the Bloc Québécois's motion. It is not possible to talk about the Bloc Québécois and the carbon tax

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without first mentioning its visceral hatred of oil and gas. That is quite a paradoxical position for a party that represents the regions of Quebec, where gasoline is absolutely essential to everyday life. People need it to go to work, to drive their kids to school, to go to the grocery store, to work in the fields and to travel the long roads that connect one village to the next. For the Bloc Québécois, oil is just dirty, and Quebecers must pay the price. It was Bloc Québécois MPs who said that the carbon tax should be much higher than it is. What does the Bloc Québécois think now about the fact that Quebec is still a province that levies a carbon tax and makes Quebecers pay more for their gas by maintaining a carbon pricing system? How does the Bloc Québécois feel about the fact that, last week, I paid \$1.16 a litre here in Ontario to fill up my car, whereas, when I came back to Ottawa this week, I paid \$1.55 a litre in Thetford Mines for the same gas and for the same distance?

This is a recurring theme in the daily lives of many Canadians who feel that the cost of living is rising. Gas prices have accounted for much of this increase. Does the Bloc Québécois agree that Quebecers are currently disadvantaged in many respects with all the taxes on gas? Why does the Bloc Québécois think it is acceptable that Quebecers should pay for the war on carbon all by themselves and that families, especially those in rural areas, should be deprived of hundreds of dollars each year, money that they could be using to pay their bills?

Fifty-six per cent of Quebecers believe that Quebec should end its carbon pricing system. Furthermore, 68% of Quebecers want the carbon tax to be shown separately on their gas bills. The Bloc Québécois voted with us for a budget to be tabled this fall. The Bloc Québécois rightly wants to know the state of public finances and the Liberal Prime Minister's plan. What is the state of the deficits? What is the government's operating deficit? How will the Liberals pay for the things they have promised?

I have another question, and this time it is for the Liberals who were elected in Quebec. Did they pressure the banker Prime Minister to extend this vote-buying exercise to Quebecers? Did they let this injustice happen without standing up for the interests of Quebecers?

At first glance, the Bloc Québécois's request may seem legitimate, but it does not take into account the other request made by the Bloc on the state of public finances. It is not possible to play for the Liberal team, promise the moon and the stars and make all kinds of commitments, and say that everything will change overnight without telling Canadians and Quebecers how much money is in the bank account and how much of that money will have to come from the credit card.

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Who will have to pay off this credit card? We know very well. I assume people know that credit cards have to be paid off eventually. I assume that most of our colleagues here know that. The problem we have is that the debt has become so big in Canada that we are not the ones who will pay off our own debt. It will be our children, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren. If this continues, we will never see the end of this debt. Demanding a budget at this time is the right thing to do. The Bloc Québécois was right to join us in amending the reply to the throne speech. We expect the Prime Minister to table a budget to ensure fairness for all Canadians and Quebecers.

I would like to use my remaining speaking time to move an amendment to the Bloc Québécois motion. I move that the motion be amended by deleting the words “without conditions” and “estimated at \$814 million” and, in the last paragraph, by replacing the word “Quebec” with “Quebeckers and British Columbians” and adding the following: “when the Government of Quebec ends its cap-and-trade system to compensate Quebeckers who have paid for and are still paying for that system”.

I think that would make it fair. It would mean that Quebeckers would receive a cheque directly from the federal government, as the citizens of the other provinces have. That way, Quebeckers would save at the gas pump every day.

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. In the case that he or she is not present, consent may be given or denied by the House leader, the deputy House leader, the whip or the deputy whip of the sponsor's party.

I invite the whip of the Bloc Québécois to take the floor.

Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is opposed to the amendment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): There is no consent. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 85, the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière mentioned at the beginning of his speech the hardships he had to overcome during the election campaign. These are personal hardships that have touched all of us as colleagues. He is someone we appreciate very much and I think that we cannot remain insensitive to what he has been through. Our thoughts were with him and they are with him again today.

To come back to his speech, however, I must acknowledge my colleague's talent as an actor. He knows very well that his reading of the carbon exchange and the carbon tax in the rest of Canada is false, but he makes a speech giving the impression that all this is true when he knows full well that it is not. In short, he is an excellent actor to whom I would certainly give an Oscar, but we are not there yet.

Canadians outside Quebec who were subject to the carbon tax received one last cheque. Ninety per cent of the revenue from that tax was remitted. As a result, 80% of households benefited from this

rebate compared to what they were paying in carbon pricing. My colleague knows that very well. This is all well and good because they received one last cheque that was completely unjustified during the election campaign, but in the coming months, they will no longer receive any of those cheques.

How will my colleague explain to people outside Quebec that they are no longer entitled to this compensation and that, by the same token—

• (1140)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I am interrupting the hon. member because his question is a little too long for his two minutes.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière.

Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, allow me to take this opportunity to thank my colleague from the Bloc Québécois, as well as all of my federal, provincial and municipal colleagues of all stripes, for their solidarity. I felt it, and it really helped our family. I would like to thank all of my colleagues for their words of solidarity.

That said, I am not an actor, and I would like to know what I said in my presentation that was not true. Quebec has a greenhouse gas cap-and-trade system, which means that Quebeckers pay more for their gasoline than Canadians in other provinces. I gave a clear example: Last week, I filled up at \$1.12 per litre in Ontario and, Sunday, I paid \$1.55 per litre in Thetford Mines before coming here. It is the same gas. That is not a fantasy. It is a fact. It is realistic.

Quebeckers deserve a bit of respite, too, when it comes to the price of gas, because they live in a large province where travel is necessary. Not all places have public transportation, so we need to use our personal vehicles. I do not think that I am dramatizing. These are facts and nothing but the facts.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at the outset, I will express my personal thoughts to the member regarding the situation that he found himself in and his opening comments.

Having said that, I want to get clarification. Is it the position of Pierre Poilievre and the Conservative Party that they do not believe that seniors in Alberta, the Prairies, Ontario and Atlantic Canada should have received the rebate check back in April? Is that the position of the Conservative Party? Many of those individuals, in particular seniors and individuals on fixed incomes, would have been anticipating it and possibly incorporated it into their own budgets.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, right in the middle of the election campaign, the Liberals just happened to send out cheques to reimburse Canadians for money they had not spent. It was easy to send a cheque to every Canadian; it was also very convenient. The timing was perfect for sending a cheque signed by the Liberal government.

However, the reality is that the government forgot two provinces. As long as it was taking money from general government funds, why did it not send the same cheque to all Canadians? I agree that that was terribly unfair. I wonder why the 40 or so Liberal members from Quebec did not take a stand against taking everyone's tax dollars and sending them to parts of Canada.

We believe that the money that the federal government sent some Canadians should be sent to all Canadians, including all British Columbians and Quebecers, once the greenhouse gas cap-and-trade system in Quebec has been lifted.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to speak for the first time in this new Parliament on a subject that I find extremely relevant. Before I begin, like many of my colleagues, I would like to say a few words of personal thanks, and look back at the spring election campaign, which was not without its challenges, emotions and hardships. I want to send a heartfelt and very sincere thank you to a wonderful team of volunteers. The Bloc Québécois gang in Drummond was absolutely fantastic. We almost had to turn people away at the door. We had so many volunteers and so many people willing take part in the campaign, which was not going to be easy from the outset. We already knew that, yet volunteers of all ages—young, old, not so young, older and those who have been young longer than others—got together and came together to lend a hand and run a campaign that was extraordinary in many ways. I want to thank those volunteers sincerely.

We all do it here in the House. I know we are all very grateful for the work that is being done in our respective ridings. However, the work of our supporters is essential. It allows us to be in direct contact with our people as well, to hear their concerns and to know how to align our positions. I do not think we thank them enough. We do it at the beginning of every Parliament, when we should be doing it almost on a weekly basis, so I want to thank all those people who have been truly essential, exceptional and who have maintained a fantastic morale, which gave me great sustenance throughout the campaign.

I especially want to thank two volunteers who are, in my opinion, extraordinary. Perhaps members will understand my bias here. They are my parents. My parents are 85 years old. During election campaigns, they complain that they are not given enough work. My father complains, at 85, that I do not give him enough areas to cover to go and meet people. My mother complains that we do not give her long enough lists for phone canvassing. They come knocking on the door early in the morning. They are the last to leave. Frankly, I could not be prouder of these two volunteers, my parents, Henriette and Louis. I want to emphasize how fantastic they are. I am convinced that they will still be there in the next election. They are truly exceptional people. They deserve a statue. I am working on that.

I also want to acknowledge and recognize the unwavering support of my immediate family, my wife Caroline, our children Tom, Lily-Rose, Alexandrine and Christophe. Frankly, without them, without their understanding of what an election campaign is and what the life of a member of Parliament entails, I would not be able to do this job. I think that everyone in the House would agree.

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Last but not least, I want to salute my outstanding team in Drummond. Andrée-Anne, Isabelle and Marlène have been providing impeccable service to the people of my riding for years. Once again, I am very privileged to be able to count on such fantastic, dedicated, committed, competent and delightful women. I am truly surrounded by exceptional people. I would also like to acknowledge Rémi, the newest member of my Parliament Hill team. He has run for the Bloc Québécois twice and is a full-fledged member of the Bloc team in his own right. I am very proud to have him with us.

As I said earlier, I am very pleased to speak to this Bloc Québécois motion. We were looking forward to this opposition day. I want to highlight some of the key points in the saga of this rebate for a carbon tax that had already been abolished. To make a long story short, government funds were used to send out rebates and refunds for something that was supposed to be paid later. However, the quarter covered by the April 22 rebate did not exist. The carbon tax had already been abolished, as of April 1. In short, money was used during the election campaign for false reasons, literally.

Who was left out of all this? As today's Bloc Québécois motion says, those who were left out were Quebecers and British Columbians, who had acted responsibly by joining the carbon exchange with California, Washington State and soon Oregon. To call a spade a spade, this fictitious rebate was nothing more than an election giveaway.

• (1145)

Anyone with a modicum of decency, ethical integrity and respect would look favourably on the request we are making today, which is to compensate Quebecers fairly for the election giveaway they helped fund through their taxes. After all, we are talking about an estimated contribution of \$814 million. That is not just pocket change.

Since this is my maiden speech in this Parliament, Madam Speaker, I would like to pause for a moment and tell you that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Shefford.

I would like to point out a few things about this rebate business. The first is that, by repeating a slogan based on falsehoods probably spread by the oil companies themselves, certain people succeeded in making Canadians believe that the carbon tax was eating into their purchasing power and costing them dearly. In reality, deep down inside, the Conservative members knew perfectly well that 80% of households outside Quebec and British Columbia that were subject to the carbon tax were receiving more money from the rebate than they were paying. They were benefiting from the system. There is a good reason why the OECD condemned the decision to eliminate the carbon tax.

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We must admit that this was a politically savvy election-time decision, because it cut the ground from under Pierre Poilievre, who had spent months making the carbon tax his number one issue. Thanks to lies and repeated slogans, the public came to believe that the carbon tax was bad for their budgets and that it was basically the root of all evil. There were claims that food banks were swamped and that requests for MAID had shot up because of the carbon tax. That is how far people went in the 44th Parliament. That is quite the feat.

The other great feat is the government's ability to renege on its climate action commitments. That came as a real shock to me. I thought that it was very savvy of the Liberals to say they would eliminate the carbon tax and that they were going to win the election, since they had stripped Pierre Poilievre of his only argument. I thought that, after the election, they would announce another massive action plan to fight climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but no. After the election, they talked about building oil pipelines from one end of the country to the other. It was not merely an election strategy. They really were reneging on their greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

Within six months, all of the fundamental values that Quebeckers hold dear have been swept aside. The fight against climate change is no longer a priority. Money is what matters most. There is money to be made transporting oil from one end of Canada to the other. The Liberals do not care about the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, the BAPE, or about environmental requirements. They will shove these pipelines down our throats if they have to. Within six months, we saw a stunning change of course. From an environmental standpoint, the Liberals have turned into Conservatives. I am looking at members on each side of the House, and I do not know which party I am looking at.

The motion we are moving today is quite straightforward. It is a motion for fairness and respect that will also ensure that Quebeckers are no longer taken for a ride. We want to know where the money is coming from, we want a budget, but we have not been given answers. Billions of dollars in tax cuts are being announced, but we do not know where that is going to come from. The challenge against Bill 21 at the Supreme Court of Canada has already racked up \$1 million in costs in just a few months, and there is no transparency on that. I think we have earned the right to feel fed up and to demand respect.

We are asking that Quebeckers be reimbursed \$814 million, which corresponds to their contribution to the amount paid to the rest of Canada for the phoney carbon tax rebate. It is a motion for fairness and respect that makes a lot of sense, and I do not understand why my colleagues in the other parties do not support it. That is the least we owe to the Quebeckers who elected us.

• (1150)

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

• (1155)

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Drummond, who was obviously so clear in what he said that nobody here has any questions for him. That said, I would like to pick up on something he said.

He clearly explained the strategy that was used. During an election, it might seem like a good idea to promise cheques. The election was a convenient time to eliminate the carbon tax and promise a cheque.

This cost the Liberals in terms of economic credibility, however. I am not the only one saying so. Even the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, whom I met at an event last night, criticized the Liberals' current lack of economic credibility.

Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Shefford, and I look forward to hearing her speech in a few minutes.

I, too, was surprised by this stunt, and I recognized it as one at the time. I even told the people around me that the Liberals were doing this to cut the ground from under the Conservatives. However, I thought they would come back with something else, since it is not in the Liberals' nature to not at least pretend to be active in the fight against climate change.

That did not happen. As I was saying at the end of my speech, here we are after the election, which the Liberals probably won partly because of this election ploy, and we see them promoting pipeline investment projects that rely on ignoring environmental assessments and provincial and Quebec requirements.

It makes no sense. Even the OECD denounced the government's decision. Their lack of credibility is now blatant. It is literally the Liberals' fault. To fix their credibility problem, they are going to have to implement concrete measures to fight climate change for real.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is no trickery here, just a new Prime Minister and a new government.

The new Prime Minister indicated that we would get rid of the carbon tax. It made sense that we would not cancel the rebate 28 days later, when Canadians had been incorporating those rebates as part of their budget. I am amazed the Bloc members are not thinking of those individuals, in particular the seniors who were dependent on it, individuals on fixed incomes and many others. For the member to say that it has anything to do with any form of trickery, I think, is disingenuous.

It would have been cruel for the Prime Minister to not move forward with those rebates. The question I would ask the member is, does he not recognize the value of the rebate cheques that were anticipated in April?

[Translation]

Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I do not know where to begin. That is such a patchwork of nonsense that it is fascinating.

The member for Winnipeg North knows full well that these rebates were sent out at the beginning of each quarter. It was not money that had already been spent, but money in anticipation of the expenses that would be incurred due to the carbon tax, and he knows that very well.

Seniors in Quebec are also struggling to make ends meet. As long as the Liberals are engaging in vote-seeking ploys like this and sending cheques to everyone, why not also include Quebec's seniors, since my colleague seems so concerned about them?

Seriously, the Liberals need to stop spouting nonsense and start telling the truth. That money was paid for in large part from Quebecers' taxes, not from the carbon tax that was charged before April 1.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his re-election and on his speech.

I would like to remind the House that everything he mentioned was known to Quebecers. From my perspective, his leader ran a very good campaign. That is what I think. Politically, we are not friends, but I know talent and hard work when I see it. He did not make any major mistakes in his election campaign. Despite everything, the party that this member represents was hit particularly hard by the Liberal Party of Canada and lost about 10 seats.

During the leaders' debate, the leader of the Bloc Québécois even raised the issue directly with the Prime Minister. Despite that, Quebecers elected 44 Liberal members in Quebec. How does my colleague think that happened?

• (1200)

Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I would say it is because of the fear that was carefully stoked throughout the election campaign for political reasons. That fear was stoked by a team that wanted to win the election and who knew full well that seniors and the most vulnerable members of our society would be afraid...

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Shefford has the floor.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the Bloc Québécois motion, which states that "the House call on the government to pay Quebec, without conditions, an amount equivalent to its contribution to the \$3.7 billion in spending, estimated at \$814 million."

This Bloc Québécois motion seeks to quickly and easily correct a financial injustice to Quebec and Quebec taxpayers. First, I will explain the source of that injustice. Second, I will talk about the Liberals' lack of economic credibility, and third, I will explain why this sends the wrong message when it comes to the fight against climate change.

First, the new Prime Minister, who had recently been chosen to lead the Liberal Party of Canada, but was still unelected, decided to end the federal fuel tax by regulation on March 15, 2025. He probably got the idea from the executive orders signed by the president of the country south of the border. This is how things are done now.

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This injustice stems from the government's decision to grant cash payments to Canadian households, except those in Quebec. This decision was made in April 2025, specifically between April 22 and election day, which was April 28. The timing was convenient. The cheques sent to Canadians ranged from \$220 to \$456. These amounts are similar to what Quebecers have received in the past from their own government to help them cope with inflation and the rising cost of living. Lo and behold, when the federal government takes action for similar reasons and does so during a federal election, as if by chance, Quebecers are left out of the group of lucky recipients of government cheques.

The reason that the government gave for the payment was the elimination of a policy, namely carbon pricing, which was paid by consumers in Canada, but not those in Quebec, before April 1, 2025. The government used a poor excuse to keep Quebecers from receiving the election cheques it issued to Canadian voters. In fact, the federal fuel charge paid by consumers at the pump did not apply in Quebec. That is what the government said, but Quebecers consequently never received what is known as the Canada carbon rebate, or CCR, which was the cheque paid four times a year to individuals. This was to offset the fuel charge.

However, when the last CCR cheques were issued, Canadian consumers had not paid the fuel charge that the rebate was supposed to offset. As I said earlier, the rebate was always paid in advance of the period when the charge, which some people call "the tax", was collected. This means that the \$3.7 billion in CCR cheques that were issued in April were not funded by carbon pricing applied to Canadian consumers. Canadians never paid the amounts that they received.

Second, this issue helps fuel cynicism and has led to what are now known as the Liberals' Harry Potter budgets. The \$3.7 billion in question came straight out of the government coffers. This public money belongs to Quebecers too, and part of it comes from their taxes. That means that the Liberal Prime Minister's vote-buying cheques for Canadians outside Quebec were funded in part by Quebecers, who did not receive them.

What is more, the Quebec National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion calling on all federal political parties to commit to giving Quebec back its share of that payment, which it estimates to be over \$800 million, with no strings attached. However, the Liberal Prime Minister refused to commit to responding to the National Assembly's request. The Liberal leader not only refused to recognize that the last round of rebate cheques came from public funds, but he also sidestepped the issue by talking about something that had nothing to do with the matter at hand, namely, his election promise to lower taxes.

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If we add to that Canada's decision to abandon the carbon tax, this poses a threat to Quebec's economy. I have been hearing about it from businesses in Shefford. Right now, they want to diversify their export markets, and Europe is implementing a carbon border adjustment mechanism for goods coming from irresponsible countries like Canada. During the election campaign, the government promised to increase the carbon tax for large industrial emitters. However, there is nothing about that in Bill C-4. As of January 1, the European Union will impose an import tax on goods produced in countries where it is free to pollute or where the cost to pollute is not high enough. With Donald Trump making access to the American market uncertain, now is not the time to cut off our access to the European market.

As I was saying, Bill C-4 now proposes to formalize this decision by completely removing the Canada carbon rebate from federal legislation. By doing so, Canada is choosing to go back to the 20th century. If it scraps or reduces carbon pricing for industries, it will undermine Quebec's efforts to diversify its exports and increase its trade with Europe. Since Quebec businesses are part of a country with low carbon pricing or none at all, there is a risk that their exports will be taxed.

• (1205)

Both the European Union and the U.K. have put in place a system of exemptions. If an exporter comes from a country with no or low carbon pricing, they can be exempted from the tax if they can demonstrate that their emissions have actually been priced.

The Bloc Québécois will oppose any federal measure that would thwart Quebec's efforts to diversify its export markets to counter the negative effects of the Trump administration. It will therefore also oppose any reduction in industrial emissions pricing in Canada outside Quebec, which would reduce Quebec's comparative advantage. That is because Quebec accounts for one-third of Canada-Europe trade and accounts for nearly 40% of European investments in Canada. Quebec certainly has an advantage, and it is a bridge between North America and Europe. The Bloc Québécois hopes that Quebec will be able to double its trade with Europe, including the UK, within five years, increasing it from \$42 billion to \$84 billion.

Third, we must point out that this request from the Bloc Québécois is just a modest request to correct an obvious one-time injustice. We will then need to deal with the real root problem created by getting rid of carbon pollution pricing in Canada. One concrete example of that problem is, first, the obvious inequity between Quebecers and the rest of Canada when it comes to prices at the pump. It should be noted that, of all the existing pricing systems in Canada, the Quebec carbon market had the lowest impact on gas prices. That simply means that Quebec's policy was better designed than Canada's. We are reducing greenhouse gas emissions while imposing fewer impacts on consumers than the federal policy did.

That is one of the reasons why the Bloc Québécois has repeatedly reminded the House that any provinces or territories that were unhappy with the federal policy were already free to opt out and either create their own system or join the Quebec-California carbon market. That invitation was officially extended by the Government of Quebec itself.

Canada can change the terms of its pollution pricing policy if it realizes that its old system was too complex and too costly. However, getting rid of carbon pricing is another matter entirely. Obviously, it is causing price distortions and creating an inequitable situation with respect to Quebec. The federal government can no longer continue to support the unacceptable situation it has created, despite repeated warnings from the Bloc Québécois, where there is such a big price difference between gas purchased in Quebec and gas purchased outside Quebec. This adverse effect of the federal government's decision to scrap federal carbon pricing ends up punishing Quebec for having the wisdom to adopt a good carbon pollution pricing system.

For at least three years now, the Bloc Québécois has been pointing out these negative effects, explaining why it was not in the best interest of Quebec and Quebecers for the federal government to do away with its carbon pricing in the rest of Canada. However, that did not stop Quebec Conservative MPs from supporting their leader's lies and using every possible, often desperate, means to convince Quebecers that it was in their best interest to axe the carbon tax. It is now clear to everyone that it was not and that the Bloc Québécois was right to warn people against the Conservatives' claims about carbon pricing.

It did not stop the Liberal Party of Canada from bowing to the success of Conservative propaganda in swaying public opinion in Canada and destroying its own climate record, either. This is a fact recognized by all experts, including the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Carbon pricing gave Canadian households about 90% of the revenues generated by the pricing system. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, eight out of 10 Canadians actually received a larger rebate than what they paid in carbon fees. Only the wealthiest paid a bit more than what they paid at the pump. This system, we must remember, was used to fund a federal policy that in the most effective way produced real reductions in greenhouse gases and truly contributed to the decarbonization of the economy.

In conclusion, in addition to sabotaging their own climate policy and making it even less likely that Canada will honour its international climate commitments, the Liberals also managed to instantly perpetrate an economic and financial injustice on Quebec consumers and taxpayers. We must therefore rebuild Canada's climate policy without delay and rid ourselves of the oil sector's propaganda and lies. I am not exaggerating when I say that the flaws in the Liberals' logic are obvious here, making it impossible for the Liberal government to rationalize its decision. The Prime Minister's response confirms that Quebec is being treated unjustly, so the Bloc Québécois is wholly justified in moving its motion today in the House to correct an injustice that indicates the government's desire to fight climate change is waning.

• (1210)

I want to say one last thing. All the federal parties want to scale back carbon pricing for purely electoral reasons.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the point about the global market situation. This is something that we as a government have recognized. We continue to maintain the industrial tax to ensure that Canadian businesses and entrepreneurs remain competitive, as we look at ways to bring in technology to reduce emissions. That is, in fact, in the best interests of Canadians as a whole.

I am wondering if the member could expand on why she believes it is important that we continue to ensure, given the global market and trade, that we have clean energy and move toward advancing technology to reduce emissions.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, a green and eco-friendly transition is obviously what we should be pursuing. Funding pipelines and oil companies will not achieve that transition.

I forgot to say something in my speech. In 2023, the World Bank enumerated 73 carbon pricing mechanisms in 53 countries. That is five more than in 2022, 12 more than in 2021 and 69 more than 20 years ago.

At the end of the day, if Canada does this, it will be the first to choose this path. That is not in everyone's interest, because we want to remain competitive internationally and expand into new markets.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about an issue that arose during the last election.

The Prime Minister tried to buy the votes of Canadians with the carbon tax rebate. He tried to influence the media. For example, he announced over \$150 million for the CBC. I think that there has to be consequences for doing such a thing.

What does the member think?

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, she is talking about consequences.

She is talking about spending. What concerns me at the moment is that the government is announcing spending, without any explanation of where the funds will come from. The government is not tabling a budget or an economic update. That is why I talked in my speech about a Harry Potter budget.

As I said earlier, I met the hon. Lloyd Axworthy yesterday. He is not exactly a member of the Bloc, and yet he has spoken out about this situation. The Liberals are not tabling a budget and they announced a tax cut and a vote-buying cheque that was supposedly a carbon tax rebate. He spoke out against that by saying that this showed a total lack of economic credibility.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for years, the Conservatives have been advocating for the elimination of the carbon tax. When we asked the Liberals ques-

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tions, they laughed at us and said that we were against science and in favour of global warming and more wildfires.

In December, they voted down our motion to eliminate the carbon tax. Now they have done an about-face.

What does the Bloc Québécois think about this about-face just before the election?

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, it seems like a desperate move. It seems like a government on its last legs that miscalculated the impact of the fear caused by the U.S. election that put Donald Trump in office.

The impression that I got on the ground during the election campaign was that, amid all this turmoil, voters really did not support the Conservative leadership choice they were being given. At the same time, they had questions. I do not think that Canadians voted for this. We can see it in what was promised during the election campaign. The Liberals did an about-face after that. They are backing down on their decisions and doing things that they did not talk about during the campaign.

I think that people were sold a bill of goods in this election.

• (1215)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been interesting, listening to the arguments that have been presented already this morning. I find a lot of irony in it. On the one hand, we often get the Bloc talking about the importance of supporting our seniors, while we also get the Conservatives talking about election gimmicks or trickery and things of that nature. I would like to highlight a few very important points here. First and foremost, we should recognize there is a new Prime Minister. It is a new government. What we have seen are, in fact, significant changes as a direct result of a new government.

The member from the Bloc talked about the support. In this last election, the Prime Minister and the candidates, combined, achieved 8.5 million votes. That is a record number of votes for any political party in the history of Canada. That was because Canadians understood what was at stake. They also recognized there was a new Prime Minister. I will get into that whole aspect shortly. Before I do that, I do want to acknowledge the Province of Quebec and the Province of British Columbia for their efforts in dealing with emissions. They have provided leadership to other jurisdictions here in Canada.

Going back into Canada's history, the first province to do so was your own home province of Alberta, Mr. Speaker. In North America, out of all the provinces and the states, it might have been one of the top three jurisdictions that recognized we have to get control over emissions and brought in a form of a carbon tax on emissions. That was many years ago, under a Progressive Conservative provincial government; we need to underline the word "progressive". The issue of having polluters pay is not necessarily new, per se. I think it is time that we revisit history in terms of what has led us to the point where we are today.

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Back in 2015, there was a major policy discussion on the environment in Paris. Former prime minister Justin Trudeau and provincial delegates all went to Paris along with other countries from around the world. Out of that conference came the idea of having a consumer price on pollution. It was widely supported by provincial entities in Canada and opposition parties, except for the Conservatives. I should not say the Conservatives opposed it; they were actually quiet on the issue.

Then we went into that first election in 2019, where they had a leader who was, again, kind of silent on the issue but gave the impression that they would be supportive. Then it was the Hon. Erin O'Toole, who ultimately came across and incorporated it into his platform, that a consumer price on carbon was in fact a good idea. Every political party inside the House of Commons, every member of Parliament, with no exceptions, ultimately ran on a campaign in advance of a carbon tax on pollution.

Then the Conservatives had a new leader elected, a new leader and a new Conservative Party. That was when we started to hear about axing the tax. As he travelled the country, he talked about how Canada was broken. A big part of that was to axe the tax.

● (1220)

An hon. member: You copied it.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member says we copied it. Generally speaking, back in January, Justin Trudeau stepped aside as leader of the Liberal Party to facilitate a leadership convention. It has been recorded that I indicated Canadians wanted to see change back in January, and because of Justin Trudeau's decision to step aside, it created an opportunity for the Liberal Party of Canada to change from within so we could meet the change that Canadians wanted to see. Then the current Prime Minister stepped up to the plate.

After the many discussions and reflections with Liberals in every region of the country, which gave a true reflection of Canadians as a whole, today's Prime Minister made it very clear that there was no consensus at all in having a consumer price on carbon. Remember that the Prime Minister was elected as leader of the Liberal Party back on March 9. It was within a week, on March 14 give or take, that he indicated the consumer price on carbon was no more. It was a reflection of what Canadians were feeding to the Liberal Party, and there was in fact a mood for change.

If we fast-forward a couple of weeks later, we were into an election and the carbon tax was not being collected, as the newly elected leader of the Liberal Party had decreed. Many individuals in Canada, in the provinces where the consumer carbon tax was being applied, were anticipating a rebate, and justifiably so. This is why I referred to seniors. I do not know how many times in the past Bloc members have stood up and said that a caring government would take care of our seniors. We need to think of the number of seniors and low-income individuals on fixed incomes, people with disabilities, the unemployed and others who would have budgeted for the rebate. The carbon tax was cancelled on April 1, and many constituents in my home province were not expecting the new Prime Minister to say they needed to forget it; they were not going to get the rebate. It would have been highly irresponsible for the Prime Minister to do that.

That is the essence of what has taken place from the moment of the Paris conference to where we are today. The Prime Minister has formed a new government with all sorts of priorities that focus on building a stronger, healthier Canada, a Canada, from an economic perspective, that will be the strongest in the G7. That is our goal. That is the mandate that Canadians have given us based on what the Prime Minister talked about during the last federal election, and every single member of the Liberal caucus is committed to working toward building a stronger and healthier Canada.

There are initiatives that we have put in place. One of my colleagues, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, made reference to Bill C-4. We are still waiting for the Conservatives and the Bloc to say they support the bill and would like to advance it. The Conservatives and Bloc members are a little uneasy, asking why the Liberals cannot support Canadians more.

The legislation would do three major things.

● (1225)

Number one is completely relevant to today's discussion: The consumer carbon tax is in fact in the law, but Bill C-4 would take it out of the law. It would no longer be a part of Canadian law. I see that as a very strong positive. It is what the newly elected Prime Minister committed to, to Canadians, and it is incorporated into Bill C-4. One would think that everyone, given the last election, would support that aspect of the legislation.

The other aspect of the legislation would decrease the tax bracket by one percentage point. In essence, for a two-income family of four or five, I believe it is about \$840, give or take, that they can maximize because of that particular tax break, which is also incorporated into the legislation. When I ask members, I am not hearing from anyone who opposes that aspect of the legislation.

Then there is the final component of the three. Again, these are reflections based on what was being said in the last federal election. One would anticipate and expect that we would get the support, because of the mandate that the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party were given. First-time homebuyers have to pay GST. Well, this legislation would eliminate the GST when they build that home under \$1 million, or on that first \$1 million. We want to see more homes built, and we want to empower more young people to be able to afford to build a home. That is my understanding, and that is what this aspect of the legislation would do. Again, I would have thought it would receive unanimous support.

Whether it is getting rid of the consumer carbon tax and taking it out of the law, giving Canadians a tax break or supporting young people in buying their first home, which were all talked about and, I believe, are supported, still there is no indication from opposition members as to their willingness to see this legislation pass.

We have a Bloc motion before us today that is focused on one aspect. It is important to recognize that, whether it is British Columbia or Quebec, because it is not a Quebec-only issue, they did not have the backstop for the consumer price on pollution; it only makes sense that we are talking about those provinces and territories that actually participated in it. The motion is somewhat narrow in terms of what it is specifically asking. I think we have to take a look at the broader picture. This is a government that is not saying no to the environment.

People are genuinely concerned about our environment. We often talk about emissions, controls, targets and so forth. When I am knocking on doors and talking to constituents, the type of environmental issues that often come up are those consumer-oriented ones. I remember talking to someone about roof shingles, as an example. There was a time when we would get a big truck pulling up with a trailer; they would strip off the roof shingles, bring them over to the dump yard and have to pay to dump them. Through technology, we now see that used shingles are used in many different ways. A certain percentage can be incorporated into asphalt, so they are being used in a way that is advantageous. It is something in which people can actually see the difference.

• (1230)

When I was an MLA, I was a big fan of banning plastic bags, because if we were to google “plastic bags in trees”, we would see that they will be there for years. With provincial jurisdiction, what provinces can do, there are initiatives that provinces can take. Provinces do matter. The best example that comes to mind in terms of environmental issues is cans and bottles, especially when I talk to young people, because they too want to be engaged in the environment.

I would look at the province of Alberta. Much as Quebec and B.C. lead on the pricing of carbon, and have done so for many years, I think Alberta has a great program, unless it has changed more recently. Alberta gets a high percentage of containers returned for recycling purposes, in contrast to Manitoba, unless Manitoba has changed very recently. It is virtually night and day. In Alberta, there is an incentive to return an item, and it does make a difference.

It is important for government to recognize that it has a role to play in supporting the environment. We can set ambitious goals and try to achieve them. I have seen budgetary measures, as we all have, from the previous administration, which provided financial incentives for people to buy electric vehicles. This is something real and tangible; people can really appreciate that.

Equally important is the issue of emissions, even if we are not hearing it at the doors as much, at least in the area I represent. That is why, even though we have gotten rid of the consumer price on carbon, we are keeping the industrial carbon pricing mechanism. It is interesting that the Conservatives are being critical of us for wanting to keep it; in fact, the Conservative caucus in Alberta should revisit why the province of Alberta was actually one of the pioneers in North America in recognizing the benefits of industrial carbon pricing.

My friend from the Bloc made reference to a very good argument about why we need to have an industrial carbon pricing mechanism.

It is that, when we think of world trade and markets, which were talked about to a great extent in the last federal election, we need to be able to advance the issue of industrial carbon pricing and how we can co-operate with industries to develop the technology to make our environment healthier in order for Canada, our manufacturers and others to be competitive into the future.

All one needs to do is take a look at some of the European nations. Today, if countries do not have some form of industrial carbon pricing, often, a tariff is applied to a product. How do Canadians benefit from that? The Conservatives are going to try to tie it into something that it is not. If we are concerned about world trade going forward, we need to have industrial carbon pricing in place, and big polluters should pay.

I see you are signalling to me that my time has run out, Mr. Speaker. I hope I will get a few questions that will allow me to highlight a couple of other points.

• (1235)

Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is really a wonder that, for years, Canadians were told that we must have a carbon tax. The Liberals told them and told them. Magically, as if by magic, just before an election, suddenly, poof, it disappears.

I am wondering if my Liberal friend across the aisle would admit that were it not for Pierre Poilievre and the Conservatives, Canadians would still be saddled with an onerous, hated carbon tax, and that this whole thing was nothing but an election ploy.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member to talk to Erin O'Toole, a former leader of the Conservative Party, who was very much a big fan of having a consumer price on carbon. By the way, many of the hon. member's colleagues ran under his leadership.

We have a new leader, a new Prime Minister. That new Prime Minister has been very clear on the issue from day one, since he became prime minister. I support what the Prime Minister is saying, that we cannot have a consumer price on carbon if the general feeling among the Canadian population is that it is not the way to go.

As a result, the Prime Minister continues to emphasize industrial carbon pricing, because that is the right thing to do. With Bill C-4, we are also taking the corrective action to get rid of the price—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

*Business of Supply**[Translation]*

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to my colleague's speech because it is a real farce. He is telling us that his government is still keen on fighting climate change after it eliminated the carbon tax for individuals and after one of the first things that the Prime Minister did once he was elected was to meet with the oil and gas companies. Now the government has tabled Bill C-5, which will give any minister responsible for the Major Projects Management Office the discretion to exempt any oil project from environmental standards. That makes no sense.

To get back to today's motion, what we want is to be reimbursed for the \$814 million that Quebec paid to the rest of Canada while it still had a carbon exchange program. What message is the government sending when it decides to issue cheques for a tax that people are not paying, and when it makes people who are still fighting climate change pay for those cheques?

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada are sending a very strong message. That message is based on what we were hearing with regard to the last federal election, on April 28, which is that we have to build one Canadian economy.

We have to deal with Donald Trump, the tariffs and the whole issue of trade. We have to look at ways in which we can expand our world trade opportunities. We have to protect wherever we can and enhance jobs. It does not matter whether it is in the province of Quebec, my home province of Manitoba or any other jurisdiction in Canada.

Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a new kid in the chamber. I have only spent the last four decades or so in business in my riding. One of the reasons I decided to run in the last election was the carbon tax. What I find really interesting is that the parliamentary secretary said that business needs to have a carbon tax in order to be competitive. I can tell members that when we are paying 30% of our gas bill in carbon taxes, we are not competitive. When we are trying to be competitive on an international scale, that tax is punitive.

I want to know if the member would tell me what the moment was when he had the epiphany, because he stood up for 16 months, as I was campaigning, defending the carbon tax.

When did that moment arrive in which he, all of a sudden, decided that we do not need a carbon tax anymore?

• (1240)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, when Justin Trudeau made the decision to step aside, it provided the Liberal Party of Canada with the ability to do something Canadians wanted. Canadians wanted to see change. The consumer carbon tax was a part of that. I indicated to party members and would-be leadership candidates that we needed to have a thorough discussion about the consumer carbon tax.

I was very pleased when our current Prime Minister recognized what Canadians were saying on the issue and then made a decisive decision to get rid of the consumer price on carbon. I would think

the Conservative Party would be grateful to see that the Liberal Party was able to succeed in getting that change and getting rid of the price on carbon.

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as it is the first time I am rising in this House with you in the chair, I want to congratulate you on your position.

The member opposite gave a lot to unpack, but the thing that stuck out the most to me was how he mentioned it would be unfair to Canadians who were relying on that payment, because they budgeted for it. This tells me the member opposite understands the importance of budgets and sees that they are timely and that they matter.

I am just wondering, why is the member opposite content with his government not tabling a spring budget? How come he is not asking for and demanding it, if he believes budgets are so important?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, Stephen Harper was elected in February and waited months, going into May, before he presented his first budget after the election. Brian Mulroney actually waited 300 days before he presented his first budget. Pierre Poilievre, in the Conservatives' own election platform, did not even commit to presenting a budget in the first 100 days.

I would suggest that the Conservative Party has a double standard, and this is just a crux. The member opposite, along with every Conservative member, voted in favour of the ways and means. They should read the document, where we get a good sense of where the money is going. I thank them for voting for the government; it was a vote of confidence, and we appreciate it.

[Translation]

Gaëtan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, would the member have supported our amendment? It called for the motion to be amended by deleting the words "without conditions" and "estimated at \$814 million" and, in the last paragraph, by replacing the word "Quebec" with "Quebeckers and British Columbians" and adding the following: "when the Government of Quebec ends its cap-and-trade system to compensate Quebeckers who have paid for and are still paying for that system".

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am not too sure if I fully understand the question, per se. I will reinforce the questions I have been asking members of the Bloc, in terms of understanding and appreciating the timing of that particular rebate and the many individuals who are on fixed incomes, whether they be seniors, people with disabilities or low-income families, who were very much dependent on that deposit or cheque. I suspect it would have caused a great deal of hardship to Canadians not to have it, which is the reason the decision was made to continue forward with the rebate.

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● (1245)

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Repentigny.

On April 22, just six days before the federal election, millions of Canadians got a cheque from the federal government. It was a generous payment presented as a carbon rebate totalling \$3.7 billion. Cheques were as much as \$456 per household, but Quebecers did not get a dime. However, Quebec taxpayers paid their unequal share of that expenditure. Their income taxes funded nearly \$814 million of that rebate. They paid part of the bill, but they were excluded from being beneficiaries. That is an egregious injustice, it is an unacceptable vote-buying action, and that is what the Bloc Québécois condemns today. We have moved a clear, legitimate and fair motion today that is asking the federal government to immediately and without conditions reimburse Quebec for its contribution equal to \$814 million. It is not a privilege and it is not a favour. It is a question of justice.

Let us look at the facts. The new Prime Minister made an order on April 1, 2025 repealing the federal carbon tax. The carbon tax rebate was paid out on April 22, but it covered the period from April to June 2025, a period where carbon pricing did not even apply. It is written in black and white on the Finance Canada website: “Payments delivered to Canadians in April would thus return the fuel charge proceeds collected during the April-June quarter”. Since no proceeds were collected, however, the government paid those rebates directly from the public purse.

My goodness, what a lovely gift for the rest of Canada. Those public funds also include the taxes paid by Quebecers. Quebec was excluded, however. Why is that? Because it was not subject to the federal tax, but the tax that was eliminated on April 1 did not fund anything. The fact is that those rebate cheques were a purely political gesture paid for by everyone and distributed to nearly everyone, excluding Quebecers. Let us recall that Quebecers were never entitled to the carbon tax rebate because, in 2013, Quebec chose to adopt its own carbon pricing system. It is a system that is recognized, credible and effective, with links to California and Washington state. It is a system that works. It is a system that Quebecers embraced out of a sense of responsibility, and now they are penalized for doing the right thing.

Let us look at some concrete examples. A family in Mont-Joli received no part of the \$456 paid to their Canadian neighbours. A senior couple in Amqui was paid no part of the \$334 that their taxes helped to fund. Students in Rimouski, workers in Trois-Pistoles and retirees in Sainte-Angèle-de-Mérici got nothing at all. They all paid their fair share, but they did not get their piece of the pie.

Meanwhile, households in other provinces receive a cheque for a tax that no longer even exists. Canadian unity sure is wonderful. This is not just an economic injustice; it is also an abandonment of the environment. By abolishing its carbon tax, the Liberal government is sabotaging its own climate policy. It is betraying Canada's international commitments. It is giving in to the Conservatives' simplistic propaganda.

Let us remember that 90% of the tax revenue was returned directly to households, and according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, eight out of 10 Canadians got back more than they paid. That is what Justin Trudeau's Liberal government has been telling us for the past 10 years. Why scuttle an effective policy? It is because the “Axe the tax” slogan is easier to sell than a transition plan. It is also because, six days before the election, a cheque is much more attractive than an energy transition project. There are consequences to that choice. While the government is abandoning carbon pricing, the European Union is preparing to implement a border carbon adjustment as early as next January.

● (1250)

Concretely, that means that products from a country like Canada, which does not put a price on carbon or pollution, will be subject to surtax in the European market. In that case, who suffers? Canadian companies will, but not Quebec companies. Why? Because Quebec is responsible and it still has a price on pollution. While Ottawa is making Canada weaker, Quebec is wisely preserving its access to international markets.

However, from everything I have just said, Quebec is the one being punished, even though it is doing all the right things, is responsible and has taken action, and above all refuses to take the easy way out. The Bloc Québécois is not the only one making this request today. The National Assembly is making the request unanimously with its motion from April 23, which demands that Quebec receive its share, meaning over \$800 million. What response did the Prime Minister give? It is no big deal, Quebec has another system. The Prime Minister gave a clear and unequivocal refusal, a refusal to recognize an injustice, a refusal to respect Quebec's elected officials and the National Assembly's unanimous request.

The motion we have moved today is not just a partisan plea. It is a basic demand for justice and respect. It aims to correct a clear mistake, a decision made in haste during an election, without a thought for tax fairness among the citizens of this country. Today, we are simply asking that Quebec be treated with respect, that its taxpayers be reimbursed for what they have paid and that the government finally listen to what every single elected official in Quebec has been calling for. Of the \$3.7 billion distributed, including \$814 million financed by Quebec, Quebecers received zero dollars.

Quebec took action. Quebec is paying. Today, Quebec is demanding fairness. Elected officials in the House must respond fairly.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I have a comment, and then I will get right into the question.

The consumer carbon tax was a backstop. Not only the Province of Quebec but also the Province of British Columbia had its own internal policies dealing with the issue. As a result, the rebate never went to either one of those provinces, so the member does a disservice to try to give the false impression that this is an attack in any way on the Province of Quebec.

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I want to pick up on the industrial carbon pricing issue, because I agree. The European Union and other countries are looking at ways in which they can apply tariffs to those jurisdictions that do not have some form of making big polluters pay. I am wondering whether the member could provide additional comments with respect to why that is so important.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Winnipeg North has contradicted himself a lot. I will remind him of the facts. His government's Department of Finance has said that payments made to Canadians in April would give back the federal fuel charge proceeds collected from April to June.

What does my colleague not understand about that? The tax, which was repaid in advance, no longer existed between April and June. I think that the Quebecers listening to us today are not fooled. It was an election giveaway.

Let us look at how clever the Liberal Party was to send out cheques right before the election. Let us remember that, in August 2021, a cheque was sent out to seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Liberal Party is able to deliver cheques in mailboxes during election periods, but when it comes time to solve problems like the Phoenix pay system, it is too complicated.

A little consistency and a little rigour from our colleague from Winnipeg North would do no harm, and it would elevate the debate in the House a bit.

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik-Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will ask my colleague, who is also my riding neighbour, whether he has had the chance to hear the amendment we proposed this morning and whether he agrees with it. I would like him to give us an answer.

• (1255)

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I salute my colleague and riding neighbour. I think that one thing about the Conservatives is clear. We know that some people still deny science. Nonetheless, in terms of respecting jurisdictions, the Quebec government is free to choose its own carbon market.

The Conservatives moved a motion today that seeks to interfere in areas of jurisdiction. Someone in the Conservative Party or its Quebec caucus needs to explain in English to their colleagues from Alberta or western Canada that, when they move a motion to abolish Quebec's carbon exchange, they are not respecting jurisdictions. I think that is akin to talking out of both sides of one's mouth. They are saying they respect jurisdiction but then they table a motion that will do the opposite.

The answer is quite simple: The Bloc Québécois is opposed to the jurisdictional encroachment the Conservative Party seeks to undertake through its motion today.

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I did not consider it necessary to clarify the purpose of the motion, however, in light of the questions I am hearing this morning, it would be good if my colleague could repeat yet again that no one paid the carbon price in April, May or June but that everyone except Quebec got a refund.

I think this reminder would be good so that we can finally have a discussion on the actual subject.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, if there is something I have learned in politics, it is repetition. It is not that some people do not want to understand; rather, some people do not want to know.

It is pretty simple. During the election campaign, the Liberal Party and its leader abolished a tax that was no longer in effect. As a result, some people received a rebate on a tax that was no longer in effect. Who did we not get a rebate? I must admit that this affects Quebec, as well as British Columbia and other jurisdictions. That said, only the Quebec National Assembly spoke up to ask for the \$814-million reimbursement.

I am trying to explain this as simply as possible to my colleagues. An election cheque landed in the mailbox before the election was called. It is as simple as that. We are simply asking to be reimbursed because we did not get our fair share.

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since I have been in the House of Commons, I have heard several Liberals and Conservatives say how proud they are to represent their Quebec constituents in the House. They thanked their constituents. However, I no longer hear this when it comes to defending Quebecers on financial and other matters and making the voice of Quebec and this nation heard on issues that they believe are important, such as a healthy environment. The people of Quebec have developed through renewable energy. They have freed themselves from having to depend on international markets for heating. I think that we should be proud of this. We should be proud of what has been done. Quebec has positioned itself as a leader in the fight against climate change compared to many other states. It is a carbon market pioneer. We must seriously commit to the Paris Agreement and participate in the global effort to cut greenhouse gas emissions in the face of a climate crisis that is hitting almost every corner of the planet, as we are seeing again today with the forest fires.

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Canada was a little behind, and in some respects, it decided to join the global trend by putting a price on carbon. However, in a blatant attempt to win votes, the new Liberal leader decided to abolish federal consumer carbon pricing by signing an order in council on March 14. Then the election was called. Ten days later, on March 23, the carbon tax was officially abolished. On April 1, in the midst of the election campaign, there was no longer a price on carbon. However, we know why the Liberal leader at the time decided to do away with a climate policy that he originally said was important to his party. Many Liberals said that it was a good policy. The Liberal leader at the time even denied the work of his colleagues, such as the former environment minister, the current member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, who said it was a good policy. Why did he do that? It is basically because the Conservative leader had been hammering away at the public for three years with slogans about axing the carbon tax. The Conservatives tried to demonize it in the public eye. Obviously, they wanted to take advantage of the electoral momentum. The strategy that we deplored, of course, was when the Liberal leader decided to axe this tax. Yes, the Liberals did away with those environmental policies in response to pressure from the Conservatives.

However, Ottawa decided to still issue a rebate for a tax that had been abolished, with the last payment going out on April 22. Oddly enough, on April 22, the election campaign was in full swing. It is important to understand that this tax was supposed to be paid. The rebate was supposed to cover what Canadians would be charged in the following three months. All Canadians, except Quebecers and British Columbians, received cheques, which were sent out in the midst of the election campaign.

It is simple. We call that giving out election goodies. The cost was \$3.7 billion. It was not funded by the proceeds from the oil and gas levy. It was funded directly from the government coffers. The cheques sent to Canadians ranged from about \$220 to \$456 per family. That \$3.7 billion came out of the government coffers. It belongs to all taxpayers, including Quebecers. Quebecers paid for this election gift and did not get so much as a penny in return. In Quebec, we paid for this, but we got nothing. The Liberal government gave an election gift to the rest of Canada at Quebecers' expense.

I think that the situation is very clear. It is unacceptable. It is an injustice. Among other things, we are paying for the responsibilities of provinces that have not done their part. Quebec is responsible enough to have a carbon exchange with California and other states that are taking the climate crisis seriously. As we can now see, this crisis is not imaginary. It is hitting western Canada with forest fires, the smoke from which has spread as far as England.

That \$814 million was taken from the pockets of Quebecers to send cheques to Canadians. That is \$814 million that will not be invested in health, education, child care, public transit or the fight against climate change, when those needs are urgent. Everyone knows that.

All the parties in the Quebec National Assembly agree. They adopted a motion calling on all the federal parties to commit to returning to Quebecers, without conditions, the \$814 million that was taken from their pockets. That money belongs to them.

• (1300)

How did the new Prime Minister respond to this demand from the Quebec National Assembly? He said that Quebec had chosen a different system, that this system is still in place and that this final payment would apply only to the rest of Canada. Let us tell it like it is: This is nonsense. He refuses to acknowledge the very simple fact that the final cheque was not paid by the rest of Canada, as he claims, but that it was paid by all taxpayers. His argument is flawed. It does not hold water. We have been demonstrating this since this morning and we will continue to do so throughout the day in the hope that parliamentarians will listen to reason. Our motion gives the government and all parties an opportunity to correct the situation, to be on the right side of history, and to respond appropriately to the Quebec National Assembly's unanimous request to resolve this injustice.

Beyond this specific injustice, we must recall the broader implications of eliminating this important part of carbon pricing in Canada. It does not augur well for the fight against climate change. We have seen this since the new government took office. Unfortunately, Canada is not on track to meet its international commitments. We are not the ones saying that eliminating carbon pricing was a bad idea; it is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD.

The federal government, including Prime Minister Trudeau and his ministers, often said that it was a good policy for most Canadians and that close to 80% of people got back more than what they paid, especially low- and middle-income households. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer acknowledged this, and he was very clear about it. Unfortunately, the Liberals did not defend their policy well. They were unable to make people understand the urgency of the climate crisis, to stand up and implement policies to meet that challenge. Now, Quebecers are the ones who are paying the price for their mistakes.

It is a political decision, and it is clear that there has been no change in the Canadian oil monarchy's current goal of producing and exporting as much oil from the oil sands as possible. Unfortunately, the Liberals and the Conservatives, of course, like to confuse the interests of Canadian oil companies with Canada's national interests, but we have to be careful not to confuse them with Quebec's national interests, which are definitely not the interests of oil companies. Despite the fact that Canada is the world's fourth-largest oil and gas producer, in Quebec, we have decided to move away from oil and gas, and we are being penalized for that right now. It is costing Quebecers \$814 million because we are standing up and taking this climate crisis seriously.

A choice has to be made. We are talking about climate justice and financial injustice. Here in the House, it is clear that the government is defending the oil and gas lobby. Now, we expect it to defend the interests and wallets of Quebecers. The government needs to rebuild trust. It is a matter of justice and fairness for Quebecers.

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We are hoping for a positive response from our colleagues to the unanimous request of elected representatives of the Quebec National Assembly. The message could not be clearer. Remedying this situation would certainly be a good starting point. We would be glad to discuss the policies that this government should or should not introduce if it seriously wants to fight climate change. Today, however, it is important that members of the House support this motion to require the federal government to remedy the situation. We, in the House, cannot accept that election goodies intended to directly influence an election and assist in electing a government should be paid for out of taxpayers' pockets, especially not the pockets of Quebecers.

In short, this is about defending the national interest and climate justice. The parties would send a clear message if they did the right thing and supported our motion. We are talking here about public funds that were used in a discriminatory manner for electoral purposes, and I think a red line was crossed. The least we can do is discuss the matter, but the most important thing is for members to vote in favour of this motion today.

• (1305)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity in several questions to ask why the Bloc did not see the benefit of us going into an election and on April 1 making the decision to stop collecting the carbon tax. At the end of the day, the rebate cheques were part of the budgets of the many individuals I have emphasized: seniors, people with disabilities and fixed-income or low-income individuals. Not giving them out would have had a fairly negative impact on those people.

The carbon tax was applicable to the provinces outside of British Columbia and Quebec. Does the member not have any sympathy for those individuals?

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, the comments I have been hearing from the opposite side of the House since the debate started are quite outrageous. It kind of seems like the hon. member is taking us for fools.

We are absolutely not opposed to the idea of helping people who are struggling with the cost of living. The problem today is that money was taken from Quebecers and given to Canadians. That is the problem. I fail to understand what the member does not get about that. I cannot make it clearer: Election goodies were paid for by Quebecers, but they themselves did not receive a cent. That is the problem.

No matter how my colleague says it, he is not going to take us for fools. Quebecers paid for vote-buying cheques. The Liberals must do the right thing, back off and send cheques back to Quebec.

• (1310)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my regards to my colleague, and congratulations on his long-standing political involvement and on his election as the member for Repentigny.

The member knows very well that the issue that we are discussing today was raised during the election campaign. All the facts were known during the campaign and even during the leaders' debate. The leader of the Bloc Québécois put the question directly to the Liberal leader, who fumbled and was unable to give a clear answer. This happened in the middle of the debate. Ten minutes later, all the commentators gave their opinions on the debate and, lo and behold, five panellists on the state-run news network said the Liberal leader had won, even though the leader of the Bloc Québécois had clearly raised the issue.

My question is this: How can the member for Repentigny accept the fact that, even though Quebecers knew all this, they elected 44 members who have been particularly quiet today in this debate—

The Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member to give the member for Repentigny a chance to answer the question.

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, I salute my hon. colleague and congratulate him on what I believe is his seventh consecutive election win.

Let us be clear, today's debate is about \$814 million that was taken out of Quebecers' pockets to pay for election handouts to Canadians. The debate is not about who won the leaders' debate or whether the fact that it was mentioned in the leaders' debate and 44 members were still elected justifies the action that was taken.

If we ask Quebecers today, I am sure they will all say that it is completely unfair. They will ask to be reimbursed for those cheques.

I expect the Conservative members to be very clear and to get over their past position on the carbon tax. Today's issue is not the carbon tax, but an election handout paid for out of the pockets of Quebecers.

I hope that you will set aside your ideology to defend Quebecers' wallets in this situation and that you will ensure that the government changes its position.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to remind the member for Repentigny that he must address the Chair. He used the word "you". I do not have a position, but members do.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have been following this debate since the beginning of today's opposition day. It started at 10 o'clock this morning. It is now one o'clock in the afternoon, and there are still several hours of debate to go before the end of the day.

There was something that struck me. Since the beginning of the sitting, not a single Liberal member from Quebec has risen to speak about this. Not a single one has spoken up. However, there are 44 of them. What does that mean?

Patrick Bonin: Mr. Speaker, no matter where members come from, even if they are from outside Quebec, I hope they will rise and support this motion. This is a matter of justice, and I am sure that no one in Canada would want to be played for a fool the way Quebecers have been.

The members from Quebec, more than anyone else, should stand up proudly and support our motion.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Les Pays-d'en-Haut.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to take part in this opposition day debate. In the recent federal election, Canadians demanded a serious, ambitious plan to make life more affordable for everyone in Canada.

Bill C-4 implements the plan designed to help Canadians, including those in Quebec, keep more of their hard-earned money. In addition, it aims to reduce income taxes for Canadian workers in every province and territory. It also eliminates the consumer carbon pricing legislation.

After it was eliminated, eligible Canadians did receive a final Canada carbon rebate payment on April 22, which was roughly two months ago. The federal government based this decision on the fact that many Canadian families, particularly those living on low incomes, were counting on the April rebate and had planned their budgets accordingly. As my hon. colleagues already know, the Canada carbon rebate payments, which were intended to return most of the proceeds of the federal fuel charge to households, were only made in provinces where the federal carbon pricing backstop applied. Since Quebec's current fuel charge system exceeded federal standards, the federal fuel charge did not apply to that province, which means that Quebecers did not receive these Canada carbon rebate payments. With the elimination of the charge, our government is now able to refocus federal carbon pricing and pollution standards by ensuring that all carbon pricing systems are in place across Canada for a wide range of greenhouse gas emissions from industry.

Quebec has long been a pioneer in regulating large emitters. Quebec has already solved this problem. This is important, because carbon pricing for businesses is one of the most important policies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions across Canada. According to research by the Canadian Climate Institute, Canada's carbon pricing systems will be more effective at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 than any other policy. They will help us reach our national emissions reduction target of 45% to 50% below 2005 levels by 2035. With strong carbon pricing for large emitters, we will be able to drive innovation and competitiveness nationwide by attracting investment in emissions reduction projects and creating more well-paying green jobs for Quebecers and for all Canadians. This approach is sure to make us a more attractive trading partner. It will also allow us to protect Canadian businesses, including those in Quebec, from the carbon pricing that countries and regions such as the U.K. and the European Union are imposing on countries that do not yet have a carbon pricing system.

It is important to remember that this bill not only eliminates the federal fuel charge from legislation, it also includes significant tax cuts for Canadians right across the country, including in Quebec. Once it receives royal assent, this legislation will remove the goods and services tax, or GST, for first-time homebuyers on new homes up to \$1 million, saving Canadians up to \$50,000.

These are promises we made during the election campaign. As we talked to people on the campaign trail, we heard that many

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young Canadians would like to buy a house. This part of the bill will help young Canadians, including Quebecers, do just that. The bill will also lower the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. Eliminating the GST would have a positive effect on supply. It could stimulate new home construction right across Canada and enable us to address the housing crisis that is affecting us—

• (1315)

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

Is the member talking about today's Bloc Québécois opposition day motion?

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for her intervention.

I am sure the hon. member will bring her speech back to the topic at hand. However, members are given a great deal of latitude to express themselves during debate.

The hon. member for London West can continue her speech.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, I will pick up where I left off.

As I was saying, the GST reduction we are proposing will allow many young Canadians, including those living in Quebec, to buy their first home. Eliminating the GST will affect everyone in Canada, including Quebecers. In addition, young Canadians could benefit from lower anticipated housing costs, making it easier for them to enter the housing market and realize their dream of buying their first home. During the election campaign, we all heard young people say they wanted the opportunity to buy their first home. As a millennial, that is a dream I share with two generations, generations Z and Y from across Quebec and Canada.

This measure would build on the already substantial federal tax support provided to first-time homebuyers through programs such as the tax-free first home savings account, the home buyers' plan, the registered retirement savings plan and the first-time homebuyers' tax credit.

In addition, under Bill C-4, the government is also going to offer a tax cut for the—

• (1320)

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

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I realize that members have some latitude while debating issues in the House. However, that freedom should not be unlimited. I would like to know if you could ask the member to focus her remarks on the motion before us on this opposition day. Liberal members have many opportunities to debate government bills, but opposition days are few and far between.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for his comment.

As he said, members do have a certain amount of latitude. Members will have a chance to ask questions during questions and comments.

The member for London West may resume her remarks.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, our Bill C-4 also includes a tax cut for the middle class. This does relate to the motion we are discussing today. We are talking about cutting the carbon tax. As I said earlier, Canadians wanted a little more money. We are therefore explaining how we will offer lower-income Canadians additional opportunities to contribute and live healthy lives across the country, including in Quebec.

Getting back to what I was saying, this bill will provide tax relief for the middle class by cutting taxes for nearly 22 million Canadians, saving families in Canada and Quebec up to \$840. Canadians, including Quebecers, could start seeing these tax savings on their paycheques as of July 1 of this year.

Hard-working Canadians with taxable incomes below \$114,000 in 2025 will benefit the most from these tax cuts. I talked about Canadians who hoped to have a little more money after April. We are working on a plan to show how these Canadians will be able to get a little more money. All Canadians will benefit from this cut, regardless of the province they live in, which was not the case for the Canada carbon rebate.

That is just the beginning. We are determined to continue helping hard-working Canadians save money. That is the mandate they gave us and that is what the government is going to do. We are reviewing core spending and government efficiency to help cut costs and increase productivity across the public service.

We are also taking measures to eliminate internal trade barriers with a goal of reducing costs by 15% and adding up to \$200 billion to our economy, or potentially as much as \$5,000 per Canadian. We are also cancelling the tax increases on capital gains to help stimulate investment in our communities and encourage builders, innovators and entrepreneurs to grow their businesses in Canada.

In the fall, we will table a well-thought-out budget that will advance our primary objective of investing more in the people and businesses that will grow our economy.

As His Majesty said in the Speech from the Throne, in all of its actions, the government will be guided by a new fiscal discipline: spend less so Canadians can invest more. By working together, we will fight climate change and strengthen Canada's and Quebec's economic resilience in a rapidly changing global landscape.

We are going to build a stronger, more unified new economy, an economy that will create better-paying jobs and higher incomes for everyone—the strongest economy in the G7.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech, but I wish she had spoken more about the opposition day motion than Bill C-4.

Before I ask my question, I would first like to apologize to my colleague. Earlier today, when she asked me a question about my speech on the Bloc Québécois opposition day motion, I came down on her, saying that she would have to explain to her constituents why \$10 million was diverted from her riding and given to the rest of Canada. I thought she was a Quebec MP, but she represents an Ontario riding. Consequently, her riding actually benefited from the diversion of those funds.

I would like to know whether my colleague can tell me why no Quebec Liberal MP has risen today to speak on this issue. Is her party preventing them from speaking, or are they ashamed of their position?

• (1325)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his clarification on the comment he made earlier.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind my colleague that there are francophones across Canada, not just in Quebec. There are francophones in Ontario. My colleague asked me why members from Quebec are not speaking. Are francophones from outside Quebec not francophones?

That is my question for my colleague.

[English]

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, it is about binoculars. I cannot see the CN Tower from here. I cannot see the CN Tower from my riding.

The government divided Canadians, rolled back the CMA data and classified my riding as not being rural but part of Toronto. Again, we cannot see the CN Tower. We were denied the rural top-up we were entitled to. Now, people who mistakenly got the rural top-up have the CRA coming after them.

Could the hon. member circle the square that people in downtown Ottawa and in downtown Toronto received the rural top-up, as per my OPQ question, but the people of York—Simcoe did not?

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Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and I are often on flights together, so he knows that I am not from Toronto or another big city. I am from London, Ontario, and I think 30% of my riding is also considered rural. I do speak for a large number of Canadians who are from my riding.

I also want to say that, when it comes to dividing Canadians on this issue, it was the Conservatives who created the dividing language around the carbon tax, to the point that it became so divisive for Canadians that we had to drop it.

The hon. member needs to be talking to his leader about the language he has used in the House to divide Canadians more than he needs to ask me about that.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the deputy House leader sharing such good comments today. I know that the member opposite did stand up on relevance, but I do believe that Bill C-4 is very relevant to this conversation.

In the riding of Waterloo, constituents want to be reassured that the government will continue to fight climate change, because we know that climate change is real. As I said yesterday, all members in the House seem to believe it, except for the official opposition, for whom I guess the jury is still out. They have not seen that the environment is changing and that we need to do something about it.

I would ask the member to share, because we both come from southwest Ontario, the benefits of ensuring that we take the environment seriously. Are the benefits to climate change and economic policy ensuring economic drivers or jobs for tomorrow?

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, we are keeping the industrial carbon pricing, which is three times more effective than the consumer carbon pricing.

First of all, we have to talk about the fact that Canada has been a leader at home and internationally on climate change, and it will continue to be. Instead of rewarding the biggest polluters and making Canadians pay for our new climate plan, we will build more green jobs. Our area, that of my colleague and I, has new jobs in the green sector for the EV sector. That is something we want to continue to work on to make sure that green jobs are kept across the country.

We are the government that believes in climate change and the real threats of climate change. If members want to go outside, they can see it. We will continue to do so.

[Translation]

Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate and to reiterate our government's plan outlining our immediate priorities to make life affordable for all Canadians, including Quebeckers.

I want to thank the voters of Les Pays-d'en-Haut for placing their trust in me. As a member from Quebec, I think it is important for some of my colleagues from another political party to remember that Quebeckers elected 44 Liberal members to the House of Commons. This is a historic accomplishment because it is the highest number of Liberals elected to the House since 1980 and, I should point out, it is twice the number of Bloc Québécois members elected to the House.

Quebeckers have quite simply given this government a strong mandate to fight unjustified tariffs, build a strong economy and make life more affordable. We also know that protecting the environment and economic growth are important priorities for Quebeckers. Instead of seeing those noble objectives as mutually exclusive, Quebeckers have long understood that they go hand in hand. Quebec has in fact long been a leader in fighting climate change. In 2013, Quebec established its own cap-and-trade system in order to set a price on carbon pollution. Quebec controls the design of the system and all of its revenues, which is why Canada's carbon rebate never applied in Quebec and why Quebec never expected to receive a carbon rebate. Quebec's leadership in establishing a cap-and-trade system not only predates the federal carbon pricing, it also served as a model for other jurisdictions in North America. Its ties with California through the Western Climate Initiative show that provinces can take the initiative on innovative cross-border climate solutions.

The government will always support provinces that take ambitious, innovative and responsible action to fight climate change, as Quebec did. That is why I find the Bloc Québécois motion a bit ironic. On this side of the House, we respect and appreciate the provinces and territories that have implemented their own climate policies and are aligned with our shared goal of fighting climate change. The existing system is a recognition of Quebec's unique leadership on this issue and its jurisdiction. The Bloc will surely agree with that. The rebates that applied to the federal carbon tax, which has now been cancelled, were sent to Canadians living in provinces that were part of the existing plan. Canadians in those provinces would have budgeted for that rebate, and the government decided to make things easier for them.

It is important to understand how carbon pricing works. It does not apply in provinces like Quebec that have their own carbon pricing system. In provinces where the federal system applied, all proceeds from consumer carbon pricing were returned to the province in which they have been collected. In those provinces, Canadians paid the fuel tax up until a few weeks before the final rebate was sent out. They rightfully expected to receive the final carbon tax rebate in April.

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That is why the final Canada carbon rebate was issued as a transitional measure after the elimination of the consumer fuel tax. The payment was not a new benefit. It was the final instalment of a rebate for costs associated with the federal fuel tax. Quebec did not pay the federal carbon tax, so it did not receive the federal rebate. That makes perfect sense.

This situation is not unique to Quebec. The carbon rebate system did not apply in British Columbia or the territories either. People in those provinces and territories were also not entitled to the rebate. This seems to me to be a relatively simple and straightforward premise. I have a lot of respect for my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, especially when it comes to environmental issues. However, motions like this one seek to sow division where there is none. The federal government has respected Quebec's jurisdiction over cap and trade and has worked with Quebec on environmental issues and carbon pricing.

• (1330)

However, the other side of this mutually beneficial relationship was simply that Quebecers did not pay the federal carbon tax as a consumption tax. It makes no sense for refund cheques to be sent to Quebec households, since they were exempt from the system in the first place.

Quebeckers want all of the parties in this House to unite, rather than focus on motions that sow discord. They have asked us to put aside our partisan differences and stand up for Quebec industries, Quebec workers and a strong Quebec economy as part of a strong and united Canadian economy.

• (1335)

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague, who is the first Liberal member from Quebec to have the courage to rise in the House. However, I am not sure whether he fully understands his government's decision.

As he said, Quebec is not subject to the carbon tax. Considering that we did not pay the carbon tax, we are not entitled to the rebate. However, in April, May and June, when there was no carbon tax, Ottawa still sent out cheques. This means that Quebecers paid for the elimination of the carbon tax in Canada. That is what it amounts to. It means that the people in my colleague's riding paid \$10 million out of their own pockets to people making less of an effort to fight climate change.

Is my colleague going to explain that to his constituents? I think it might not go down very well.

Tim Watchorn: Mr. Speaker, after listening to the debates in the House, it seems a bit ironic to hear the Bloc Québécois say that eliminating the carbon tax is an election ploy.

In Quebec, people received zero dollars in carbon tax rebates because they were not participating in the carbon tax program, yet they still elected twice as many Liberal MPs as Bloc MPs.

I think Quebecers get it.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Liberals on their decision to adopt the Conservative policy of axing the consumer carbon tax. This was

not easy for the Liberals, who opposed it for so many years. It was clear to us that it was a tax plan, not an environmental plan. It was a burden being imposed on people.

Will the Liberals admit that the industrial carbon tax continues to be a burden, not only on industry, but also on Canadians?

Tim Watchorn: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important to understand that climate change is very real and that the carbon tax is an important measure to fight climate change.

Unfortunately, the debate on the carbon tax for individuals became so toxic that the measure was no longer useful. We abolished it because that is what all Canadians wanted.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Les Pays-d'en-Haut for his excellent speech, which has provided some necessary clarification on the issues being discussed today.

He ended his speech by saying that rather than trying to discuss a motion that is somewhat divisive, we should focus on the issues of the day, such as the need to strengthen and unify our economy.

How will our government's plan to strengthen the economy help his region?

Tim Watchorn: Mr. Speaker, I think that the measures being put forward by our government, such as the tax cut, the GST rebate on new homes and the other initiatives that have been mentioned, will give the people of Les Pays-d'en-Haut a bit of break when it comes to affordability.

I think these flagship measures from our government will pay off.

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate once again that while Quebecers did not pay the carbon tax in April, May and June, neither did any Canadians. However, Quebecers and British Columbians were the only ones who did not get a cheque for those three months. It is simple. That is the only thing we want. That money was not taken from the carbon tax. It was given to everyone but Quebecers.

We just want our fair share, which would include \$10 million for my colleague's riding.

Tim Watchorn: Mr. Speaker, Quebecers did not pay the carbon tax. They are therefore not entitled to the rebate. The same goes for British Columbia and the territories. It is very clear that they are not entitled to a rebate.

I think that our colleague from Winnipeg North said it well. While budgeting for the year, vulnerable people in the rest of Canada were counting on getting this carbon rebate. That is what our government did today.

• (1340)

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

The subject of today's Bloc Québécois motion is a good example of the injustices that Quebec is subjected to because we are a distinct nation governed by another nation. For example, the federal language policy uses our tax dollars and its overriding legislative power to impose the language of the Canadian majority on the people of Quebec.

The same goes for environmental policy. Quebec's environmental policy and its economy are based on renewable energy, whereas Canada is a petrostate. In fact, Canada is already a conventional energy superpower. It is the world's fourth-largest oil producer and fifth-largest gas producer. The Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, also known as the carbon tax, put a price on fossil fuels in eight provinces that did not already have their own carbon pricing system.

Quebec and British Columbia were excluded because of their respective systems: a carbon exchange in Quebec and a provincial carbon tax in British Columbia. Canadian consumers paid the tax when they purchased gas or natural gas. The tax was built into the product price. Individuals in the provinces subject to the carbon tax received a rebate cheque in advance of what they would be paying at the pump. The Canada carbon rebate was paid out to individuals four times per year before the tax was collected. In fact, 90% of the revenues collected from the carbon tax were directly redistributed to residents in the form of rebates every three months. The remaining 10% were invested in energy transition programs. Those rebates were intended to fund the federal policy that most effectively produced real greenhouse gas emission reductions and truly helped decarbonize the economy.

The Liberal Prime Minister, before he was even elected, decided to abolish the carbon tax, an important climate policy from his own party, for purely political reasons. The government eliminated consumer carbon pricing as of April 1, 2025, and doled out the carbon rebate, even if people were no longer paying the carbon tax, as an election goody. This is a great example of the elastic ethics of the Liberals, who are masters in the art of buying votes with voters' own money. Since the carbon tax does not apply to Quebec, which has had its own carbon exchange since 2013, it decided not to give Quebecers anything. However, these election goodies distributed to the Canadian provinces, to the tune of \$3.7 billion, were paid for with federal funds, meaning by all taxpayers, including Quebec taxpayers. Quebecers should have received \$814 million for it to have been equitable.

It was quite the feat by the Liberal Prime Minister. Not only did he sabotage the Liberals' own climate policy, he also managed to create economic and financial injustice for Quebec consumers and taxpayers. He is using Quebecers' own money to punish them for their good behaviour and their climate responsibility. Quebec is simply being penalized for its efforts to fight climate change.

The Quebec National Assembly voted unanimously in favour of a motion calling on all federal political parties to commit to giving Quebec back its fair share of the payment, which it estimates to be

Business of Supply

over \$800 million. All members of all the political parties represented in Quebec voted in favour of that motion. That is not to mention the price that Quebecers pay for the effects of the greenhouse gases emitted in Canada outside Quebec. We learned just today that Quebec, like other northern regions, is warming at twice the rate of the rest of the planet, with considerable harm to health and infrastructure, and that is related to the western continent.

• (1345)

I should add that Canada's abandonment of carbon pricing threatens Quebec's economy. This comes at a time when we need to diversify our export markets more than ever, and at a time when Europe is imposing a carbon border adjustment system on products from irresponsible countries such as Canada. Quebec accounts for one third of trade between Canada and Europe and attracts close to 40% of European investment in Canada. Quebec has a clear strategic advantage. In a way, it is a bridge between North America and Europe.

The Bloc Québécois would like to see Quebec double its trade with Europe, including the United Kingdom, from \$42 billion to \$84 billion within five years. The European Union adopted Regulation (EU) 2023/956 establishing a carbon border adjustment mechanism at the European Union's borders in 2023.

In order to prevent carbon leakage and unfair competition, Europe will be imposing a tax adjustment on certain imported products from countries with no or low carbon pricing starting January 1, 2026. The United Kingdom adopted similar legislation in 2024, and it will come into force on January 1, 2027. When a product enters Europe, the European Union will impose an import tax equivalent to what the carbon pricing would have cost had it been manufactured in Europe.

Carbon adjustment is new, but border tax adjustments are common and in line with trade rules. Let us consider that the World Bank has identified 73 carbon pricing mechanisms in 53 countries. That is 69 more mechanisms than 20 years ago, and no country in the world has abolished carbon pricing, except Canada, which is the first to choose this path.

The carbon market system in Quebec allows us to trade carbon credits with companies in California and Washington State. In a world where pollution is increasingly costly, Quebec enjoys a clear comparative advantage thanks to its abundant production of zero-emission energy.

Business of Supply

The Liberal government abolished carbon pricing for individuals in Canada outside Quebec and is proposing to reform industrial carbon pricing, but it is not providing any further details. If it decides to abolish it, it will further undermine efforts to diversify exports and increase trade with Europe.

Canada can still choose the energy transition, sustainable growth and economic and environmental sustainability. We are asking all members to support our motion calling on the government to pay Quebec, without conditions, an amount equivalent to its contribution to the \$3.7 billion in spending, estimated at \$814 million. That would be a step in the right direction toward rebuilding public trust in justice for all in the fight against climate change.

We have to start by respecting Quebec consumers, taxpayers and citizens by responding positively to the unanimous request of their elected representatives in the Quebec National Assembly. The Bloc Québécois's request is nothing but a modest request to correct an obvious and specific injustice.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize right at the get-go that the Province of British Columbia and the Province of Quebec were not part of the backstop that had the federal government participating in the consumer carbon tax. The new Prime Minister and the new government have made a decision to get rid of the consumer carbon tax, but we still understand the importance of having the industrial carbon pricing system. Let us be very clear on that, because we understand the global market and the critical role that has to play in it. It is only the Conservative Party of Canada that has decided to dunk its head in the sand.

My question for the member is this: Would he not agree that we should be focusing on trying to reverse the Conservative position in regard to the industrial carbon pricing, because it is in the best interest of all of Canada to do so?

• (1350)

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, we obviously agree that industrial carbon pricing should be maintained, because it is very important. However, my colleague missed the point.

In this case, the Liberals decided to hand out election goodies for electoral purposes, as they tend to do. In this case, we are talking about a total of \$3.7 billion taken from government funds. Quebec taxpayers ended up paying for the Liberals' election goodies without receiving any compensation.

[English]

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are pleased with the deathbed conversion the Liberals had in cancelling the carbon tax, but Canadians are left with a carbon tax hangover because what the Liberals neglected to do was include a mechanism requiring prices to come down. Instead, the marketers have left prices for groceries the way they are instead of taking into account the reduced carbon tax. The Liberals also left the industrial carbon tax in place.

My question for the member who just spoke is this: Should there be a mechanism to ensure that Canadians do feel the full benefit of getting rid of the carbon tax, and by how much does the member expect the industrial carbon tax to reduce forest fires in Quebec?

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, in fact, we take the opposite view. The carbon tax should not have been eliminated. It should have been maintained.

We shall see what happens with industrial carbon pricing. There was nothing about it in the Liberals' recent bill, but we hope that something will be done. In all honesty, if the industrial tax is not maintained or even increased, that will hinder our trade diversification with Europe.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the debate since this morning. Clearly, the Liberals are having a hard time understanding. They are the ones who wrote these election cheques. There seems to be some confusion; they do not seem to understand the process. During debate, after the member for Beloeil—Chambly asked a question, it was clear that even the Liberal leader does not understand the system.

This taxation is upstream, that is, it happens on the front end. People receive money even though they have not paid the tax yet. When the government gives money to people even though they have not paid the tax yet, it does not take an economics expert to understand that this money comes from everyone's taxes, from the public budget. Quebecers have collectively paid for this election gift, but we are excluded from receiving a cheque because we have our own system.

What does my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île have to say about that?

Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague.

Canadian citizens stopped paying the carbon tax as of April 1, which means that their rebates were just vote-getting handouts.

Earlier, one of my fellow MPs from Quebec said that no one in Quebec asked to be reimbursed, but he is unaware that there has been a lot of talk about this situation in the media. The Quebec National Assembly even voted unanimously in favour of a motion in this regard. Even Liberal MNAs agreed that it was inconceivable that the federal government was handing out election goodies paid for in part by Quebecers, who received no compensation.

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your appointment to the chair. This is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak to you in your new role. I am very happy for you.

I also want to use my first official speech to thank the people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue for their trust in me. Despite some headwinds, that trust remains strong. I was able to hold on to roughly the same amount of support from the voters in my riding, and I am very grateful to them. I especially want to thank to my campaign team, starting with Gérard, Benjamin, Lynda, Christian, Jean-François, and anyone else I may have forgotten to mention. They have my sincere thanks.

Allow me to set the stage a little.

A few months ago, the federal government scrapped the carbon tax. Canadian consumers were paying something called the federal fuel charge. The tax did not apply to Quebec because of Quebec's carbon market. Four times a year, Canadian consumers received the Canada carbon rebate, which ranged from \$200 to \$450. The rebate was not a big deal for the Bloc Québécois. However, the same cannot be said of the cheque sent out during the election campaign. Why is that? The thing is, this particular rebate cheque was funded by all Quebecers and all Canadians, and that is the crux of the problem.

According to columnist Hélène Buzzetti, the rebate has always been prospective, not retroactive, meaning that it was meant to cover what people were going to pay in tax over the next three months. She reported that, according to the Finance Canada website, "Payments delivered to Canadians in April would thus return the fuel charge proceeds collected during the April-June quarter".

As such, the April rebate was paid for with government funds. In other words, it was everyone's money, including Quebecers' money, that paid for the rebate.

That is what is so unfair about this. Quebecers and British Columbians did not receive any federal carbon rebate at all. They did not get a single cheque.

In total, those payments cost taxpayers \$3.75 billion, including a substantial portion, estimated at more than \$800 million, that should have gone to Quebec in accordance with the rule of three.

Why should the people of Quebec be excluded from a program that they contributed to financially? That is the question. What is the justification for excluding them like this?

The answer we got is that federal pricing is of no concern to Quebec since it has had its own carbon market in partnership with California since 2013. What is more, I congratulate Quebec because that system yields the best results worldwide. Our system still exists more than 10 years later, proving how robust and effective it is.

This final rebate applies only to residents of the rest of Canada, but that is the problem: The residents of the rest of Canada did not pay for this rebate. All taxpayers paid for it, contrary to what the Prime Minister says.

I am not here to create division, but to point out that this injustice needs to be corrected. Quebec is not asking for special treatment. It is simply asking that Quebecers be treated the same way Canadians are. We want to receive our fair share of what we paid since we have made commendable and much more effective efforts than other people in Canada have.

Business of Supply

I would also like to point out that the Quebec National Assembly adopted a motion on April 23 calling on the federal government to give Quebec its fair share of the carbon rebate. This was not a partisan request. It represented the voice of all parties in the Quebec National Assembly. What was the federal government's response? It was basically an outright refusal.

To make it easier for the federal government to correct this injustice toward Quebecers, there is no need to send cheques directly to them. The federal government could instead pay the Quebec government its fair share. The Quebec government could then decide how best to redistribute this money to Quebecers.

Perhaps this money could be go toward other measures to promote innovation and the fight against climate change and carbon emissions. The Quebec government could grant this amount as a rebate on gasoline taxes for the next year, which would reduce the price gap between Quebec and Ontario, for example. Quebec has already taken a step in this direction by eliminating the minimum price for gasoline.

The Quebec government could also do more by investing those funds in the environment and energy transition.

● (1355)

I was recently in Amos for an event hosted by the Abitibi—Témiscamingue Youth Forum to encourage young people to participate in municipal elections. These young people are motivated by a desire for change. They are thinking about the future. They are not thinking about short-term gains. They are concerned about the future of our planet. In first nations communities, decisions must be made with the next seven generations in mind. There is something inspiring about that that I—

● (1400)

The Speaker: I must interrupt the debate.

The hon. member will have approximately four and a half minutes to conclude, following this afternoon's vote.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***TRAGEDY AT LAPU-LAPU DAY FESTIVAL**

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the lives lost in the devastating attack at the Lapu-Lapu Day festival just six weeks ago in my riding of Vancouver Kingsway. Eleven innocent people were taken from us by the horrific act of violence that occurred as Filipino Canadians gathered to proudly celebrate their history, culture and achievements. To the loved ones of the victims, all who were affected and the entire Filipino Canadian community, our nation stands with them in this time of unspeakable grief and sorrow.

Much has been said about the profound resilience and faith of the Filipino people. While that is truly the case, we must ensure that they get the resources and justice they need and deserve. In the wake of this tragedy, let us come together, not just to recover but to forge a stronger and more united country where everyone is safe, supported and cherished.

* * *

PORTUGUESE HERITAGE MONTH

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *olá*. As the member of Parliament for Davenport, the riding with the largest number of Portuguese Canadians, I am proud to rise in the House today to celebrate Portugal Day in Canada and to celebrate June as Portuguese Heritage Month.

It has been 72 years since the first group of Portuguese immigrants arrived at Pier 21 in Halifax. Today, Portuguese Canadians are almost half a million strong, representing one of the largest Portuguese diasporas in the world. Living in communities across our fair country, Portuguese Canadians are leaders in every single sector: business, politics, science, sports, arts, health care, construction and so much more. Through their perseverance and hard work, they have enriched Canadian society and transformed Canada into a stronger and better country.

I invite all members of the House and all Canadians to join in the celebrations today and every day this month, whether it is by listening to fado, drinking vinho verde or eating a *bifana* or *pastéis de nata*.

Feliz Dia de Portugal. Feliz mês de Portugal.

* * *

JUDITH ANN “JUDY” SCOTT O'BRIEN

Mike Dawson (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our political family in New Brunswick suffered a loss with the passing of Judy Scott O'Brien of Durham Bridge. The daughter of the late Anita and Darrell Scott, she is survived by her husband Mike O'Brien, her brother Don and his wife Joyce, as well as nieces and nephews. Originally from Edmundston, Judy was a key resource for former premiers Richard Hatfield and Bernard Lord. While I did not know her personally, she is a very close friend of my family, and I am aware of her legend.

Judy was colourful. She was fiercely loyal, and she was a hard worker. She kept and loved horses. Judy loved politics but also enjoyed her peaceful home in Durham Bridge and her trips to St. Martins with Michael.

Please join me in offering condolences to the family and many friends of Judy Scott O'Brien.

* * *

SAVE OUR LOCAL NEWS CAMPAIGN

Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as it is my first time rising in this Parliament, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation and thanks to the people of Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for electing me to a fourth term in this place.

I am pleased about an important initiative in British Columbia, in the Lower Mainland, to save our local news. Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Burnaby, New Westminster, Anmore and Belcarra lost local news coverage when Glacier Media shuttered their papers. People no longer know what is happening in their council chambers, read news about their little league teams or learn about that new cookie shop downtown.

Last week, I learned about the Save Our Local News campaign. Headed by former local reporters Janice Cleugh, Cornelia Naylor, Mario Bartel and Theresa McManus, it will create a new, reliable news outlet with the support of Unifor.

Please join me to save our local news.

* * *

CONDOLENCES

Chris d'Entremont (Acadie—Annapolis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an incredible honour for me to rise today in the 45th Parliament as the elected member for the extraordinary riding of Acadie—Annapolis. I want to sincerely thank the residents of Acadie—Annapolis for once again placing their trust in me to be their voice in Ottawa.

This past week has been very difficult for me personally and for my family. In the span of just a few days, I have had to say goodbye to three people who were incredibly close to my heart. My beloved mother-in-law, Ella Muise, was a woman of grace, care and warmth whose gentle spirit touched everyone she met. She was an important part of my life for over 40 years. My wife, Anne, will dearly miss her *mamme*, and my two boys, their beloved *grand-mère*.

Braden Muise, my cousin's son, only 18, full of potential, was tragically taken too soon. He will be missed dearly by his friends and family.

● (1405)

[Translation]

There was also Blair Boudreau, a pillar in our Acadian community, a proud passionate and tireless defender of our language, culture and history. He leaves a deep and lasting legacy.

[English]

Let their memories be eternal, and may we honour them by living with the same love, strength and purpose that they brought to this world. May they rest in peace.

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[Translation]

PORTUGAL DAY

Carlos Leitão (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 10, people around the world celebrate Portugal Day, the day of Portuguese communities. It is a very special time for us to celebrate the soul of our country and the indomitable spirit of the Portuguese people.

This celebration means a great deal to me, as a Portuguese immigrant to Canada and a proud member of this House.

Canadians of Portuguese descent have enriched this country through their warm traditions and dynamic culture.

Let us be proud of the diversity that unites us.

[Member spoke in Portuguese]

* * *

[English]

SOUTHERN ONTARIO CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other weekend, I had the honour of kicking off the cricket season with SOCA, the Southern Ontario Cricket Association, founded in 1883. Under the leadership of Parveen, Dr. Hariharan, president Giridhar and vice-president Karthik, SOCA has grown into a community of 79 teams. Today, SOCA runs leagues for women, children and seniors, creating a truly inclusive cricket community.

In the Waterloo region, SOCA serves 8,000 members, who find friendship, purpose and pride. Through sport, they are growing leaders, role models and stronger communities. Parveen Sharma has dedicated over 31 years to growing this organization. Parveen was the backbone of local cricket programs long before cricket had the visibility it enjoys today.

Mayor Berry has been a tremendous support over the years. His advocacy at the municipal level has played a key role in helping the league thrive in the Waterloo region.

This is exactly the kind of community building I am very proud to support. I wish SOCA a very successful season.

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HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Jimmy Lai, a 77-year-old pro-democracy advocate and

Statements by Members

journalist, stands for values cherished by Canadians: media freedom and the rule of law. Despite his age and health issues, Mr. Lai remains imprisoned in torturous condition under Hong Kong's repressive national security law, the provisions of which are inconsistent with international human rights law.

In March 2024, the Subcommittee on International Human Rights issued a news release to “call for the release of Jimmy Lai, and express their solidarity with everyone advocating for freedom and justice in Hong Kong”, echoing that Jimmy Lai “stood up for truth and for his fellow Hong Kongers, and now we must stand up for him.”

Parliament has a proud tradition of supporting such individuals, as shown in 2023 when it granted honorary Canadian citizenship to Russian dissident Vladimir Kara-Murza. I now call upon the Government of Canada to make Jimmy Lai an honorary citizen of Canada.

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[Translation]

NEW F-35 JETS FOR CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Auditor General published another scathing report about the contract for the new F-35 jets for the Canadian Armed Forces.

In her report, she sharply criticized the Liberal government's control throughout the process. She pointed out that the project is now 50% over budget and has reached a cost of \$30 billion, not including the required weapons and infrastructure, which will cost at least an additional \$5.5 billion.

Finally, she pointed out the critical shortage of pilots to operate the F-35s once they are delivered.

The people of Beauce want to know when this Liberal government will start managing their money responsibly. Maybe the Liberals should start by tabling a spring budget.

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VICTOR-LÉVY BEAULIEU

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Lower St. Lawrence and Quebec literature have just lost one of their most spectacular, bold and prolific representatives.

Victor-Lévy Beaulieu has passed away at the age of 79, but he is leaving us with his plays, essays and novels. VLB was an editor, novelist and essayist. He was indignant and rebellious, a separatist who loved his corner of the country.

Félix had his island, Vigneault had Natashquan, and Victor-Lévy Beaulieu had Trois-Pistoles. Despite his immense body of work, *Race de monde*, *L'Héritage* and *Bouscotte* left the most lasting impression on Quebecers.

Statements by Members

For years, millions of us sat in front of our TV screens watching his stories, unable to tear our eyes away from the drama or close our ears to the swearing of the larger-than-life characters. "*Gumbitch*" and "*ostie toastée des deux bords*" have become part of Quebecers' more colourful language.

Victor-Lévy Beaulieu was a giant.

To his family and loved ones, we offer our deepest condolences.

* * *

• (1410)
[English]

AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

Alana Hirtle (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past week, the Truro Farm Equipment Museum marked its 35th anniversary of preserving agricultural heritage in Nova Scotia.

Museums like this are so much more than the antique tractors and plows that are on display. They are keepers of stories that matter, stories of families working the land and building our society from the ground up. Our rural communities have always been laboratories of innovation and resilience. For generations, our farmers have fed entire communities while protecting the land for future generations.

As elected representatives are called to act on the biggest challenges of the 21st century, we would do well to learn from the same spirit of ingenuity and co-operation historically found in agricultural communities across Canada.

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HOUSING

Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge today's scathing Auditor General's report on the current and future use of office space. The report noted that the Liberals promised to reduce office space by 50%, with \$1.1 billion over 10 years to do so. However, the Auditor General found that the office space reduction will only be 33%.

The results show the absolute failure of the Liberals to get housing built. After years of flashy announcements, all they have are endless broken promises. The report says that it takes six to eight years to dispose of surplus buildings, a completely unacceptable and costly timeline.

As millions of Canadians are struggling to find affordable housing, this latest report confirms just how out of touch and unhelpful the same old Liberal government has been.

* * *

UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the United Church of Canada, established by an act of Parliament exactly 100 years ago today.

In my riding of Winnipeg South Centre, several United Church congregations, including Young, Augustine, Fort Garry, Westmin-

ster, Harrow and Crescent Fort Rouge, gathered this past weekend for a special service of celebration and thanksgiving. I want to thank Reverend Marc Whitehead and all those who helped to organize this meaningful gathering at Crescent Fort Rouge.

For a century, the United Church has stood alongside communities across Canada, not only as a spiritual home to many but also as a place of welcome, community and support, offering a wide range of programming and services to residents of all backgrounds. On this special anniversary, I want to extend my congratulations and gratitude to the United Church of Canada for 100 years of ministry, leadership and hope, all in service of community.

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F-35 FIGHTER JETS

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's investigation into the Liberals' purchase of the F-35 fighter jets is shocking. It is over budget and behind schedule. Costs are up 50%. The new facilities to house the jets will not be completed until 2031. That is three years too late, forcing taxpayers to spend even more money on temporary hangars.

The investigation also confirmed what we have known since 2018: We do not have enough pilots. Canada was the pilot training ground for the Commonwealth during World War II. Thanks to the Liberals, we send our recruits to Italy to learn to fly.

The lost Liberal decade has left Canadians unsafe and insecure in an increasingly dangerous world. The out-of-control costs, repeated construction delays and lack of staff threaten to delay the replacement of the fighter jets. Now the Liberals want billions of dollars more to waste. Under the Liberals, Canadians are paying so much while getting so little in return.

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• (1415)
[Translation]

PORTUGAL DAY

Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, people of Portuguese origin everywhere are celebrating Portugal Day, the day of Camões and Portuguese communities.

Portugal Day is first and foremost a time to celebrate everything that has shaped Portuguese culture over the centuries, rather than just a military deed, a conquest or even the Portuguese discoveries. It is a time to celebrate the cartography, the *azulejos*, the symbiotic relationship with the ocean and the oh-so-delicious use of its resources.

Lusitanianity is well represented not only by the *pastéis de nata*, our custard tarts, but also by the great and renowned literary works of Camões, Fernando Pessoa, Eça de Queirós and José Saramago; by fado, which embraces and charms us from cradle to grave; and by our simple but delicious gastronomy, enhanced by spices discovered in the 16th century and the skilful use of sea salt.

Finally, being Lusitanian, whether in Portugal or elsewhere in the world, means living with this rich heritage in our hearts without feeling too much *saudade*.

* * *

[English]

ARRIVECAN APP

Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's Auditor General's report is another damning indictment that the Liberals have lost control of their rampant spending on consultants.

GC Strategies, the consulting firm with links to arrive scam, cut 106 service contracts worth \$92.7 million. This is the same company that was found in contempt of Parliament for refusing to answer questions and was called to this very House to answer questions.

The scandal, of course, compounds from there. The AG found that in a third of the contracts awarded, there was no evidence the consultants had the required experience, and there were massive security clearance failures. There was also a failure to prove that the fees paid did not exceed market rates, and most damning of all, endless reams of evidence showed that the work was not even completed.

In true Liberal fashion, of course, the Trudeau ministers responsible for arrive scam actually got promoted. It is clear that with decisions like this, the Liberals have no plan to get taxpayers' money back on this blatant corruption.

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GRADUATION CONGRATULATIONS

Corey Hogan (Calgary Confederation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 2025 graduating class from the University of Calgary. The last of this convocation's 7,000 graduates cross the stage today. Graduates like Austin Friesen, who just received his M.B.A., come from across degree programs and disciplines. Graduating from university is an enormous accomplishment. Grads are fortunate to have attended Canada's entrepreneurial university, one of our city's gems. The education and friendships they made along the way will serve them well.

Sometimes young universities struggle to have their reputation keep up with their accomplishments, so I would like to inform the House about just a few. Today, in dollar terms, the hard-working students, faculty and staff at the U of C do about as much research as Queen's, Western and TMU combined, all great universities in their own right. The university has among the highest student satisfaction scores. Its stroke protocol saves lives globally, and more start-ups have come out of the U of C over the past five years than any other Canadian university.

Oral Questions

I congratulate all the graduates. Their community is proud of them. They did it.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Auditor General released a scathing audit on the top arrive scam fraudster, GC Strategies. This two-person, basement-dwelling company feasted on 64 million taxpayer dollars. This was a direct gift from the Liberal government, which allowed basic procurement rules to be completely ignored over the last 10 years. Canadians still do not know who did the work, what was done, if they were qualified or if they had security clearances. This is complete government incompetence.

The ask is simple: When will taxpayers get their money back?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Auditor General for her service. I note that GC Strategies has been prohibited from government contracts for seven years. It is that standard—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. Mark Carney: Mr. Speaker, as a member of Canada's new government and a new member of Parliament, I say we will uphold higher standards.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, shockingly, the very same Liberal ministers who had their fingerprints all over the arrive scam are still in cabinet today: namely, the jobs minister, the U.S. trade minister and the foreign affairs minister. Their lack of ministerial responsibility is both negligent and inexcusable. The fraudulent payment of \$64 million is not just about reckless spending; it is a total waste of taxpayer dollars and a betrayal of Canadians, who are living through a cost of living crisis.

I ask the Prime Minister again, when will taxpayers get their money back?

● (1420)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the members opposite for supporting the making life more affordable act to get taxpayer dollars back to Canadians. This government is committed. This new government is committed to making the best use of all taxpayers' dollars.

*Oral Questions***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General just slammed the Liberals in her report this morning, saying what we have known all along: the Liberals have broken our military. Today's F-35 report criticized the Liberals for misleading cost projections that are 50% higher, by over \$14 billion; ongoing construction delays for necessary infrastructure; ignoring the severe pilot and mechanic shortage; and implementing weak oversight mechanisms.

The ministers who were responsible for this debacle are still sitting in here. Will the Prime Minister hold them accountable for this mess?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the member opposite holds himself accountable for letting military spending fall below 1% of GDP when the Conservatives were in government. This government has doubled military spending in cash terms. We are meeting our NATO obligations this year, leading from the front.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Prime Minister, we actually delivered for our military. We bought five brand-new CF-17 Globemasters, new Hercules, new Leopard tanks and new Chinook helicopters. We delivered.

Instead, what we have here is an Auditor General report referencing her 2018 report on Canada's fighter jets. That report said the biggest obstacle to meeting operational requirements was a shortage of fighter pilots and technicians. Over the lost Liberal decade, the Liberals have worsened this capability gap through mismanagement and completely ignoring the Auditor General's recommendations.

The foreign affairs minister, who was responsible for the military back in 2018, is still in cabinet. Why is this?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was proud to stand yesterday with the Minister of National Defence and the chief of the defence staff to announce the largest increase in military expenditure in decades. Building our military strong, building our military with Canadian technology, Canadian jobs, Canadian steel and Canadian aluminum, is what the review of the F-35 is about. That is what the future of this country is about.

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has lambasted the Liberals' management of the F-35 fighter jet purchase. It is now 50% over budget, with the cost exceeding \$30 billion. Construction delays, staff shortages and poor oversight are threatening this project and, once again, Canadians are footing the bill. The Prime Minister forgot to mention that the new money announced yesterday will only go towards the additional costs associated with the incompetence of his government and his ministers, who have botched this file over the past 10 years.

He promoted the former minister of national defence. Why?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the first things I did was review the F-35 contract, because it

has to be right for Canada, for Canadians and for our security. We will report back to Parliament this summer.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is the only new member of this government. The government as a whole is the same old one, and today we are seeing the problems caused by the Liberals' incompetence over the past 10 years.

Today, the Auditor General informed us that ArriveCAN's main subcontractor received \$64 million from this Liberal government, even though it is under investigation by the RCMP. GC Strategies, a company with only two employees, received 106 contracts from 31 federal organizations, with a total value of \$92.7 million.

Is this old Liberal government incompetent, corrupt or both?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, after an independent process, the government suspended the company for this year. It is finished.

* * *

● (1425)

FINANCE

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I hope you are sitting comfortably, because this is kind of complicated.

The Prime Minister gave Canadians a refund for money they did not pay. It was actually an advance, but they will never pay back that advance. Nearly \$4 billion was distributed to Canadians one week before the election, but Quebecers did not get a penny.

Can the Prime Minister explain that to Quebecers?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud that we cancelled the carbon tax. Quebec and British Columbia have their own system. Our decision, including the decision about the final rebate payment, concerns the rest of Canada.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that makes absolutely no sense. Those who pay should get a rebate, not those who do not pay.

It has been clearly established that this has nothing to do with a carbon tax he abolished—a move the OECD criticized—and we all know it was a vote-getting gift and an injustice, so will he acknowledge that the \$3.7 billion Canadians received has nothing to do with climate change?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec did not pay the consumer carbon tax. Therefore, this is not unjust. It makes sense that the rebate would be paid one last time as an adjustment for Canadian families.

Oral Questions

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to explain, because I was the one who implemented the carbon pricing that has been in effect in Quebec since 2013, when I was minister of the environment.

The Prime Minister clearly has an easier time with numbers than with facts.

Will he pay Quebecers back the \$814 million he owes them?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the leader of the Bloc Québécois just mentioned, he created Quebec's own carbon pricing system. Things were different elsewhere in the country, with the exception of British Columbia.

This is consistent, it is fair, and it is done.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has once again exposed the Liberals' incompetence, highlighting millions wasted on their good friends and favourite consultant, GC Strategies. Not only have the Liberals not clawed back one penny from this scam, but every Trudeau minister with their fingerprints on the scandal has been promoted by the Prime Minister. Now the Liberals are planning an extra \$26 billion of taxpayer money for their insider consultant friends.

How about they spend less on insider friends and invest more on clawing back the money from GC Strategies?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will note that in March 2024, my department terminated all contracts with GC Strategies and has revoked its security clearance, rendering it ineligible for contracts that require that security clearance, but we went even further. The office of supplier integrity last week determined that GC Strategies is ineligible for seven years. This is a free, independent process holding bad actors to account and working exactly as it should.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it ended years after they were exposed. Now, \$64 million went to Liberal friends at GC Strategies, in rampant sole-sourcing of contracts with no justification and projects paid for despite no work being done. Incompetence is so ingrained in the government that it has actually ordered officials to put in writing that they are not violating procurement rules when they are granting contracts. Now the Liberals want \$26 billion more for these consultants.

When will the Liberals turn off the taps to their friends and focus instead on clawing back the money from this fraudulent GC Strategies?

• (1430)

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Auditor General for her report and highlight that we have acted on previous reports by the Auditor General and also on internal audits to increase transparency, increase data collection and increase oversight. I will also note that last year, my department ter-

minated all contracts with GC Strategies and revoked its security clearance, and as of last week, the office of supplier integrity has rendered a decision making GC Strategies ineligible for contracts for seven years.

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if someone is spending \$64 million on a product, they would probably think to at least do some price comparisons. However, the Liberal government did no such thing. The Auditor General said that in 82% of GC Strategies contracts examined, there was no evidence that fees being charged by this two-person company were based on a fair market value.

Is this the Prime Minister's idea of a new fiscal discipline, or does price really not matter to Liberals when it comes to paying their well-connected friends? When will we get our money back?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be absolutely clear. Misconduct of any kind in the procurement process is never acceptable, which is why we have acted on previous recommendations from the Auditor General. As of last year, GC Strategies has seen its contracts terminated by the Government of Canada, and the government has revoked its security clearance. The government went even further: The office of supplier integrity has rendered a decision making GC Strategies ineligible for seven years. This is a process that is free and independent, holding bad actors to account, and it is working as it should.

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if it was not bad enough that the government did not check for fair market value, Canadians could hope that at least we got something in return for \$64 million. That is not the case here. This is how Liberals are spending taxpayers' money, overpaid and with nothing to show for it. The Auditor General said only 54% of contracts audited could prove deliverables were received.

Is this the Prime Minister's new fiscal discipline, or, for the Liberals, is it business as usual? When will we get our money back?

Oral Questions

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have highlighted in previous answers, in March 2024, PSPC terminated all contracts with GC Strategies. We revoked its security clearance. Now, the office of supplier integrity, which we have put in place after a thorough investigation, determined that GC Strategies met the threshold to be found ineligible for government contracts. As such, it is ineligible for the next seven years. This is a process to hold bad actors accountable, because we will never accept and tolerate misconduct in the procurement process.

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, money does not grow on trees, but it sure seems to grow in the coffers of Liberal government insiders and contractors. Today we learned through the Auditor General's blistering report that 31 service procurement contracts had been awarded to GC Strategies, for \$92 million. The ministers did not enforce security. The ministers did not monitor contracts, and they did not follow proper procurement policies. Guess what. These same Trudeau ministers are in today's cabinet.

Who is running that circus over there, and when will the Canadian taxpayers get their money back?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following a thorough investigation by the office of supplier integrity, last week a determination was made that GC Strategies should be ineligible for the next seven years. This is a free and independent process we have put in place to hold bad actors to account, and it is working exactly as it should.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Appearances do not lie. A Liberal is a Liberal is a scandal. The Auditor General issued a scathing report this morning on GC Strategies and the Liberal ArriveCAN app. That two-person company received \$64 million in payments from the Liberals. The Auditor General found that nobody knows who did the work, what was done, whether the people who did something were qualified or whether they had the necessary security clearances. The ministers who allowed that to happen all got promotions.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister recover the money that his government took out of the pockets of all Canadians?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in March 2024, Public Services and Procurement Canada terminated all contracts with GC Strategies. The company's security clearance has been revoked, rendering it ineligible for any contract requiring a security clearance. Last week, the office of supplier integrity and compliance determined that GC Strategies would be ineligible for any future contract for the next seven years. This is a free, independent process that is working exactly as it should.

• (1435)

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, GC Strategies did not force the government to pay it \$64 million. It paid \$64 million for an app that did not work, was not secure and cost much more than expected. The ministers who authorized those expenditures are in cabinet or in the Prime Minister's inner circle. Marco Mendicino is now the Prime Minister's

chief of staff. Another former minister of public safety is now the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. The former health minister is now the Minister of Jobs and Families. Being promoted following a scandal is what being a Liberal is all about.

Which of these ministers will now be declared ineligible?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. We will never accept misconduct from our suppliers. In March 2024, my department terminated all contracts with GC Strategies and revoked its security clearance. Last week, the office of supplier integrity and compliance rendered a decision making GC Strategies ineligible for any contracts with the Government of Canada for seven years. We put this process in place to ensure that bad actors are held accountable, and it is working exactly as it should.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if Ottawa reinvests in defence, that money must serve Quebec's economy. It needs to be used for our aerospace sector, our shipbuilding industry and our artificial intelligence, among other things. Ottawa needs to hire Quebec suppliers instead of giving our money to the Americans, as it did with the F-35s. That is why the Bloc Québécois is proposing a bill to implement a local procurement policy to encourage our businesses and keep the benefits at home.

Since the government has announced that it is going to reinvest in the military, will it take up the Bloc Québécois's proposal?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud to support Canada and to invest in Canada, in Canadians and in the Canadian Armed Forces. Reaching the 2% target set by NATO also means rebuilding our defence industry capabilities here at home. There are already close to 300,000 jobs in Canada in the broader defence sector. This investment will allow us to increase that number. We will, of course, support our Canadian Armed Forces members.

Oral Questions

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, over 60% of Canada's aerospace manufacturing takes place in Quebec. That needs be reflected in the contracts. Quebec's shipbuilding industry has the expertise to build ice-breakers. That needs be reflected in the contracts, all the more so since, I remind members, Quebec got ripped off under the ship-building strategy. Another one of Quebec's strengths is artificial intelligence. That too needs to be reflected in the contracts.

At the very least, Quebec deserves its fair share, equal to 22% of defence investments. Will the minister even commit to establishing a floor?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is good news for Canada, for Canadians and the Canadian Armed Forces. Yesterday, the Prime Minister announced a \$9.3 billion investment in Canada's defence, which means that, in this fiscal year, we will meet NATO's 2% target. We are reinforcing Canada's role as a strong and reliable international partner in NATO while rebuilding and arming the Canadian Armed Forces.

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[English]

HOUSING

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's new report on housing shows just how badly the government has failed Canadians. Since 2018, the government has spent over \$300 million to fund a new bureaucracy called the federal lands initiative. It built 309 units. That is fewer than 50 units a year. That is over a million bucks a unit. Now the Prime Minister says he is going to create another bureaucracy to do exactly the same thing.

How much more of Canadians' money will be flushed down the drain to pay for bureaucracies rather than paying for building homes?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Auditor General for her report on office space and federal lands. I note that we accept all recommendations. I also note that she highlights that progress has been made. We are on the way to meeting our objectives in terms of affordable housing on public lands and federal lands. This is very good news for Canadians.

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if we accept the findings and do the exact same thing, Canadians who need a place to live are the ones who end up paying the price. The federal lands initiative, the crown jewel of the government's agenda on building housing, has attained just 7% of its target. The people in charge of that initiative are now the justice minister and the finance minister. They actually got promoted.

In the real world, incompetence of this magnitude has consequences, so I have a simple question: Which one of them is getting fired?

• (1440)

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am new to this place and thankful for the opportunity to be here.

This new government is focused on moving forward and building affordable housing using the federal lands we can make available and partnering in good faith with mayors, premiers and chiefs to work in partnership and in synergy with all levels of government to leverage federal lands. We will do that.

Jamil Jivani (Bowmanville—Oshawa North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have spent over \$300 million on a housing program, claiming they would build 4,000 units. In seven years, they have built 309. To put it bluntly, that is not close at all. They have missed the mark by 93%.

How can the Prime Minister continue to have the minister responsible for this failure in his cabinet? How could he promote that failed minister to be our current Minister of Justice?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a great opportunity here to build housing. When we look at the pathetic performance of former housing minister Pierre Poilievre, who delivered six affordable housing units in one year and zero in the city of Vancouver, where I was serving, that is a record that is deplorable. It is a record that this government will never repeat. We are focused on building big.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Vancouver Island, high prices are pushing thousands of families and seniors out of the housing market. Meanwhile, the Auditor General says that the government is sitting on empty office buildings and surplus land. The Liberals promised 4,000 homes through their signature housing initiative. After seven years, they have delivered a measly 309. For this failure, the former housing minister has been promoted to the justice portfolio. There is no justice in that.

How can the Prime Minister reward such failure while people in my riding are struggling to find a place to live?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to be here as the new housing and infrastructure minister and to go forward with initiatives that will deliver affordable housing across Canada. We will look for the support of the members opposite. We will look for partnerships with all levels of government to deliver that. We will use all the tools of the federal government to deliver with "build Canada homes". We have a lot of opportunities ahead of us. We have to stay focused and work together.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the government estimated that 50% of federal offices were vacant or underused. The Liberals said they would cut that number in half and create housing. Eight years later, the Auditor General of Canada has confirmed that there has been less than a 2% reduction, that none of the 10 properties promised in the NCR have been disposed of and that only 309 of the 4,000 promised housing units have been built. They talk a good game but have yet to deliver.

Why does the Liberal government fail to keep its promises, even when there is a dire need and the money has already been budgeted?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Auditor General of Canada for her report. We accept all of her recommendations to ensure that we are meeting our objectives in terms of federal space and federal government rental space.

I would note, though, that in her report, she mentions very clearly that we are on track to meet our target for affordable housing units using federal lands.

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*[English]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Hon. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now more than ever, it is critical to invest in Canadian industry as we rebuild Canada's national defence capabilities. For example, in my riding, Cove is leading the way in creating solutions and sustainable growth for Canada's marine and maritime sectors.

Can the minister please expand on the government's plan to rebuild, reinvest in and rearm our Canadian Armed Forces?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday this government announced a generational \$9.3 billion investment in Canada's national defence. This means we will reach NATO's 2% spending target this fiscal year.

Reaching NATO's 2% target also means rebuilding our defence industrial capacity here at home, including in Nova Scotia. There are almost 300,000 jobs across Canada in the broader defence sector, and this investment will grow that number. We will ensure Canada remains strong, sovereign and secure.

● (1445)

[Translation]

Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know how things work on the other side: incompetence gets rewarded.

Today's Auditor General's report reveals that the budget for our F-35s has increased by 50% more than anticipated. The initial project costs submitted by National Defence in 2022 were based on 2019 data. Additionally, the construction of infrastructure for the F-35s in Bagotville and Cold Lake is three years behind schedule.

Why are the Liberals incapable of meeting deadlines and avoiding cost overruns?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Auditor General for her work.

For a project of this magnitude, it is not unusual for costs to change over time, especially given the challenges posed by the pandemic and inflation. National Defence monitors costs closely and works hand in hand with industry. We are making the largest investment in the Royal Canadian Air Force in more than 30 years.

Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is hard for me to find the words to describe how badly mismanaged the F-35 procurement process has been. Costs are skyrocketing. The cost is now nearly \$30 billion. There is a shortage of pilots and technicians. This has been discussed since 2018. The construction of the facilities is behind schedule and the completion date is now 2031.

This government is always behind schedule. Is that deliberate or due to incompetence?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we would like to thank the Auditor General once again for her work and her recommendations.

We are committed to openness and transparency. National Defence will keep Canadians informed at every step of the process without compromising operational security. National Defence is closely monitoring costs and working closely with industry to ensure we get the best value for Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has reported that the cost of the F-35 jets has increased by billions, by almost 50%.

I have a simple question. Are these increased costs included in the Prime Minister's recently announced plan to meet NATO's 2% target by April 1 of next year?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Auditor General for her work.

In a project this big, it is normal for costs to fluctuate over time, especially with all the challenges faced during the pandemic, such as supply chain disruptions and inflation, as many F-35 participating NATO members have actually experienced.

National Defence is working hand in hand with industry to make sure we get good value for Canadians. We are making the biggest investment in the Royal Canadian Air Force in over 30 years. This is about giving our aviators the tools they need to keep Canada safe.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Finland is also undertaking this big project. They announced their purchase of F-35 jets around the same time Canada did, in early 2022.

Finland purchased 64 jets, Canada 88. The Auditor General has reported that facilities and training for the F-35s are years behind schedule. The Finns' F-35s will achieve full operational capability in 2030. The government will not achieve that until at least 2033-34, years behind the Finns.

Why can the government not deliver these jets on time and on budget?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we thank the Auditor General for her work and her recommendations. We are taking close note of them and moving to implement many of them already.

We are committed to being open and transparent. National Defence will keep Canadians updated every step of the way, without compromising operational security. I am sure the member is not implying that we should be doing that. National Defence is keeping a close eye on costs and working hand in hand with industry to make sure we get the best value for Canadians.

We remain focused on supporting our top Canadian aviators as we procure a new fleet of fighter jets.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's Auditor General report reveals the shocking contempt that the Liberal government has for matters of national security. It cannot demonstrate that security clearances were held by 50% of the contracts that it awarded to GC Strategies. In more than 20% of the cases, contractors were working without the required clearances. It did not check before the work began. It does not know if the work got done. There were no security clearances for the workers, but it cut the cheques anyway. Then, the Prime Minister gave the ministers responsible a promotion.

Will the Prime Minister stand up today and tell us when we get our money back?

● (1450)

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I noted in previous answers, in March 2024, PSPC revoked the security clearance of GC Strategies. We have also terminated all contracts, because we will always hold bad actors to account.

Last week, the office of supplier integrity rendered the decision that makes GC Strategies ineligible for the next seven years. This is a process that is independent, that is free of political intervention, to hold bad actors to account, and it is working exactly as it should.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the minister knows that it is working exactly as it should, because the Liberals do not know that about any of the work GC Strategies did. For \$100 mil-

lion, no deliverables can be proven, no security clearances were done, and the minister is talking about the company's not doing work in the future. That is fine, but what we want to know is about the work it did not do in the past that Canadians paid \$100 million for.

Will the minister stand up and tell us when, what date, Canadians are getting their \$100 million back?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Auditor General for her report. As I mentioned earlier, the office of supplier integrity rendered a decision last week making GC Strategies ineligible for future contracts from the Government of Canada.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals handed 20 million taxpayer dollars to GC Strategies for its arrive scam. This is for a company that did no work, whose office was raided by the RCMP and that is implicated in fraud.

Today we learned from the Auditor General that millions of dollars more went to GC Strategies without any proof that work was done. This is absolutely outrageous. When can taxpayers expect a refund?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Auditor General for her report. We have acted on all the recommendations she has made in previous reports as well those in internal audits. As I noted earlier, the office of supplier integrity last week made a decision to make GC Strategies ineligible for future contracts for a period of seven years.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General found no proof of work for a staggering 46% of contracts awarded to GC Strategies, and yet the Liberals consistently authorized payment.

Millions of taxpayer dollars went improperly out the door without any meaningful oversight, so who on the other side of the aisle is going to stand up, take responsibility and get taxpayers their money back?

Oral Questions

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have noted, we have acted on all recommendations by the Auditor General in previous reports. I thank her for her work. We will always hold bad actors to account. As a matter of fact, last week, the office of supplier integrity made a decision to make GC Strategies ineligible for future contracts for a period of seven years. This is a process that is working as it should.

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$64.5 million is how much taxpayer money the Liberal government gifted its friends at the top arrive scam contractor, friends who are now under RCMP investigation, yet the Trudeau ministers responsible for the scandal, far from being held accountable, have actually been promoted to minister of U.S. trade, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Jobs.

My question for the Prime Minister is this: When will there be some actual accountability for the millions of dollars in fraud, and when will the hard-working men and women of this country get their money back?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear: Misconduct of any kind by suppliers is never acceptable, and we will always hold bad actors to account. As a matter of fact, the office of supplier integrity last week made a decision making GC Strategies ineligible for contracts for a period of seven years. We also terminated, in March 2024, all contracts with GC Strategies and revoked its security clearance. We will always hold bad actors to account.

* * *

● (1455)

[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.) Mr. Speaker, Quebec runs its own carbon pricing system that has been effective in reducing pollution.

Today, the Bloc Québécois is asking the federal government for a rebate, even though Quebec decided not to participate in the federal carbon pricing system. Essentially, the Bloc Québécois wants to have it both ways.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell the Bloc Québécois the truth?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the carbon pricing rebate has been around for many years.

Quebec has its own carbon pricing system and the federal fuel charge does not apply in Quebec. That is why Quebecers did not receive the Canada carbon rebate. We respect Quebec and have been consistent on that. The Bloc Québécois should support our efforts to fight climate change and protect our environment instead of playing politics.

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General tabled a scathing report today on how the Liberals paid GC Strategies, which is now under RCMP investigation, \$64 million. In 46% of the contracts reviewed, federal organizations had little to no evidence of receiving deliverables, yet government officials continued to pay.

Given that the ministers responsible have yet to get the money back from the fraudsters, how did they get promoted into the Prime Minister's cabinet?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Auditor General for her report and for a previous report she made on the matter. We have acted on all of her recommendations to increase accountability, transparency and data collection, and to clarify the rules, roles and responsibilities.

Let me be very clear that we will always hold bad actors to account. As a matter of fact, we have revoked the security clearance of GC Strategies. The office of supplier integrity has acted on GC Strategies.

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there has been \$64 million in fraudulent spending on GC Strategies, and not a cent has been returned. Today's Auditor General reports have slammed the government. The F-35s are 50% over budget, up from \$19 billion to nearly \$30 billion, with more increases expected. Millions of dollars have been spent on transforming office space into housing, and no homes have been built.

Why, under the Liberal government, are Canadians spending so much and getting so little?

[Translation]

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the office space my colleague mentioned, I want to thank the Auditor General. The government accepts all of her recommendations. That said, I would like to point out that, in her report, she notes that we are on track to meet our affordable housing targets. That is good news for Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's Auditor General reports show the true extent of Liberal incompetence and waste. Taxpayers are on the hook for \$14 billion in F-35 fighter jet overruns, the arrive scam report confirms that a two-person firm received \$64 million in contracts for little to no work, and zero dollars have been returned to the taxpayer.

What does the Prime Minister do? He promotes the very ministers responsible for these scandals into his own cabinet: the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade and the Minister of Jobs as well.

If the Prime Minister is rewarding the failed ministers, how can Canadians expect to receive a penny of the money back?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, because the member mentioned the Canadian Armed Forces, I will say that the government is proud to champion the outstanding work of the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces. Last month, our forces were deployed on Operation Caribbe, where they successfully conducted seizures of more than 1,300 kilograms of cocaine in the Caribbean Sea. This month, our forces have been deployed across Canada on Operation Lentus to evacuate Canadians from dangerous wildfires, and that work continues in Sandy Lake today.

The contributions of our brave forces at home and around the world are simply and incredibly remarkable.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, right now trade diversification is top of mind for many of the small businesses in Scarborough—Agincourt and also for Canadians across the country. Our new Minister of International Trade has already met with counterparts and business partners in South America and Europe.

Can the Minister of International Trade tell us how he plans to diversify Canada's trade portfolio in the current geopolitical climate?

• (1500)

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt for her tireless advocacy.

I have hit the ground running. A couple of weeks ago I was in Ecuador, meeting with regional leaders and marking the conclusion of a new trade agreement that is to come. Last week I was in Paris, meeting with a dozen trade ministers to talk trade and economic opportunities.

Canada has what the world needs. I will continue working with industry leaders to discuss opportunities around the Indo-Pacific, the European Union and many regions around the world. Trade diversification will help create jobs here at home and help build the fastest-growing economy in the G7.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the arrive scam contractors made off with 64 million taxpayer dollars. Multiple software developers in Waterloo region have told me that a couple of them could have created the app over a weekend. The contractors did not write any code; their only job was to make sure the actual code writers had the proper security clearances, but today the Auditor General tells us that they did not manage to do even that.

Meanwhile, the F-35 program is 50% over budget. That is \$14 billion over budget, and we still do not have any jets.

Could the Prime Minister perhaps produce a budget accounting for all of this? Could that budget perhaps include less fraud and waste?

[Translation]

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question, and I also thank the Auditor General for her work and for the recommendations in her previous reports, which we have acted on to ensure greater transparency and accountability from suppliers. We will always hold suppliers accountable for their actions.

In fact, in March 2024, my department revoked GC Strategies' security clearances and terminated all of its contracts. Last week, the Office of Supplier Integrity and Compliance announced that GC Strategies will be ineligible to apply for contracts for seven years.

* * *

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps saying that he cannot impose a pipeline without agreement from the provinces. The problem is that his Bill C-5 does not say that at all. It even says the opposite.

In fact, once a project is designated as being in the national interest, it is a done deal, and there is nothing the provinces, the first nations, Canadians or cities can do to stop it. This is going to happen no matter the cost, in two years at the most. It is a huge gift for the large corporations.

Why does the Prime Minister, who was elected to stop the Conservatives from winning, want to achieve Pierre Poilievre's wildest and most dangerous dreams?

Business of Supply

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a week ago, I was in Saskatoon with the Prime Minister and the provincial and territorial premiers, including the Premier of Quebec. All the provincial and territorial premiers talked about the need to build major projects across Canada, such as the Contrecoeur port in Montreal. I talked about that project today with my Quebec counterpart, Minister Guilbault.

We must build Canada today. We must build it together.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were shocked to learn that the Indian prime minister, Prime Minister Modi, has been invited to the G7 meetings here. This is deeply troubling and hurtful for the Sikh community and for all Canadians who are concerned about human rights and foreign interference. Now we find out that the Saudi leader has also been invited.

Honestly, the G7 leaders' summit is becoming a showcase of tyrants. Will the Prime Minister rescind those invitations and make sure that the people coming to the G7 summit believe in human rights and believe in people, not profits?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and I have spoken with our Indian counterparts, and there has been an agreement for continued law enforcement dialogue.

The G7 leaders' summit is a critical forum for global leaders to have productive and frank discussions. The RCMP's independent investigation is ongoing. In this country, the rule of law will never be compromised. We will always stand up for the safety and security of Canadians.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**OPPOSITION MOTION—FOOD INFLATION AND BUDGETARY POLICY**

The House resumed from June 9 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:04 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Calgary East relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (1505)

[English]

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

• (1515)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 5)

YEAS**Members**

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Jonas	Block
Bonin	Bonk
Borrelli	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	DeRidder
Deschênes	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Duncan	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Falk (Provencher)
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Groleau
Guglielmin	Gunn
Hallan	Hardy
Ho	Hoback
Holman	Jackson
Jansen	Jeneroux
Jivani	Kelly
Khanna	Kibble
Kirkland	Kmiec
Konanz	Kram
Kronis	Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot)
Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lawton	Lefebvre
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
Ma	Mahal
Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle
Martel	Mazier
McCauley	McKenzie
McLean (Calgary Centre)	Melillo
Menegakis	Moore
Morin	Morrison
Motz	Muys

Nater
Patzner
Perron
Reid
Reynolds
Roberts
Ross
Ruff
Scheer
Seebach
Simard
Steinley
Stevenson
Strauss
Thériault
Tochor
Uppal
Vien
Vis
Warkentin
Williamson

Normandin
Paul-Hus
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Richards
Rood
Rowe
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shipley
Small
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Stubbs
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Viersen
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Waugh
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NAYS

Members

Acan
Ali
Anand
Auguste
Baker
Battiste
Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)
Bittle
Blois
Brière
Carr
Chagger
Chang
Chatel
Chenette
Church
Connors
Coteau
Dandurand
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Desrochers
Dhillon
Duclos
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fancy-Landry
Fergus
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Fuhr
Gainey
Gazan
Gould
Greaves
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Hodgson
Housefather
Iacono
Jaczek
Joly
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis

Al Soud
Alty
Anandasangaree
Bains
Bardeesy
Beech
Bendayan
Blair
Boulerice
Carney
Casey
Champagne
Chartrand
Chen
Chi
Clark
Cormier
Dabrusin
Danko
Deschênes-Thériault
Dhaliwal
Diab
Duguid
Earle
El-Khoury
Eyolfson
Fanjoy
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gaheer
Gasparro
Gerretsen
Grant
Guay
Gull-Masty
Harrison Hill
Hirtle
Hogan
Hussen
Idlout
Johns
Joseph
Kelloway
Klassen
Kwan

Business of Supply

Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lauzon
Lavoie
Leitão
Long
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Nguyen
Ntumba
Olszewski
Osborne
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sarai
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sodhi
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Villeneuve
Weiler
Yip
Zerucelli

Lambropoulos
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lattanzio
Lavack
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Cardigan)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)
May
McKelvie
McKnight
McPherson
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Myles
Nathan
Noormohamed
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Petitpas Taylor
Provost
Rana
Rochefort
Royer
Saini
Sari
Schiefke
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Souza
Sudds
Thompson
Valdez
Vandenbeld
Watchorn
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 174

PAIRED

Members

Genuis
Majumdar
Hajdu
Solomon— 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 13 minutes.

● (1520)

OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADA CARBON REBATE AND PAYMENT TO QUEBEC

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier that, for first nations, decisions must be made with the next seven generations in mind. This idea motivates young people. With all due respect, I would like to suggest this: Perhaps we should replace you in your role as Speaker with an 18-year-old man or woman to remind us of the importance of this mindset. That would be an important symbol. In addressing the Chair, we would also be addressing the next seven generations. Perhaps this would make us aware of how important it is to think about the future, about the young people of tomorrow.

Business of Supply

In committing this injustice, the government also made a decision. It decided to axe a tax program that was designed to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels. As we know, the most effective means are coercive means, and the carbon tax was another way to make people think about tomorrow, the future and our planet. Are all environmental policies perfect? The answer is no, and that is normal. However, the Quebec government's carbon exchange has been going on for a dozen years now. That means it is a success; it must be rewarded.

Some progress depends on developing technology, so it makes sense to revisit our policies. Decisions can change or evolve. I am from a remote region, so I understand the challenges of electric vehicles. Keeping hybrid vehicles around a little longer makes sense to me. That is one of the adjustments we can look at. Expanding our network of charging stations and working on making them available everywhere is certainly part of the solution. Basically, some challenges demand adaptation. We have to do it with an awareness of where we are going.

Climate change is no joke. It is real. Building more pipelines and relying more on natural gas will not improve the fate of our planet.

Quebec has been a pioneer. We set up a cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gas emissions to fight climate change in 2013. This system was then linked to California's system in 2014 to create North America's largest carbon market. Not everything is perfect, but we are steadily moving in the right direction. This carbon market has helped Quebec show that it is possible to cut greenhouse gas emissions while having minimal impact on consumers' wallets. However, instead of being rewarded, Quebec is now being punished for adopting a forward-thinking and responsible climate policy.

Canada's willingness to abandon its climate policies will also have an impact on market diversification. While we are told that our dependence on the United States is harmful, Europe is moving toward greener policies and carbon pricing. The European Union plans to impose a carbon adjustment mechanism starting in 2026 and 2027. This policy will allow certain products from countries with no or low industrial carbon pricing to be taxed at the border, similar to customs duties. As a result, Quebec products such as aluminum, iron and steel could be slapped with new customs duties because of Canada's inaction.

In conclusion, we need a climate policy that recognizes and respects Quebec's efforts. By penalizing Quebecers, who contributed to this rebate, Ottawa is sending the message that being at the forefront of climate action is not a good thing.

This debate is not just a matter of fairness; it is a matter of respect for the Quebec nation and its choices.

• (1525)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is being somewhat misleading. Whether it is British Columbia or Quebec, we have looked at those two provinces and admired the leadership role they have played in dealing with the environment. This has nothing to do with punishing either Quebec or British Columbia.

I want to pick up on the point about the global markets, because it is very important to recognize that the government has not given up on industrial carbon pricing, in good part because of the whole global market issue. The European Union potentially putting tariffs on products from another nation where there is no pollution controls is very real.

I am wondering if the member could expand on that point as to why it is so critically important that we do have the—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the parliamentary secretary.

The member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I would really like the member for Winnipeg North to tell us, following his intervention, what he thinks about the environment commissioner's report, which says that Canada's climate change adaptation strategy is missing essential elements and is progressing slowly.

The government got rid of the carbon tax, a coercive measure that was working. Everyone got money, except Quebec. The principle of one economy does not include Quebec, I guess. There is no vision. There is noise, but no results and little meaningful action.

I would like to know what he thinks of his colleague from Laval—Les Îles, who comes here full of arrogance, and the response from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, who says that because we in Quebec want an equitable measure, we are trying to have it both ways.

We are the victims in this system. This has to change or we are going to have to get the hell out of dodge.

The Deputy Speaker: I am not sure that the member's final words were exactly parliamentary, but we will move on. The member should perhaps avoid using such words in the House.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

• (1530)

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the remarks of Bloc Québécois members concerning election goodies handed out during election campaigns. It is exasperating and probably an abuse of power.

Is the Liberals' reversal on the carbon tax a change of heart or an abandonment of their principles, assuming they even have principles?

Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that different places in Canada have different visions and that Quebec's policy works. What is the point of penalizing a government for taking bold action that works and that allows for cap and trade with California? There is a return to be made there. If we do the math, we easily come up with \$814 million that could be invested in a variety of programs in Quebec. It does not necessarily need to be sent to individuals.

Because of its negligence, especially in governance matters, the federal government suspended funding to SDTC. We are aware of the scandal that occurred, but the impact of this is damaging to Quebec and to technological innovation in this area.

Ultimately, who benefits? Once again, it is the oil companies.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I have a point of order from the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, you had somewhat warned the member. I think more than a warning is necessary, given the language that was used in his previous answer. I would ask him to apologize. The type of word that was used is definitely inappropriate.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I ask the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue to withdraw the last few words he used.

Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat hesitant. Out of respect for your position, I will do it, but I believe that this is how Quebecers feel. For me, it is—

The Deputy Speaker: That is all I needed. I really appreciate that the member withdrew his comments.

The hon. member for Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomik—Témiscouata.

Bernard Gagné (Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik—Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning we tabled a potential amendment to the Bloc Québécois motion. When I asked the member for Rimouski—La Matapédia a question, he responded by talking about respect for provincial jurisdiction.

We obviously respect provincial jurisdiction. I would nevertheless like to hear the opinion of my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue on the motion we moved this morning.

Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my Conservative colleague for mentioning the importance of respect for provincial jurisdictions. We have not always felt that same level of respect from the Conservatives on this specific issue over the years, but that was in a previous Parliament.

The government is coming in with a new attitude, but there is indeed one issue that has been overplayed. Seeing the consequences this can have on farmers, it is obvious that they are playing politics in an area that should not be politicized. It took the Conservatives a long time to recognize that Quebec has a carbon exchange and that the carbon tax did not apply in Quebec.

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of my riding,

Business of Supply

Beauport—Limoilou. I want to mention that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

I am pleased to take part in today's debate and to reiterate the immediate priorities of our government to make life more affordable for all Canadians, including Quebecers. The Canada carbon rebate was implemented to return the majority of direct proceeds from the federal fuel charge to residents of provinces where it applied. It did not apply in Quebec.

The emissions reduction plan contains a complete suite of mitigation measures, strategies and investments, including policies that complement carbon pricing. A price on pollution for major emitters will continue to be a pillar of Canada's plan to build a prosperous net-zero economy and make progress on climate objectives.

The government intends to refocus federal carbon pollution pricing standards on ensuring that carbon pricing systems are in place across the country on a broad range of greenhouse gas emissions from industry. It will reinforce Canada's approach to carbon pricing for industry to ensure its continued effectiveness.

The federal government intends to work with the provinces, including Quebec, the territories, indigenous peoples and stakeholders on changes to the minimum national stringency standards for carbon pollution pricing, known as the federal “benchmark” criteria.

The changes would ensure that industrial pricing systems continue to maximize emissions reductions and encourage the transition to low-carbon technology, while protecting industry against competitiveness and carbon leakage impacts. By improving its emissions performance, Canadian industry will become more efficient and maintain its competitive edge as Canada works to diversify its trade relationships and deepen its market access, particularly in jurisdictions that, like the European Union, increasingly value low-emissions goods. The goal of the benchmark criteria would continue to be that systems are similarly stringent, fair and effective.

The review will look at opportunities to strengthen industrial carbon markets to provide the necessary incentives for major industry-wide decarbonization projects, while creating jobs and spurring investments in the technologies that will shape the clean economies of tomorrow.

Business of Supply

Thanks to the elimination of the federal fuel charge effective April 1, 2025, eligible Canadians received a final Canada carbon rebate payment on April 22. The government decided to make this final carbon rebate payment to eligible households in April since Canadian families in the provinces subject to the federal fuel charge, especially low-income families, were counting on the April rebate.

Last week, we introduced Bill C-4, which would officially remove consumer carbon pricing from Canadian law once it is repealed. This bill would also reduce the cost of living so that Canadians, including Quebecers, can keep more of their paycheques to spend on what matters most to them. It includes a middle-class tax cut effective July 1, tax relief for close to 22 million individuals in Canada and \$840 in savings per year for two-income families. As we have also clearly stated, this cut will primarily benefit the hard-working Canadians who need it the most.

● (1535)

The bulk of the relief would go to people in the two lowest tax brackets, those earning less than \$114,750 in 2025. Within this group of working Canadians, nearly half of the tax savings would go to those in the lowest tax bracket, those earning \$57,375 or less in 2025. We can deliver these tax savings quickly to Canadians because, when our middle-class tax cut was announced, the Canada Revenue Agency updated its source deduction tables for the July to December 2025 period so that employers and payroll administrators can reduce tax withholdings starting July 1.

We will also eliminate the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes up to \$1 million, which will save them up to \$50,000. We will cut the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. This will result in a significant increase in the already substantial federal tax support available to first-time homebuyers through programs such as the tax-free first home savings account, the home buyers' plan, the registered retirement savings plan and the first-time homebuyers' tax credit.

This will help more young people and families achieve their dream of home ownership. Thanks to these measures, we are making changes to lower taxes, we are lowering costs and we are putting more money in the pockets of Canadians and Quebecers. Those are just some of the ways the government is making life more affordable. The government will also maintain the programs that are already helping families save thousands of dollars every year.

As His Majesty said in the Speech from the Throne, in all of our actions, the government will be guided by a new fiscal discipline: spend less so people 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. That is why we are committed to presenting the details of our plan in the fall in a comprehensive, effective, ambitious and prudent federal budget.

One of the key priorities that we have discussed and focused on since the start of our mandate is to improve the efficiency of government spending. We are looking for areas where we can cut costs and improve public service productivity.

Day-to-day government spending, that is, the government's operating budget, has been growing by 9% each year. The government will introduce measures to bring that growth below 2%. 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 already mentioned, the government's overarching goal and core mission is to build the strongest economy in the G7. That starts with creating one Canadian economy out of 13. Internal barriers to trade and labour mobility cost Canadians as much as \$200 billion each year. That is why we have introduced legislation to remove all remaining federal barriers to internal trade and labour mobility.

Our government is working hard right now to meet Canadians' needs, and that includes making life more affordable across the country, including in Quebec, so that Canadians can keep more of their hard-earned paycheques.

● (1540)

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ):
Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his speech.

He said that Quebec cannot get a refund for the carbon tax because it has its own system. I did not realize that having an independent system meant that we will not be treated fairly. We are going to have to sort something out. The carbon tax refund was supposed to be paid out on April 22, but the tax was abolished on April 1. The finance department simplified things by saying that the refund of the infamous carbon tax was for the period from April 1 to June. How can the government refund something that was never collected? Quebecers pay taxes to the federal government, unless my colleague can prove otherwise. If a refund is being given for something that was never paid, it is only fair that we ask for our fair share.

I would like my colleague to tell me what he thinks of the unanimous decision by the 125 members of the Quebec National Assembly to demand that Ottawa reimburse Quebecers their \$814 million. Does he think those MNAs are liars or just idiots?

Business of Supply

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his many questions. I will try to answer them as best I can.

As he said, something that has never been paid cannot be reimbursed. What is clear is that Quebec has never participated in the Canadian carbon exchange. It created its own carbon exchange, and we respected its provincial autonomy. As my colleague put it so well, something that has never been paid cannot be reimbursed.

[*English*]

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his speech on the carbon tax.

I would like to ask him, as he is a new member of the House, how he feels about running on the idea and platform of a carbon tax, only to come to the House and find out the carbon tax has been axed, as in the Conservative platform. Is that something he can now defend to his constituents?

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, Canadians wanted a climate policy that transcends political division, and we listened. From day one, we eliminated consumer carbon pricing, which has already lowered fuel costs for Canadian families. We are maintaining industrial carbon pricing, which is three times more effective than consumer carbon pricing.

• (1545)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague and friend could provide his thoughts in regard to the notion that it seems to be more of a divisive motion the Bloc is raising. This is not just about the province of Quebec. Quebec and British Columbia have played a very strong leadership role on the environment, but neither of those provinces participated in the federal backstop program.

Could the member provide a quick comment on that issue?

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, this motion is indeed causing division. However, the federal government respected the will of the provincial government to have its own carbon exchange. Today, the families who were counting on that April 22 cheque have received it and they were compensated. It is not favouritism. It is a question of fairness for these families.

We are not sowing division. We are acting out of respect for those who paid this carbon exchange.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talks about fairness when it comes to the carbon tax rebate.

Does he agree that this money was paid on April 22 for the period of April, May and June, while the carbon tax was abolished on April 1 by his leader, the Prime Minister of Canada, by order in council?

Effective April 1, there was no more carbon tax. The government supposedly reimbursed the taxes that should have been paid during

the months of April, May and June, but will not be. Does he agree with that?

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, the rebate cheques were issued on April 22, as planned and out of respect for Canadians. Many families are in need, and they expected to receive their cheques on April 22. This refund was not made out of favouritism, but out of respect for Canadians.

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate and to reiterate our government's immediate priorities for making life more affordable for all Canadians, including Quebecers.

Ultimately, this motion and debate boil down to affordability. I will therefore take a moment to focus on the logic behind the consumer carbon tax rebate, although I would also like to pause in order to go over some of the important measures that our government has taken to make life more affordable for Canadians.

Quebeckers and Canadians asked for a serious plan for change to deal with the rising cost of living that has eroded their quality of life; change that puts more money in the pockets of Quebeckers and Canadians; change that will build the strongest economy in the G7; change that builds one Canadian economy out of 13 and that includes a strong Quebec; and change that builds an affordable Quebec and an affordable Canada. During this session, our government has introduced important and ambitious legislation to make life more affordable for Quebeckers.

Bill C-5, the one Canadian economy act, sets out legislative measures designed to eliminate internal trade barriers and promote projects of national significance. It sets out a broad framework for liberalizing the Canadian economy, diversifying trade and improving national productivity, resilience and competitiveness.

In Bill C-4, we have put forward three important measures that will put more money in the pockets of Quebeckers at a time when they really need it. First of all, Bill C-4 would implement our government's middle-class tax cut, which would provide tax relief to 22 million Canadians, including 4 million Quebeckers, and save two-income families up to \$840 per year in 2026.

Once this legislation is enacted, the lowest individual marginal income tax rate would fall from 15% to 14% as of July 1 of this year. This tax cut would help hard-working Quebeckers and Canadians keep more of what they earn in their pockets and build a solid future. This tax cut will primarily benefit the Canadian workers who need it the most. That means that most of the tax relief will go to the two lowest income tax brackets, with close to half the tax savings going to those in the lowest tax bracket.

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In addition, Bill C-4 would start providing tax relief almost immediately. With our middle-class tax cut announcement, the Canada Revenue Agency can update its source deduction tables for the period from July to December 2025, so that pay administrators can reduce income tax as of July 1. Further, Bill C-4 will remove the GST for first-time buyers of new homes valued at up to \$1 million. That is great news.

• (1550)

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Mirabel on a point of order.

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, the member has been given time but the motion concerns a specific topic. My colleague is completely off topic. I would like to know if she is going to shift direction and talk about the motion we are debating today.

The Deputy Speaker: As the member for Mirabel knows, members have a lot of flexibility in discussing topics of interest to them and their ridings. I am sure that the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles will return to the topic of the motion and that everything will seem quite reasonable. The member will have a opportunity to speak to this again during the questions and comments period.

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, as I continue with my speech, the connection with the Bloc's motion will become clear shortly.

The new GST rebate for first-time homebuyers will save buyers up to \$50,000 on the purchase of their first home. That is not all. The rebate will also reduce the GST on homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million for first-time homebuyers. This is great news for Quebecers who want to buy their first home and start the next chapter of their lives in Quebec.

Finally, Bill C-4 completes the next step in the regulatory suspension of the consumer carbon tax by completely removing the consumer carbon price from the law. The important word here is "consumer." As part of this process, Canadians who lived in provinces or territories under the former regime are entitled to a refund. Canadians in Quebec, British Columbia and the territories did not contribute to this system. It is therefore clear that they will not receive similar refunds. This point seems relatively obvious and significant to me.

I will clarify what I said for my colleagues opposite, as well as for Quebecers watching at home. In 2013, Quebec put in place its own cap-and-trade system to put a price on carbon pollution. Rebates were sent to Canadians living in provinces or territories that were part of the existing regime to offset the now-cancelled federal carbon tax. Canadians in those provinces probably included that rebate in their budgets, and it was decided that they would get their money back. It is important to understand how carbon pricing works. It does not apply in provinces like Quebec, which has its own carbon pricing system. Quebec did not pay the federal carbon tax, so it did not receive the federal rebate. It is understandable and makes perfect sense. Quebec has long been a leader when it comes to the environment.

The Bloc Québécois has played a role in that field and deserves to be commended for that. The federal government respected Que-

bec's cap-and-trade system, which preceded the federal carbon tax. My Bloc Québécois colleagues can certainly respect and understand that. I hope that they will also be able to respect and welcome the important measures our government has taken to make life more affordable for Quebecers and all Canadians. I think that we should continue to focus on this important task instead of debating made-up problems that do not really exist.

• (1555)

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as I see it, one thing is perfectly easy to understand. My colleague said that Quebecers did not participate in the federal carbon pricing system because Quebec has its own carbon exchange and so Quebecers were not entitled to the rebate. While they may not have been entitled to the rebate, neither were other Canadians, since they did not pay the much-talked-about carbon tax for the period for which they received the cheque. It would be like telling a person who does not pay income tax to expect a tax refund. It does not work that way. It is as simple as that.

The people who paid the full cost of the infamous carbon tax rebate were Quebecers as a whole. The rebate was not paid out of money from the tax itself. Quebecers and Canadians paid for it together, and Quebecers contributed \$800 million.

Can the member grasp that, or is the concept too complex for her?

Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for such a genuine, in-depth question.

The Bloc Québécois is demanding that Quebecers receive payment for a program that Quebec opted out of and did not contribute to. The final payment fulfills a commitment to families who paid fuel charges. Our government is a responsible government that does not play favourites.

[English]

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the extended prorogation period and then an election campaign, I found myself missing some things about this place, and other things not so much.

Earlier in the day, there was a 20-minute intervention by my friend, the member for Winnipeg North. I did listen to his intervention, and I gathered from those 20 minutes that the Liberal Party supported the consumer-facing carbon tax when it was popular, and then when the consumer-facing carbon tax was not popular, it dropped its support.

Would the member, being a new member to this chamber, agree that this was the primary driver for the Liberal Party to drop its support for the consumer-facing carbon tax?

[Translation]

Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, my colleague likely does not know this, but I served in the House from 2015 to 2019. I am a revenant. The member likely has not seen me around. Yes, I have had the pleasure of representing the riding of Rivière-des-Mille-Îles once before.

In response to his question, I would like to say that we were recently elected to take real action to make life more affordable for all Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate that when I am here, I get to see my colleague. She has been dearly missed. She is one of those individuals who really promote the idea that we should learn more French. She has been a very strong advocate of the French language and a strong advocate for the province of Quebec.

My concern about this issue is that there needs to be an acknowledgement that British Columbia, Quebec and I believe the Northwest Territories, which I am not 100% sure about, were not part of the program. As a result, when the Prime Minister made a decision, he decided in favour of the provinces that were participating in the program.

It seems to me that that was a fair way of dealing with it, given that the rebate cheques were going out merely three weeks after the program for the consumer carbon tax was cancelled.

[Translation]

Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Winnipeg North and I have served together. It is true that I have always promoted French within the team and I am a proud defender of French. I would say that I am a proud defender of linguistic minorities. Whether we are talking about French outside Quebec, French in Quebec or linguistic minorities in Quebec, it is important to me to defend them and to continue to defend them.

The territories did not participate in the federal carbon exchange. We are talking about British Columbia, Quebec and, I believe, the Northwest Territories. It is only natural that there is no rebate for those who did not pay the carbon tax. I thank my colleague for acknowledging that. I look forward to hearing more words in French in the near future.

• (1600)

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in addition to greeting you, I would like to take this opportunity to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Rivière-du-Nord.

I listened to the previous member give a speech that was completely off topic for all 10 minutes. I was wondering how to start. I went to the dictionary and looked up the word “cheat”. That is a strong word. It is important to define it. It is defined as to “gain an advantage over or deprive of something by using unfair or deceitful methods; defraud”, or to “deprive someone of something to which they are entitled”. A government that decides not to pay what it owes to Quebecers is cheating them. For regular people, that is in the Criminal Code. That is what the Liberals are about to do, based

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on what we understand from their remarks today. The federal government has cheated people more than once, according to the definition I have here. It is a habit. It is crazy that we are here in the House saying that Quebecers are being cheated by the federal government and almost finding it normal.

When the 1998 ice storm happened, I did not even have the right to vote. The federal government still owes Quebec some \$484 million, as well as \$500 million for social assistance for people who entered at Roxham. These are unpaid cheques. Anyone who does not pay their credit card bill gets cut off, but not the federal government. There is no aerospace policy, even though the auto sector quickly received \$4 billion as soon as something happened. The Trans Mountain pipeline for western Canada is over \$30 billion. Not even 22% of military contracts go to Quebec, even though we have the aerospace industry and the icebreaker expertise at the Davie shipyard. In the bilateral health agreements, Quebec does not even have the money from its own taxes to pay for diabetes medication because the federal government thinks it is more important to meddle in other people's affairs than to help normal, sick people. This time, Quebecers are being cheated of \$814 million. The member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères said earlier that this represents more than \$10 million per riding. I do not know if the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles realizes that the federal government is about to steal \$10 million from people who just voted for her.

How did this all get started? Paul Journet, a well known and respected editorial writer at *La Presse*, summed it up well last week. He said that initially there was a deal in Canada. The federal government said: I will buy Trans Mountain, I will take care of this pipeline that no one wants and in which no one wants to invest—like most pipeline projects actually—and in exchange the provinces will commit to pricing pollution. Some provinces did not do that. In some cases, it already existed. Ontario took one step forward, one step back. Finally, the federal government had to fill in the gaps and come up with its own program. What happened next? The money came. At great expense to public funds, Quebecers paid for the pipeline. We are talking about \$32 billion, \$33 billion or \$34 billion in public funds. It is an absolute boondoggle. What happened? The Conservatives, who were heavily criticized for months and years by the Liberals, demonized that tax. A new Prime Minister arrives and says: I want to win an election and the only thing that matters to me are the polls. The guy wrote a book called *Values*. He comes to power and might call his biography *Polls*. That is what happened. The Liberals decided to buy an election. They eliminated the tax.

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As we have said before and we will say again, the law was clear. The Department of Finance documents clearly state that payments made in April defer the fuel charge proceeds from April to June. They indicate that the cheque is always paid prior to the collection period. The people who wrote the documents are the same people in the Prime Minister's Office who wrote the speeches we just heard today. It is the same staff. The same team that wrote that in the legislation, in the Department of Finance documents, wrote the absurd speeches we heard from the member for Winnipeg North and the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. We could list a bunch of ridings where people are being told to say that. It clearly says "prior to the collection period". They are telling us that Quebeckers did not pay the carbon tax, that they have their own system and that is why they are not getting a cheque. What do these people not understand? When the cheque was sent on April 1, each of the eight provinces where people received cheques had their own systems. There is no longer any system.

• (1605)

The government sent cheques to people in provinces that no longer had a system. The federal government issued those cheques anyway, using funds from its consolidated revenue fund. That is what it did.

That is why the Quebec National Assembly has spoken out on the issue. Quebeckers and British Columbians are being treated unfairly.

This is not the first time votes have been bought using that program. The first time was in 2023. Members will recall that the Liberals were at the very bottom of the polls. What did they decide to do? They decided to stop charging the carbon tax on home heating oil, which is used primarily in the Atlantic provinces. One might think that they would have reduced the amounts paid out in those provinces accordingly. If the carbon tax is lower, the amount of the cheques should also be lower. Well, I will end the suspense. They doubled a portion of the cheque. They lowered the tax, but they increased the amount of the cheque. They bought votes. On top of that, they took money from Quebeckers to subsidize half of these people's heat pumps. They buy votes. That is what they do.

I would like someone to explain to me why a vote for a Liberal, bought with public funds, is worth more in the Atlantic provinces than in Ontario, and why a vote in Quebec is worth nothing. It is because these people take Quebeckers for granted. That is exactly what is happening.

What the Liberals are telling us is that Quebeckers have their own system and that they needed to budget. The Liberals' argument to justify their opposition to our motion, even though such opposition is impossible to justify, is like a Pokémon: It evolves, but it does not get any prettier.

In 2023, when the Liberals bought votes in Atlantic Canada, the then minister of environment and climate change, who is now the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture, said there would be no more carve-outs. Today, there is no more program, full stop, and yet we have not even changed governments.

Now the new Prime Minister has come along and is trying to justify himself. During the election campaign, the Liberals realized

that they had handed out cheques at Quebeckers' expense. That is what we told the Prime Minister during the leaders' debate. The Prime Minister was unable to respond.

The Liberals then went to work to refine their arguments. Liberals can think hard when they put their minds to it. That is an important prerequisite.

As we will see, the argument has changed. The day after the leaders' debate, the then Minister of Environment and Climate Change said on LCN in Quebec that Quebeckers were paying less per tonne of CO₂ in their own system and therefore were not entitled to the cheques. Of course, an environment minister is not supposed to understand what a cap is. It is normal that he does not understand what it is. However, on April 1, the Liberals said that in eight provinces, even if they paid 0¢ per tonne of CO₂, people were entitled to cheques.

I taught logic and mathematics at university. Here, we are not even at public policy and critical thinking 101.

Now, the government is telling us that people need to be able to budget, which is why it gave them those cheques. It says that it lowered the price of gas, but this is so hard on people that they need a cheque. The member for Winnipeg North told us that this morning. He is the Liberals' St. Jude, the patron saint of lost causes. If the church did not already have a patron saint of lost causes, he would be canonized. When he rises, it is because all hope is lost. The premise of the argument is that, since the price of gas has dropped, people need compensation. This is what it has come to. What is the point of debating here when that is the premise?

No one even realizes how outrageous it is anymore. Here we are, talking about a robbery, about things written down in black and white by the Prime Minister's Office, yet it has somehow become banal. Parliament may pass the motion, but the Liberals could not care less. They are not going to respect the will of Parliament.

However, when delivery companies like DoorDash charge too much or give bad service, the Competition Bureau gets on their case, takes them to court, conducts a special investigation and demands refunds.

What we are discussing here is a veritable scandal. I urge the government to reconsider. It cannot be said often enough: Quebeckers are being cheated.

Under the circumstances, I am asking for the unanimous consent of the House to table, in both official languages, the dictionary definition of cheat. My colleagues will then see that the current situation fits that definition perfectly.

• (1610)

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: No.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

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Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that it is not just the Province of Quebec. There are also the Province of British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. They did not participate, for a darn good reason. In many ways, Quebec and B.C. have been leading on the issue of the environment, but they were not participants in the consumer price on carbon. That is the reason they were not included in the rebates that have been going out for the last year or so.

One of the member's colleagues made reference to the issue of global markets. This is where we should be looking at industrial carbon pricing and issues of that nature, to ensure that Quebec and all provinces are able to build a healthier economy by making sure that we invest time in the issue of industrial carbon—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to give the member for Mirabel time to answer.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Mirabel.

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, the issue is not that Quebec did not participate. It is that the Liberals created a war room, thought about how they could buy votes, and decided to write cheques to eight provinces.

I find it interesting how the member for Winnipeg North phrased his question. He spent the day in the House telling everyone that people had budgeted for this rebate and that they should be treated with respect. That was pretty much his only argument. However, we have just shown him that this was essentially the opposite of the truth, that his argument did not hold water, that it went against the most basic logic and that government basically cheated Quebecers. Now he is standing up and talking to us about international trade.

I appeal to the sense of duty and truth that must guide us as parliamentarians. I urge my colleague to vote in favour of the motion and to vote for justice for Quebecers.

[English]

Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his passionate speech today. We do not always agree with the Bloc, but I have to say that, in the member's speech, there was a lot of discussion about the carbon tax, when it was implemented and why it was withdrawn. There are definitely a lot of frustrations in my riding of Simcoe—Grey from people who have paid for years and years into something that they thought they got money back from, which was not true.

What message does that send to the residents in his riding and my riding about the government, when it not only flip-flops on such a key issue but also, basically, has been taking money from Canadians for many years?

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, whom I hold in high regard, said something important in his opening remarks. He said that he does not always agree with the Bloc Québécois. We do not have to agree on everything. However, we must agree that there

are facts, things that can be verified as true. Then we can disagree on which policy is the right one.

For the purposes of this debate, the Liberals believe that the Earth is flat. They are denying reality while ignoring the facts and the information put out by the Prime Minister's Office. This is undignified of a parliamentary debate. It simply proves that, in order to buy votes in eight provinces, the current government is willing to cheat the people from Mirabel out of just over \$10 million. I will make it my duty to remind them of that.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mirabel for his speech, which was, as always, well founded, well articulated, very interesting and very clear.

That said, I would like to ask him a question, because he has expertise that I do not. To my knowledge, the carbon tax was abolished on April 1, but the carbon exchange that applies in Quebec and British Columbia was still in effect on April 1, and continues to be in effect.

Are Quebecers and British Columbians not, in one way or another, paying a price for decarbonization that the rest of Canada has not been paying since April 1?

• (1615)

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are making an effort when it comes to the environment and the transition, but the rest of Canada has decided to stop trying. I think that is obvious. Now, in this debate, people have made the mistake of thinking that the April 1 cheque that was sent to eight provinces was in some way related to the carbon tax in those eight provinces, even though it no longer existed, or that it was related to the emissions trading system, to the fact that British Columbia had cancelled its tax, and so on.

These vote-getting cheques were paid out of the federal consolidated revenue fund and were sent to eight provinces, but not to Quebecers. There is no connection between those cheques and any carbon pricing policy whatsoever, be it federal or provincial.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the early 1980s, René Lévesque, a man I greatly respect and who inspired Quebec and Quebec society as a whole, said that Canada is not a gulag. Once that was said, a number of federalists began to ask why people still wanted to separate from Canada. Why would Quebec want to become a full-fledged sovereign country if, in the end, Canada is not a gulag? Perhaps we should read the second part of his statement, where he said that the federal government is a haphazard system that, all too often, hinders our development. The situation we find ourselves in today, the decision that the Prime Minister of Canada made when he took office on March 14, fully justifies that statement that Canada's federal system is a haphazard system.

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In Quebec, our problem is that we are a people governed by another people. It is a Canadian people managed by a Canadian government for which the Quebec people are a negligible part. They can do whatever they want with Quebecers' money, as they can with the rest of Canada's money. As always, Quebec will have to suck it up.

That is what we are seeing right now. The government came along and said that there would be no more carbon tax. On April 1, it was cancelled, but on April 22, money was still sent out. I cannot say that the money was returned, since it was never collected. Anyway, the government sent money to the people of eight provinces to compensate them for what they would have had to pay if the carbon tax were still in effect. That is some warped logic.

If it were coming from someone who did not know how to count, it might be understandable, but it is coming from a Prime Minister who was a banker before becoming Prime Minister, who ran the central banks of major countries, including the Bank of England and the Bank of Canada. It is hard to believe that he is gullible, naive or clumsy. This man is clearly competent at managing public finances. Under the circumstances, if he is competent, how should we interpret this move?

He is not taking money from tax revenues, because he did not collect any in April, May or June. He is taking money from all Quebecers and Canadians. He is taking a portion of that money and returning it to citizens in only eight provinces. My colleague from Mirabel spoke earlier about cheating. If that is not cheating Quebecers, I would like someone to explain to me what is. I do not understand how the government can take \$800 million out of Quebecers' pockets to compensate the people of eight provinces. The reason given, as our colleague from Winnipeg North explained to us earlier, is that it was planned that way.

Does this mean that if we in Quebec start planning for the federal government to be fair to us and give us back our share, it will give us that money? Can we expect the Prime Minister to say over the summer that since Quebec had planned to receive \$800 million, he will make sure we get the \$800 million?

That logic does not hold water, not even in a kindergarten classroom. No one would dare make those kinds of arguments. It is flawed logic. It makes no sense. I find it hard to understand how a government that governs Canada, a government led by a Prime Minister who is competent in public finances, can try or think that it is going to make us swallow this bitter pill. It makes no sense. Not only is it unfair, but it is illegal. Actually, it may be legal, because a certain number of things can be done by decree, but it is immoral.

In Quebec, we are bothered by immorality. We have had commissions of inquiry into situations that were deemed immoral. Here, we are faced with another immoral situation. Our money is being taken from us and given to others under the pretext that these people were counting on it. Give me a break.

Today, I have heard colleagues on the government side repeatedly say that Quebecers did not want to join the carbon tax and that is too bad for them.

• (1620)

Funny enough, I did not see it that way. I think that the carbon exchange is an effective system, but Canadians, except those in British Columbia, decided not to join it.

How can anyone say that we did not sign onto the tax, when the tax was imposed because the others did not join the carbon exchange? That logic is flawed. We each have our own pricing system because, in Quebec, we think that the carbon exchange is the most effective system. That is the system we adopted. We joined it, as did British Columbia and certain U.S. states.

Still today, in June, Quebecers are engaged in decarbonization. Through the carbon exchange, companies that emit carbon buy quotas and pay a levy. It will come as no surprise that Esso and Petro-Canada did not become charitable organizations that felt like making everyone happy. These are companies that want to make profits, which is normal. If the manager of a company of that scope fails to ensure that the company makes a profit, it would not take long for the shareholders to give them the boot.

These companies are out to make a profit. They buy quotas on a carbon exchange and, in so doing, end up paying a carbon tax directly. Once again, since they are not charitable organizations, they pass the bill on to their customers, the oil distributors, who in turn pass it on to Quebecers who fill up their gas tanks every day. People with electric cars help with decarbonization and do not pay that form of tax or fee because they do not buy gasoline, but that is another debate.

Quebecers are bearing the cost of decarbonization, while citizens of the eight compensated provinces have not had to bear it since April 1. Where am I going with this? It makes no sense. Not only are these other provinces not paying up—so the government does not owe them anything—but on top of that, Quebecers, who do pay, are giving money to those who have not paid the tax since April 1, money that they could have spent themselves had the Prime Minister not decided to abolish the carbon tax on April 1.

I do not know how to explain it. If anyone in the House has a logical explanation, I would like to hear it. The explanation given by the member for Winnipeg North is that the government sent out the cheques because people were expecting them. I am sorry, but with all due respect to those people, because there are people that I really like in those provinces, I am not willing to hand out cheques to them.

The only rational explanation that I can think of is what my colleague from Mirabel said just now, which is that it was to buy votes. The Liberals figured they were probably not going to win the election in Quebec and were prepared to let it collapse and continue paying. However, in the eight provinces where the Liberals had a chance of winning, they could hurt the Conservatives, beat them and win the election. That was the gamble taken by the Prime Minister of Canada.

This was about pleasing everyone by scrapping the carbon tax, because that is what people liked about the Conservative leader. It was as though the Prime Minister was telling them that he agreed with them, that he would scrap the tax himself and that he would do even better than Pierre Poilievre. Although Poilievre wanted to axe the carbon tax, he did not want to send out the money, because that would not have been logical. However, the Prime Minister went against all logic. He scrapped the tax just like the Conservatives had promised, but he also issued the cheques that people would have received had the tax not been scrapped.

I do not know what to call it. My colleague from Mirabel referred to it as cheating. It is starting to look a lot like that, based on the definition he read to us earlier. Buying an election with Quebec's money by giving that money to the western provinces makes no sense, is immoral, and is very disappointing coming from someone in whom Canadian voters had placed a lot of faith by giving him power in the April 28 election.

That said, I have an amendment to move to our motion. I move, seconded by the member for Mirabel:

That the motion be amended by adding:

- (a) after the words "including those from Quebec" the words "and from British Columbia";
- (b) after the words "to pay Quebec" the words "and British Columbia"; and
- (c) the following "for Quebec and \$513 million for British Columbia".

• (1625)

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to inform hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. If the sponsor is not present, the House leader, the deputy House leader, the whip or the deputy whip of the sponsor's party may give or deny consent on the sponsor's behalf. Since the sponsor is not present in the chamber, I ask the whip of the Bloc Québécois if he consents to this amendment being moved.

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, we do give consent.

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to say a number of things about this and to explain it in great detail during my comments on the motion itself, but suffice it to say that the federal government put in a backstop, the consumer carbon tax. For the provinces participating in the program at the time it was cancelled, it was literally weeks later that the rebates went out to those provinces. It is as straightforward as that.

Even in the province of Quebec during the leadership visits, as was pointed out, it was raised by the leader of the Bloc. The Bloc tried to make it an issue during an actual federal election. My account is that the Bloc numbers went down and the Liberal numbers went up. I think it is because the Liberal members were focused on

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building a stronger and healthier economy that would actually contribute more to the future of Quebec, B.C., and in fact—

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I have to stop the member there to give the member for Rivière-du-Nord enough time to reply.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I understand what my colleague from Winnipeg North is saying.

I wish I could have owned a grocery store in his riding during the pandemic. During that time, my colleague probably did not have time to go grocery shopping. However, based on his logic, he would still have given a cheque to that poor grocery store because they expected to receive one. If I have an electric vehicle instead of a gas-powered vehicle, he thinks I should still give money to the corner gas station because the owner expects to receive a cheque. That is pretty flawed reasoning.

Quebec will never benefit from a stronger Canadian economy. We need our own economy. We need to be respected at home and spend our money in sectors that are priorities for us, based on our interests and values.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his fourth election to the House of Commons.

My colleague has explained the fundamental problem he sees looming and explained it very well, even more so because all of the explanations were given during the election campaign. This is not something we learned after the fact. Remember that in 2015, the Liberal Party was elected on a platform of three small deficits and no deficit in 2019. The Liberals completely lied to the public, because that is not how things turned out.

However, in this case, they were very clear. They said it clearly; they announced it from coast to coast to coast. The Bloc leader raised the issue during the debate, and the Liberal leader had a hard time explaining himself. He tripped over his words.

Regardless, more people voted for us than in previous elections. Unfortunately for the Bloc Québécois, voters ditched them and they lost about 10 ridings. The Liberal Party got 44 members elected—

• (1630)

The Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the member to give the member for Rivière-du-Nord a chance to answer the question.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I also salute my colleague, who is someone I respect a great deal. I met him in 2015 and have been friendly with him ever since.

That said, merely stating that someone is going to do something nonsensical and immoral does not make it acceptable. I completely agree with my colleague: The Prime Minister announced it during the election campaign and he followed through. However, I think it is deplorable, and so does the entire population of Quebec. It is simply outrageous.

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Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised by the comments of my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk. We should ask him how many Bloc Québécois seats he thinks it takes to make cheating morally acceptable. I sense some moral ambiguity in my colleague's questions now.

I have a question for my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord. We know that the Liberals do not want to pay. Usually, we would expect the reason to be that they have no money. However, they have been playing fast and loose with public funds since they came to power. With no budget in hand, they expect to overshoot the amount provided in the estimates by \$38 billion and plan to spend \$9 billion on defence. This frenzy of government spending is happening without any transparency to Parliament.

If their reasons for not paying an amount this size are not financial, why are they refusing to pay?

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague. In fact, as I said earlier, I am one of the people who believes that the Prime Minister is smart, despite what some may think. I truly look forward to seeing him table a budget or explain how he is going to pay for all this spending and make this equitable. He must have a printer in his office that can print Canadian dollars or something. I do not have that skill, but he must. I look forward to hearing him explain to us how he is going to fund this.

Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your appointment to the role of Deputy Speaker of the House. I will be sharing my time with the member for Compton—Stanstead.

I am very proud to be in the House with this new member because there are now 44 of us members from Quebec on the Liberal side. With the 11 members from Quebec on the Conservative side, there are 55 members who are able to be both proud Quebecers and proud Canadians and to build this country together with our counterparts across the country.

Regarding the Bloc Québécois motion, we can see that there is an inconsistency that could have been fixed simply by adopting the Conservative Party's amendment, which the Bloc Québécois initially rejected but is now putting forward itself. Let me explain.

[English]

The original plan to pay the carbon rebate in the month of April to all Canadians in the eight provinces who were already receiving the carbon rebate makes logical, coherent sense. The rebate had historically gone only to those provinces that were subject to the federal backstop on the carbon pricing. Quebec, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories had their own systems and were excluded. That was the choice of Quebec, the Northwest Territories and British Columbia, to be exempt from the federal system by putting their own system in place.

That also allowed those provinces to decide where the monies went that came in from the revenues generated by their own carbon pricing system. They went to provincial programs in Quebec and British Columbia. That allowed the province the flexibility to choose where the money went. The federal government chose, in those provinces that were not part of the federal system, to give the

monies back through a consumer pricing model. That was what happened in the month of April.

Earlier today, the Conservative Party looked at the motion and said that it is not coherent, because British Columbia was also not part of the federal system.

• (1635)

[Translation]

However, the Bloc Québécois's original motion only called for the money to be returned to Quebec, leaving out British Columbia, and the Bloc Québécois rejected the Conservative Party's amendment. For the sake of consistency, the Bloc Québécois ended up adding its own amendment to say that British Columbia should also get a rebate.

[English]

That is not the perspective that the Bloc normally brings to the House. Bloc members are looking at it only from the perspective of what more or what less they can get for one province. That is not the way the federal system works. In the federal system, there are equalization payments paid to provinces. Quebec is the biggest federal beneficiary of equalization payments.

An hon. member: From Alberta.

Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, they come from Alberta and other provinces; that is correct. When we look at federal programs, we see that federal programs' monies do not always flow equally to every single province. They flow directly to different things in different programs.

We would imagine, in the end, that the country is made better as a whole by all the programs we have. The idea that we would take each and every program and allot the amount equally by province would, in the end, actually hurt Quebec. It would, in the end, actually take monies away from Quebec, not give monies to Quebec.

I do not understand the logic of the Bloc Québécois, which is insisting that, in this one particular case, we have to allot all of the monies equally by province, when that is not the opinion of the Bloc Québécois when it comes to many, many other programs.

[Translation]

I also find it a bit odd that the Bloc Québécois thinks it is wrong that Quebec decided to have its own program. We respect Quebec's autonomy. Quebec has its own program and British Columbia has its own program. The rest of the country had a different program. I would have thought that the Bloc Québécois would be very happy that flexible federalism allows Quebec to have its own program. Saying that the model used by the other provinces should also apply to Quebec, when Quebec has its own model, is completely contradictory to the general position of the Bloc Québécois, which wants absolute autonomy for Quebec.

[English]

I am happy that the new government removed the carbon tax as one of its first acts, the federal backstop, leaving the flexibility for each province to handle that the way it wants to handle it. That does not mean we are not going to invest in the economy. It does not mean we are not going to invest in clean technology. It does not mean we are not investing in the environment. However, there also has to be a general consensus on what happens.

I am also very pleased that the government, at the same time, announced the removal of the capital gains inclusion rate changes, which I had not agreed with. I think that was a very good step.

I think all the steps the government has taken by lowering income taxes on Canadians, building one national economy where free trade applies across the country within federal jurisdiction and asking the provinces to do the same, allowing for big national projects to be built, and allowing our energy and resources to go to market are bringing the government to the centre, which I think most Canadians want.

[Translation]

I think there is a willingness to work with the other political parties joining us in the centre to govern the country and make Canada's economy the best in the G7. We now have a real opportunity to do things differently than in the last Parliament, when we were always fighting and squabbling.

[English]

We can work together to build a stronger Canada, a Canada where Alberta oil can make it to market and can get to tidewater. We can have a Canada where big national projects get built in a fast time frame. We can have a Canada that respects provincial autonomy but understands that there are big national projects and national goals to fulfill. We can have a Canada where we all understand that in a changing world, where we are faced with a lot of challenges, we have to work together as a country. Whether we are Conservatives, Liberals, Bloc members or New Democrats, we have to work together as a country.

If I come back to the Bloc motion, it did not look at things, at least originally, from the perspective of the country. It looked at things from the perspective of one province only, even though other provinces and one territory were not part of the initial system. Nobody even considered them when it came to the motion. That is not how we should be looking at things. There has to be some logical coherence.

• (1640)

[Translation]

For my first speech in this Parliament, I am pleased to reach out to my opposition colleagues and tell them that I look forward to working with them on all our country's major issues and on various matters. We are here to stand together and build a better Canada.

[English]

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talked about how we are going to work together to build all these projects that are in the national in-

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terest, and he mentioned getting to tidewater. I wonder if that means he does not need consensus, because David Eby has already said that he does not want to build a pipeline.

Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, my hope is that everybody looking at the challenges we are facing from the United States will come to the rationalization that we need to exploit Canadian energy to its potential.

I am going to hope and pray that everyone will look at this as rational actors and will understand that we need to be resilient across our country first so that we are not buying oil from other countries to import to Canada when we have enough oil on our own. It is about understanding that we have to have the ability to access foreign markets, because we need an economy that is resilient regardless of what our American friends do or do not do.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for his speech.

There are many things we disagree on, but there is one thing he may have avoided mentioning in his speech. He talked about redistribution and tax sharing. He talked about equalization payments. However, he did not mention that Quebec receives the least money per capita in all of Canada. It is not good enough to say that a province receives a certain amount; it must be calculated per capita. I would invite my colleague to clarify this in his future statements.

My question for my colleague is this. According to what the member for Winnipeg North said in his speech on December 3, 80% of Canadians receive more money than they pay for the carbon tax. I would like my colleague to explain something to me today.

If the Liberal government's goal is to help Canadians, why did it eliminate a carbon pricing system that put more money in the pockets of Canadians in 80% of cases? My question is simple. Why eliminate a tax—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to give the member for Mount Royal the opportunity to answer the question.

The hon. member for Mount Royal.

Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, they talk about redistribution, but fail to say that there are several provinces that do not receive equalization payments. Albert and Saskatchewan do not receive any money through this redistribution, while Quebec does. As a Quebecker, I am very pleased to live in a federation where there is a willingness to help one another. I am grateful to the people of Alberta and Saskatchewan who give us this.

It is very easy to say that Quebec is the province that receives the least money per capita of all the provinces that receive equalization payments, but there are some provinces that do not receive any and give money instead.

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Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am distressed that the member is happy the government's first act was to remove the one climate measure that was actually reducing emissions.

I want to ask him if he is aware of when Canadians will be told what the new government plans to do to try to get on track to meeting our legal obligations under the Paris Agreement for the year 2030. We are far off target, and we just killed the one measure that was doing anything to bring down emissions.

Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I think there are those who would argue that it is not the only measure that has brought down emissions, and I am sure the government will come forward with its plan in due time.

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is my first full day of House duty and listening to eight hours of similar talking points. I am so happy about the goal of making Canada the strongest economy in the G7. However, I am worried that it is a bit of a platitude.

Could the member tell us what that actually means and by which date I may hold him to that definition?

• (1645)

Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me welcome my colleague from Kitchener South—Hespeler to the House. It is always nice to have more doctors in the House. I think they say that often.

It is funny that he is talking about prepared talking notes, because I think people watching me will note that I did not use any talking notes whatsoever for my speech, which is actually how I think speeches should be given in the House as much as possible, as with the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk and the member for Winnipeg North, by the way. I hope the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler follows that going forward.

[Translation]

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to respond to the motion put forward by the Bloc Québécois, which raises concerns about the carbon rebate that was paid out in April 2025. Let us start with the facts.

First, the April 2025 rebate was not a surprise announcement, contrary to what some might suggest. It was not a one-time election initiative, but the continuation, and also the conclusion, of a federal policy that was well established and that we have heard a lot about in the House. The carbon rebate was put in place to return federal fuel charge proceeds directly to households in the territories and provinces where the tax applied. The structure has always been the same: Revenues collected in one province or territory were returned to that same province or territory.

When the federal fuel charge was removed, on April 1, 2025, our government chose to make a final payment. Canadians who had paid the tax until that point were counting on that rebate. This payment was a matter of good governance. The federal government honoured its commitment. Household financial management re-

quires predictability, so that is what a responsible government provides.

More than 10 years ago, Quebec made the decision to implement its own carbon pricing system under a cap-and-trade system, which is designed and managed entirely by the Government of Quebec. Quebec collects its own revenue and reinvests it according to its own priorities. This system, which Quebec linked with California's system through the Western Climate Initiative, has been recognized internationally as a credible and ambitious model. Thanks to this success, Quebec has never been subject to the federal fuel tax and, as a result, Quebecers have never received the Canada carbon rebate, nor have people in British Columbia or the Northwest Territories.

It is not an exclusion. It is the result of a respectful division of powers within our federation. Quebec exercised its right to manage climate policy under its jurisdiction, and our government fully accepted and supported Quebecers' choice. To now suggest that Quebec should be compensated for a program that it did not participate in undermines the very autonomy that the Bloc Québécois is trying to protect.

The Bloc Québécois motion evokes a province that has been abandoned, but nothing could be further from the truth. Across the country, the federal government tailors its investments to each province's unique needs and systems. This is not only appropriate, it is essential, as my colleague from Mount Royal demonstrated. Some agreements are asymmetrical. I will elaborate on that with a few examples of programs that are not the same across Canada.

In Alberta, the federal government helps cover the cost of decommissioning orphan wells. British Columbia has received funding for wildfire adaptation and the clean energy transition. Ontario has seen significant investments in electric vehicle and battery production. Quebec, for its part, has received billions of dollars in federal investments, not via the carbon tax rebate, but via direct support for clean innovation, electrification, manufacturing and public infrastructure. These investments are tailored to the needs of the provinces and recognize Quebec's leadership on climate and economic planning.

• (1650)

If we want to have an honest debate about fairness, we need to start by defining what fairness really means in a federation. Fairness does not mean treating all jurisdictions the same, regardless of context. It means recognizing that there are differences within the federation, respecting the choices of different provinces and territories, and ensuring that outcomes reflect decisions.

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Quebec has chosen to keep its carbon revenues. It has chosen to manage its own system, and it is doing so very well. In a country like Canada, fairness means proportionality and consistency. It does not mean rewriting history to provide equivalent payments for different contributions. The rebates in question were paid to those who bore the cost of the federal carbon tax and to them alone. This is not special treatment; it is integrity in public policy.

Canadians across the country want governments that respect their decisions, honour their commitments and get results. The Bloc Québécois motion fails on all these counts. It disregards Quebec's autonomy, it misrepresents how the federal system works, and it sows confusion where there should be clarity.

Our government remains committed to working with Quebec and all provinces to fight climate change, grow our economy, and uphold the principles of federalism. We will continue to develop a strategic framework that rewards integrity, consistency and leadership. The debate should not be about who gets what cheque, but instead about how we support all Canadians in all the provinces in a way that reflects their choices, respects their institutions, and prepares us for tomorrow's challenges.

Canadians and Quebecers do not want squabbling between different levels of government, especially at this time. They want progress, a partnership and serious, results-oriented leadership rooted in principles that respect their decisions.

That is fairness, that is federalism, and that is the way forward.

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is quite surprising to hear my colleague say that we in the Bloc Québécois do not respect Quebec's autonomy because we are asking for money that was wrongfully taken from Quebec. Let us be clear: Quebec was robbed of \$800 million. It is not true that this tax was paid by Canadians through the carbon pricing system. We have demonstrated this extensively. Quebec was robbed.

I think it is odd that my colleague's only response is to say that we do not understand how federalism works. I find that quite rich.

Quebec accounts for 22% of the Canadian population. Is my colleague, who is from Quebec, proud that her government took \$800 million from Quebecers and distributed it across Canada without anyone in Quebec benefiting? That represents \$10 million for her riding. Is she proud of that?

Marianne Dandurand: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to point out that many of us on this side of the House come from Quebec. We are proud to represent Quebec's interests, and we fight every day here in Ottawa to achieve the best outcomes for Quebecers. We will continue to do so.

I will give another example that my colleague may have seen in recent years. We signed an asymmetrical agreement with Quebec on housing. Under this agreement, we gave \$900 million to Quebec, and Quebec contributed the same amount, for a total of \$1.8 billion in investments in housing in Quebec. This is money that was not spent elsewhere in the country.

• (1655)

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is my colleague in favour of building an oil pipeline to free up our Canadian natural resources and put Canada first?

Marianne Dandurand: Mr. Speaker, we currently have an outstanding plan to build a Canadian economy. First, we need to break down barriers between the provinces, which is a unique initiative that should have been done a long time ago. Second, we need a plan to ensure that Canada is a superpower, especially when it comes to energy.

All the initiatives we are going to undertake will move forward with the agreement of all levels of government. Once the provinces and territories agree on a project that has been submitted, that project can move forward quickly thanks to the new bill we introduced to build one Canadian economy.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and friend made reference to building one Canadian economy, and I would like to continue with that.

One of the things that I think of in the province of Quebec is the aerospace industry. The aerospace industry is virtually second to no other. It has so much potential in the province of Quebec. That is why it is so critically important that we put much more focus on how we could use industrial carbon pricing as a way to ensure that Quebec would be able to compete in and grow the aerospace industry.

Could the hon. member provide any thoughts about the importance of the aerospace industry to the province of Quebec?

[Translation]

Marianne Dandurand: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who recognizes just how much of a leader Quebec is in the aerospace industry.

Quebec is also a leader in artificial intelligence. We are going to need these skills in the coming years to build the economy we are talking about. I would like to add something else: In my region, a lot of people are employed by the automotive and rubber industries. I think that we will be able to develop the rubber industry over the next few years to take advantage of upcoming opportunities. We are building one Canadian economy, because we are removing barriers between the provinces and bringing our economy and our investments back to Canada in order to manufacture at home, process at home and create value at home. All regions will benefit, including Quebec and the riding of Compton-Stanstead. I thank the people of Waterville TG, who will likely benefit from all this.

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to inform you that I am sharing my time with the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton.

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I have been listening to my Liberal colleagues respond to our motion since early this morning. I will not repeat what has already been said. We know where that \$800 million comes from. All my colleagues made themselves hoarse trying to make the government understand that it gave out rebates for a tax that was not collected. The government turned a deaf ear. I will not repeat what has already been said. I think there is too much repetition.

However, I am struck by something and I must come back to the role of an MP. What is an MP's role? In my opinion, it is to represent the interests of our constituents. I represent the interests of the people of Jonquière and the people of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and the people of Quebec. It is my duty. I cannot understand, then, seeing Quebec MPs rising and speaking against the interests of Quebecers and acting in a way that deprives the people of Quebec of \$800 million. I cannot understand that. I do not know how my Liberal colleagues can do that.

My Liberal colleague pointed out earlier that there are many government members from Quebec who are proud Quebecers. There is something that sticks out for me. I often get the impression that Quebec members are too closely following the slogan that emerged during the election campaign: "Canada first". The Conservatives said it. The Liberals also used it during the election campaign. Unfortunately, when a thorny issue arises that affects Quebec, my Liberal colleagues are completely silent. I believe that when they do that, they are not acting like a member of Parliament who represents their constituents, but instead like a lackey, a hack, someone who is subservient and unable to defend the principles that should guide their political action.

We saw this at a defining moment. We saw Quebec members rise up in the 1990s because Quebec had been told no by the federal government, and that created the Bloc Québécois. Once they got tired of being let down by the federal government, perhaps those on the Liberal side and on the Conservative side will rise up. Mysteriously, we saw earlier that even among the Conservatives, there are those trampling a bit on Quebec's autonomy. The requested amendment tabled by the Conservatives basically said that all the Quebec government had to do was to end its carbon exchange and then it could receive a rebate, like the others. This is quite surprising. It is the federal government telling Quebec how to act. It is that tired old idea that Ottawa knows best.

That gets me thinking. Why not unpack the many injustices and inequities the federal government has perpetrated on Quebec? Why not, since that is what happened? The federal government robbed Quebec of \$800 million. Let me paint a picture before I get to the inequities. In March, Santé Québec cut \$800 million. I bring this up not because I want to get into a debate that belongs in the Quebec National Assembly, but because I want to demonstrate the potential consequences. Consider the Government of Quebec's infrastructure plan for social and community housing from 2024 to 2034. It includes 26 projects worth roughly \$928 million. The federal government shortchanged us and, as a result, key services in Quebec, such as social housing and health care, will pay the price.

Let us turn to the federal government's historical injustices and inequities. Without a doubt, one of the most glaring inequities is the fiscal imbalance. My colleagues know how this works. Virtually all public services provided to citizens of Quebec are provided by the

Government of Quebec. That includes health care and education. Most services are provided by the Government of Quebec, but the federal government occupies 60% of the tax field. For the federal government, the logic is straightforward: it takes in lots of revenue, but has few expenses. Its fiscal situation is much better than that of the provinces, which means that the federation operates using a transfer system, such as the health transfers we all know and love. While we are at it, we could discuss the Liberals' thinking in 1995 and 1996, around the time of the referendum.

• (1700)

I am talking about Paul Martin and the fiscal imbalance, one of the worst injustices ever seen. Mr. Martin repeatedly cut approximately \$2 billion in transfer payments, which completely disrupted Quebec's health care system. We are used to seeing this from the federal government and seeing Quebec's elected officials accept the unacceptable and act like lackeys. That brings me to today. The Quebec government's share of health care funding is about 45% of its budget, which is just crazy.

I want to take a closer look at this. Many analysts were quick to say that the Quebec government's austerity measures were the result of the federal government's total withdrawal from transfer payments. That is what fiscal imbalance does. That is the historical injustice and inequity that is repeating itself. Here is another example today with the controversial \$800 million.

There is this injustice of the fiscal imbalance, but there is also a flagrant structural injustice, which we are seeing again today. Two sectors of the Canadian economy are top of mind: the automotive sector and the oil and gas sector. In the past, the federal government has always been there when it came to making meaningful investments to support the automotive and oil and gas sectors.

In the tariff crisis, I see something similar to what happened in 2008, which members probably remember. At the time, the federal government invested \$8 billion in the automotive sector to help it get through the crisis. Of the \$8 billion that was used to directly support the auto industry, about \$1.6 billion went to Quebec. At the same time, in 2008, there was also an unprecedented crisis in Quebec's forestry sector. However, we never saw the federal government pay attention to and help the forestry sector.

In 2025, we are seeing the same pattern. There is a tariff crisis. What did the Liberal government do during the election campaign? It interrupted its campaign. It did so because the crisis affected the auto sector. It quickly wrote cheques totalling \$4 billion. It is the same as in 2008. However, what did the federal government do when a 50% tariff was imposed on aluminum? What has the federal government done while the forestry industry has been struggling under tariffs since 2017? Absolutely nothing. It is a double standard.

In the oil and gas sector, it is even more egregious. Between 1970 and 2015, to ensure the oil sands turned a profit, it is believed the federal government invested approximately \$70 billion. However, the government made absolutely no meaningful investments over a similar period to support industries in Quebec. Worse still, if we look at the current period, the government purchased a \$34-billion pipeline that Quebecers will never use. There are tax breaks totalling as much as \$82 billion if we use the 2024-35 time frame in the most recent budgets. All of that has gone to support the fat cats in the oil and gas sector, who made record profits of \$200 billion in 2022.

When I look at that, I tell myself in all sincerity that it is quite simple: the Liberals and the Conservatives always do the same thing. Before the election campaign, the Conservatives pushed the narrative that the cost of living would go up if we did not axe the carbon tax, and that people would suffer as a result. The Liberals used the tariff crisis to end the carbon tax, saying they had to take action and do something. Only Quebec maintained carbon pricing. Only Quebec will be competitive if Canada wants to trade with Europe, because that will inevitably require putting a price on carbon.

Then, to add insult to injury, Quebecers were forced to pay \$800 million to all Canadians and got nothing for themselves.

• (1705)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat sad that, even at a time of crisis, when we have a government that is solely focused on trying to protect Canada's interests and all of the industries across the country, members of the Bloc continue to want to play a divisive separatist role.

For example, Manitoba and Quebec benefit tremendously from DND and the military expenditures that take place. There are different industries in different provinces. At times, the federal government needs to come to the table to preserve, enhance and, hopefully, see additional growth in those industries, which is where there is a role for the national government.

We should be focusing our attention on how we can counter Donald Trump on tariffs and trade. Does the member not acknowledge that there is an issue before us today that needs to be dealt with, which the Bloc should be dealing with, and that is the issue of trade and tariffs?

[Translation]

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, when we defend the interests of our regions and our nation, we are told that we are sowing division. I find that rather surprising. I do not know whether the member for

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Winnipeg North was listening to me, but I listed all the appalling injustices that the federal government has imposed on Quebec, and today he tells me that I am sowing division.

According to the vision of the member for Winnipeg North, a good member is someone who puts Canada first, stays quiet, sits here and promotes the interests of all Canadians at the expense of Quebecers. That is what I understood him to say, and that is the problem I have with his colleagues from Quebec.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to the speeches all day. The Liberals keep saying that Quebec did not participate in the federal carbon pricing program. According to them, that is why Quebec will not receive the \$800 million.

What does the member think of that logic?

• (1710)

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, Quebec has its own carbon pricing system.

It is completely illogical for my Liberal colleagues to say that the Canadians who participated in the federal carbon pricing system are entitled to a rebate for a tax that they did not pay. That is like saying there is no need to pay taxes to receive a tax refund. It is totally illogical. The Liberals' only justification for this is to say that Quebec had its own pricing system. That is inconsistent and illogical. It really surprises me to see members from Quebec rise to defend an inconsistency that I consider to be stupid and that is at their constituents' expense.

Just for fun, we calculated earlier what \$800 million represents. That comes out to roughly \$10 million per Quebec riding, stolen from each member from Quebec. The Liberals are pleased. That is what I call lackeyism.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Jonquière on his speech.

The purpose of my question is to clarify the situation for my colleagues and for the people tuning in at home today. Liberal MPs keep telling us that Quebecers are not entitled to the rebate because Quebec has its own carbon pricing system. On April 19, 2024, the Liberal government changed the system. The Canada carbon rebate payments, which were previously paid out quarterly, became annual payments. The rebate was an advance on the tax that people would be paying indirectly on various products.

Now, they say the government reimbursed the credit on April 22, six days before the federal election. That period had already been covered in advance, but cheques were sent out anyway.

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I would like my colleague from Jonquière to explain something to us. Since the period was already covered, does that mean the Liberals bought themselves votes with a handout in the last election?

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, the answer is right there in the question. It was indeed a vote-buying handout.

I can hardly believe it. During question period, the Prime Minister even said he was proud to have put an end to the carbon tax. He said that the Government of Quebec had its own carbon tax. The Prime Minister himself does not understand the differences between the carbon pricing mechanisms in Canada. Quebec does not have a carbon tax; it has a carbon exchange. I cannot believe it.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the jig is up. Ottawa's mask has fallen to reveal the true face of injustice. While Quebec has been faithfully keeping its commitments and fighting the scourge of climate change for years, Canadian power, blinded by its political interests, has betrayed the most basic principles of fairness.

On April 22, in a move unworthy of a just country, the Canadian government issued a colossal \$3.7 billion in fake cheques labelled "carbon rebate" to people in provinces that year after year had refused to step up and do their part in what could be considered the fight to secure the future of this planet.

Meanwhile, we, the people of Quebec, have been exemplary and courageous; we have our faults and our qualities, but I think those are arguably qualities we share. Since 2013, we have led the way with our own carbon market, but we have gotten nothing in return—not one penny. Worse yet, we are being fleeced to pay for others who are dragging their feet when it comes to the environment. Is that Canadian justice? Is that how Canada rewards people for putting in an effort?

This is not a simple oversight. It is a cold and calculated betrayal. It is an affront to the people of Quebec, their virtue and their intelligence.

Who is going to pay for this joke? The people of Quebec, that is who. Our nation is providing \$814 million to support a Canadian lie.

In 2025, while Quebecers have shown themselves to be, as always, valiant and fair-minded, Ottawa, with a gimmick that is unworthy of founding principles and equal rights between peoples, has the nerve to perpetrate an unprecedented spoliation.

Between April 22 and April 28, just a few days before the general election, the federal government undertook an electoral strategy designed to pay out an astronomical sum in the form of cheques to people in the other provinces. Amounts ranging from \$220 to \$456 per person were sent out without a penny of carbon tax being collected during the period in question.

What about Quebec? Quebec was excluded and punished for being a forward-thinking nation. Why is that? We were punished because, over a decade ago, we chose to be responsible and we set up our own carbon market. We rejected inaction and neglect. Ottawa is now using that very virtue as an excuse to extort money from us.

Although Quebec did not receive any cheques, it did contribute money for that federal expense. This bears repeating: Quebec provided funds to enable that federal expenditure. It paid \$814 million. Our taxes, our sweat, have been used to fund cheques sent to citizens of other provinces, without the slightest acknowledgement or compensation.

When the National Assembly of Quebec, the legitimate legislature of Quebecers, spoke with one voice, across party lines, to demand redress for this injustice, what was the response? It was met with bureaucratic acrobatics. The Prime Minister stated that Quebec had chosen a different system. We have heard that as recently as today. To this, we say: Is it a mistake to act responsibly? Is it a crime to have foresight? The answer is no.

This is not a question of choice; it is a question of respect and justice. Ottawa stubbornly refuses to show us that respect.

The Bloc Québécois is not asking for anything extravagant in its motion. It is only asking for minimal redress for a proven, recognized and demonstrated prejudice; a simple return of what was taken from us; a simple acknowledgment that Quebec is not a fiscal cash cow here to satisfy Ottawa's electoral whims.

This injustice, however, is only a symptom. Of course, as long as Quebec is tied to a state that decides unilaterally, that distributes resources according to its partisan interests, that excludes Quebec when it suits it and taxes us when it needs to, we will be condemned to suffer.

We demand, with the quiet strength of people who are in the right, that Quebec be compensated without delay for the entirety of its stolen contribution.

• (1715)

The Prime Minister of Canada, the leader of a morally bankrupt Liberal government, not only has betrayed the principles of his own party, but worse, he has betrayed science, the future, and the trust of the people. He gave in.

Still, he and his ministers have claimed for years, with numbers to back them up, that carbon pricing was not a burden, but a fair redistribution policy that benefited the middle class and protected the most vulnerable. We have all heard these arguments from the other side of the House, with facts and evidence. He told us that the Parliamentary Budget Officer had said so and attested that eight out of 10 Canadians received more than they paid. We have all heard that.

Then suddenly, just today during question period, we heard the Prime Minister say that he was proud to have abolished the carbon tax. Wow. Under that system, Quebec was excluded, as usual. Quebec was excluded even though we paid, excluded even though we were exemplary, excluded because we are different. The reason, we are told, is that Quebec has its own system, a system that works. Because it works so well, because of that virtue, Quebec is being punished, to the tune of \$814 million, which was taken out of the pockets of families, seniors and workers.

We might say that this exclusion is probably just one facet of an even greater betrayal. What is the point of all this? It is to satisfy the oil barons, a fossil monarchy that dictates the laws to Canadian Parliament and to whom the Liberals have become obedient servants. They confuse the private interests of the oil sands with the national interest of Canada. We are currently going through an unprecedented centralization phase. That is the table Ottawa is setting behind the smokescreen, inside the Trojan horse that is “one economy, not 13”. That is what they are inviting us to once again, despite the unanimous opposition of the National Assembly.

Quebec does not want a bitumen future. Quebec wants a future with clean air, justice, progress. If Canada refuses that path, we will carve it out alone. We have no problem with that.

The Bloc Québécois motion is just a first step, a modest requirement. It is about giving us back what was taken from us. Behind this motion, there is a bigger idea: we will no longer put up with being disrespected like this, ignored, pillaged. Quebec is not to be a forgotten province. We are an awakened nation.

Today, we are calling for justice, on this issue and many others.

• (1720)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity on numerous occasions to raise the issue that British Columbia, Quebec and, I understand, Northwest Territories were never a part of the program itself. The Bloc members have chosen to completely ignore the issue as opposed to playing divisive politics.

It was interesting that one of the member's colleagues made reference to the pipeline as an example. Manitoba, my home province, has benefited from tens of millions, going into billions, of dollars, because we are a have-not province, receiving money that comes from provinces like Alberta because of issues like the pipeline. We are being critical because there were supports for a pipeline.

I wonder if the member recognizes that in a federal system, sometimes we need to support the different industries throughout the country, in all provinces, whether it is Quebec, Manitoba, B.C. or whatever it might be.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, what I have missed over the past six months is my hon. colleague being all over the map. He always gives very long speeches that go every which way in the preamble. He wants to answer everything, but at the end, he asks a question that is a bit out in left field.

Do we need to support a bunch of industries? The answer is yes.

Are there also industries that are part of the past and do not deserve support, and should we be thinking about a just transition? The answer is a resounding yes.

[English]

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree with part of the member's speech, which is how badly the Liberals misled us about the carbon tax. They told us that everybody was going to get

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back more than it cost them. The Parliamentary Budget Officer made it very clear that, in fact, not everybody who contributed to the federal carbon tax program was going to get back what it actually cost them. We got a lot of misinformation and disinformation from the Liberals on that. Now they have done a complete flip-flop on it, and they say how bad it is and that it really has created inflation and driven up the prices of everything.

We also know that provinces like British Columbia and Quebec did not contribute to the federal carbon tax program. The cheques that were issued were rebates. They were issued during the election, which was totally wrong. It was totally irresponsible of the Liberals to do that. However, does the member really think that someone who did not contribute to a pool should be entitled to a rebate from that pool?

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I think we are entitled to it because we contributed to it. That is precisely the problem: We contributed to it. Of course, what we gave, we need to get back. The same goes for British Columbia.

That said, it is ironic because my colleague remembers very well how the Liberals swore for a long time, hand on heart, that the carbon tax was good for everyone. We had the numbers, we had the facts, we had the documents and we quoted the Parliamentary Budget Officer. It went on and on. Today, the government is proud to have abolished it.

My Conservative friends must be laughing their heads off, but, as they say, laughing does not make it funny.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my Bloc Québécois colleague on his speech.

Since he is the international trade critic, I would like him to explain how eliminating carbon pricing will impact trade with the European Union. The EU is going to impose an entry tax on certain products if no carbon price was imposed on them in their source country.

I would like my colleague to explain how this could penalize Canada and benefit Quebec, which has once again shown leadership and progress by having its own carbon market.

• (1725)

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to relations with the Americans, I would say that Quebec has led the way because our system is tied to California's system.

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Here is the funny part. Next week we are going to move on to the business of supply. We know that the government intends to get strengthen ties with Europe. However, the government announced that it was abolishing carbon pricing, even though it knows the EU's position on that. There is still no departmental plan, even though we are going to vote on appropriations.

I look forward to finding out whether an agreement was reached between Canada and the European Union without our knowledge that would mean that Canada will not have any problems exporting goods to the EU, despite abolishing carbon pricing. If we get access to a departmental plan before voting on the appropriations, we may find out more.

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues who have been waiting for my impassioned speech. I will begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member for Kings—Hants.

We are talking about carbon pricing and the Bloc Québécois motion. I would like to begin by saying that what has been eliminated is carbon pricing at the consumer level. One might wonder why this was done. I think that it was the right thing to do and that it was good policy. Even though it was offset by individual rebates, consumer pricing was rather poorly received by the public. It also resulted in a lot of widely circulated disinformation. This unfortunately helped create a great deal of mistrust toward the government's policy and its use, to the point where we realized that it would be more constructive to scrap carbon pricing for consumers but maintain the industrial carbon tax. I think it is extremely important to maintain it, and that is what we intend to do.

My Bloc Québécois colleagues have rightly pointed out that this could hinder Canadian exports. In the current climate of a trade war with the United States, a partner that we thought was very reliable but is no longer, we need to look for new markets. We need to be able to diversify our trade opportunities. If we export manufactured goods to Europe, for example, we could be penalized if we do not have a carbon tax for the industrial sector.

The planet is moving forward. Carbon pricing is an effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, because we still need to reduce those emissions. I am always surprised when Conservatives, people who generally believe in market mechanisms to change behaviour, suddenly think that a market mechanism that has an effect on prices is no longer good when it comes to carbon emissions. I am surprised by that. We can bring together the most conservative economists on the planet, and they will all say that a pricing mechanism is the most effective way to change behaviour. That surprises me a bit.

We are therefore going to keep carbon pricing on the industrial side, because I think it is useful, especially at this time. The global economy is changing. It is becoming less carbon intensive.

I would like to raise another point before returning to the main thrust of the Bloc Québécois motion. It has also been mentioned today and in recent weeks, if not before, that the carbon tax has caused inflation in Canada. No, that is not how it works.

• (1730)

Let us talk about inflation. Perhaps our colleagues have heard about the pandemic and how it completely disrupted mechanisms, supply chains and international trade? Every OECD country and every developed country had to quickly and abruptly shut down its economy in 2020, then gradually reopen it. Then, in 2021-22, as we were gradually reopening the economy after the pandemic emergency passed, we realized that the pandemic-induced supply chain disruption resulted in very high demand. Unfortunately, supply could not keep up, which threw the whole system out of whack. That is what triggered inflation in Canada, the United States, Europe, Japan, Mexico and everywhere else. It was not Liberal policy, for crying out loud; it was a global phenomenon that was then exacerbated.

Perhaps our colleagues have also heard about the war in Ukraine? It set off an oil crisis and disrupted Russian oil exports, which rapidly drove up energy prices as well as grain prices, because shipments were down. Ukraine was a very large grain producer. All of these factors caused global inflation.

That was where we were in 2023 and 2024. The central banks reacted appropriately. The Bank of Canada did what it had to do. I would remind you that our colleagues across the floor were saying at the time that if they came to power, they would fire the Governor of the Bank of Canada. Let us be serious: What kind of banana republic would we end up in? That is not something that is done, especially since the Bank of Canada was one of the first to successfully control inflation. We are now back within the 2% range, and the inflation peak of a few years ago is behind us. It is always important to avoid confusing inflation with the cost of living, because they are not quite the same thing. Past price increases are still there, but inflation is now well under control. The Governor of the Bank of Canada is fortunately still in office, because he has been one of the most successful members of this fraternity of central bank governors.

Let us return to the Bloc Québécois motion. Our colleagues said that Quebec has been punished and robbed. Those are very harsh words that I find difficult to follow and understand. We live in a confederation, where there is a fairly elaborate system of federal revenue transfers. That is what we have done. I think that it has been done very well and that, no, Quebec has not been punished or cheated.

• (1735)

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see my former colleague from the Quebec National Assembly here in Ottawa.

At the time, when my colleague was Quebec's finance minister, he presented a budget within 46 days of taking office. What does he think of the time frame that is now being given to the federal Minister of Finance?

Carlos Leitão: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question.

I completely agree with the approach being taken now, which will come as no surprise. The context is completely different. We are in the midst of a trade war with the United States. We need to present a carefully considered budget and take the time to implement the necessary measures. We are taking the right approach.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his speech and on his election. I welcome him to Ottawa. He used to be a member of the Quebec National Assembly, which brings back many memories for us. I definitely remember.

I must begin by congratulating him on the thoroughness and accuracy of the facts he shared. He did not say that carbon pricing is a bad thing. He simply said that the government lost the communications battle to the Conservative Party, which has been talking about axing the tax for several years. I wanted to point that out because I think it is worth mentioning.

I would like to understand something, however. When my colleague was a member of the Quebec National Assembly, he said that Quebec was proud to be part of a carbon market of its own making. In April 2015, he even said that when Ontario joined the carbon market, he was proud that two-thirds of the Canadian economy was now participating in the cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gas emissions. He said that at the Canadian green economy round table in Quebec City.

When he is in Quebec City, the carbon market is a good idea. However, when he is in Ottawa, it is a bad idea. I would like my colleague to explain this to me, because I want to understand.

Carlos Leitão: Mr. Speaker, my opinion has not changed in the slightest. A cap-and-trade system is a very good system. Quebec chose that. At the time, we were able to convince our neighbours in Ontario to participate as well. It is, therefore, an excellent system.

What we have now, with industrial carbon pricing, is very similar to that system.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just had a federal election, on April 28, and it was really quite encouraging to see the number of Quebec members of Parliament who were elected in the government caucus, but we saw a significant drop with the Bloc. If we reflect on the election period, it seems to me that across the nation, people were genuinely concerned about things like Trump, the tariffs, the trade issues and how we are going to be able to protect critically important industries throughout Canada.

I wonder whether the member could provide his thoughts on what was happening at the doors in his constituency.

Carlos Leitão: Mr. Speaker, the riding I represent is about 70% francophone, and in my door-to-door activities during the cam-

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paign, a lot of people told me they would not usually vote Liberal but would this time because we needed someone like the Prime Minister to lead us through this period of incredible uncertainty. That is what they did, and that is why I am here. I am very happy to be here.

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin said that a balanced budget is not an obsession but an obligation.

Did the former Quebec finance minister speak with the current federal Minister of Finance?

Carlos Leitão: Mr. Speaker, that is another good question.

Indeed, it was not an obsession. It is an obligation. However, these things take time. Balancing a budget cannot and should not happen overnight. We are not going to do that in the midst of an economic crisis or trade war. We will take the time to get it right.

• (1740)

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise here in the House of Commons. I particularly enjoy participating in opposition day debates. I am pleased to have the opportunity to interact with all my colleagues here, particularly the members of the Bloc Québécois, but also the many Conservative members who speak French.

Today's opposition motion was moved by my hon. Bloc Québécois colleague from Saint-Jean. I have a great deal of respect for my colleague, who is a good parliamentarian. I appreciate the opportunity to debate the essence of the motion.

The motion is related to carbon pricing. I have a lot of experience with this issue. I am a government member who represents an Atlantic riding and, like many of my Atlantic colleagues, I had a different perspective on this issue. We understood the importance of changing the national policy, of changing the federal backstop for a couple of reasons.

I am going to talk today about something that happened in the last Parliament, and that shows the need for change. This story is also about the hypocrisy of the Conservatives when it comes to their position on the environment in general, but also when it comes to their position on carbon pricing. In some contexts, carbon pricing, particularly industrial carbon pricing, is a very conservative but small-c conservative policy. The Conservative Party platform that was presented during the election campaign included a plan to spend more public money, to spend more government money to deal with the challenges posed by climate change. It is not an effective plan, and I will talk about that later in my speech.

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It is important to understand a few aspects of the federal carbon pricing plan. When former Prime Minister Trudeau and his government introduced their carbon pricing plan, the provinces and territories had the option of creating their own provincial plans. In fact, the goal was for Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and all the other provinces and territories to have their own plans. It is absolutely necessary to acknowledge that Quebec, British Columbia and, I believe, the Northwest Territories developed their own plans. I think that Quebec's plan, with its cap-and-trade system, was a good plan. It was a good plan in terms of public policy, but also given the political context.

I represent a rural riding in Nova Scotia. It is very difficult for my constituents to get around by public transit because the systems are non-existent or are only available in the larger communities in my riding. This makes it absolutely necessary to have a car. The same is true for all rural communities across our country. It is also important to recognize that oil heating is particularly important in Nova Scotia and the Atlantic provinces in general. I must say that it is also important in Quebec. I stressed the need to change policies in order to reflect each province's and territory's realities and to address the specific issues facing the provinces and territories.

● (1745)

I commend the Government of Quebec for introducing its own plan using the cap-and-trade system while focusing on the province's major GHG emitters. Polls have been conducted. According to various polling firms, a majority of Quebecers, more than 50%, support this carbon pricing system. It was a resounding success.

Today, with the motion it moved, the aim of the Bloc Québécois is to win or justify some kind of federal expenditure specifically for the province, considering that the federal tax does not apply to Quebec, British Columbia or the Northwest Territories. David Eby's government did not raise this issue, and neither did the Premier of the Northwest Territories.

Had I accepted the Bloc Québécois's arguments, although I did not, I would have had a different problem with the text of the motion. Our government sent the payment directly to families and individuals and not to the government or a government program. The text of the motion says to give federal money to the Government of Quebec "without conditions". It says without conditions, without an obligation to make the payment to Quebec families. I think that is problematic.

If the Bloc Québécois wants a program similar to the one that the federal government had just before April, it is imperative to do what the Government of Canada did and send payments to Canadian families living in the provinces where the federal backstop for carbon pricing applied. I think that the text of the motion is problematic in that respect.

I would like to raise two other points. In the current context, it is necessary to have a flexible policy. The government is going to develop a strategy for working with the Canadian industry. We have to be competitive.

I have a problem with the Conservatives' position on the environmental issue in Canada. Our plan has the support of our

economists; it seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions more effectively in Canada, especially for big corporations. We have to work with them. With all due respect to the Conservatives, it is very rare that they raise the issue of the environment. Nonetheless, in their election platform, they say that to change our climate goals, we need to spend more. There needs to be more government spending, more public resources. In my opinion, their plan is really chaotic. There needs to be a baseline for our businesses. There needs to be stability in the climate and competition policies, but also in the context of our international free trade.

I am now prepared to answer my colleagues' questions.

● (1750)

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is one question that they have been trying to avoid since the day began. Perhaps my colleague can help me answer it.

Someone who does not pay taxes does not get a tax refund. I want to know by what magic trick do Canadians who did not pay the carbon tax get a carbon tax rebate. I would like him to explain the magic formula that makes this possible.

Hon. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, eight out of 10 people in Canada paid the carbon tax in provinces where a federal backstop applied, such as Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Families who paid the carbon tax received a payment from the federal government. When the Government of Canada decided to end carbon pricing, it sent them a final payment. Quebecers did not pay this tax because they have a completely different system.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for his speech entirely in French. It was very good. He said that the Liberals had a plan. If there really is a plan, will the government table a budget?

Hon. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I have delivered a speech entirely in French in the House. It is a very proud moment for me.

The Minister of Finance was very clear in the House of Commons. The federal budget will be presented in the fall. I think it is better to do so in the fall because we currently have many challenges ahead of us, including the relationship between Canada and the United States, the defence partnership with Europe, and the bill to build a single economy in Canada. We have a lot of important issues to address.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, can my colleague provide his thoughts on the global market and the need to look at industrial carbon pricing as something that allows Canada to continue to be competitive, as well as how that feeds into the one Canadian economy?

At the end of the day, the European Union and other countries are looking at establishing tariffs for countries that do not have some form of price on pollution. That is why we need to move forward with the industrial carbon pricing, contrary to what the Conservatives are saying.

[Translation]

Hon. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, because of the U.S. government's position, there is great deal of uncertainty all over the planet regarding free trade. However, as my colleague mentioned, there are other opportunities for us, particularly with Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

Many G7 countries are looking into how we can reduce greenhouse gases. It is important to address economic challenges while maintaining the importance of reducing GHGs. This will be a measure of competitiveness, and we need to strike a balance between those two things.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join in by heaping more praise on the member's speech in French. I remember that he hardly spoke any French back when I met him in 2019, so I congratulate him for making the effort. We can correct each other if he is interested in continuing.

My question is very simple. Could my colleague confirm for me, yes or no, whether the consumer carbon tax payment was paid out in advance or after the fact? All the analysts say that it was paid out in advance. If it was paid in advance and—

• (1755)

The Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member to give the parliamentary secretary 30 seconds to respond.

Hon. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, this was a final payment from the Government of Canada for Canadian families living in a province that had a federal backstop. It was therefore a final payment for those families. It did not apply to Quebec or British Columbia.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

Before giving the floor to the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé, I want to let him know that I may have to interrupt him given that the time allotted for debate is almost over.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, thank you for letting me know. I presume that you will remind me when I need to wrap up my speech.

We find ourselves in a sadly recurring moment in this so-called confederation, which is, in reality, a federation, where people repeatedly say they love Quebec, that it is part of Canada, that it reaps various benefits, that it is quite spoiled and so on.

However, every time we express a need and we raise an injustice or an inequity, we are told we are creating division and we are not being reasonable. In my opinion, I think we are extremely reasonable. We dedicated an opposition day to this subject in a very reasonable and positive manner. We were quite naive to think that the injustice that occurred during the election could not be ignored.

For that reason, we moved this motion in the House, thinking that all parliamentarians, who are intelligent and open-minded individuals, would hear our case, analyze the information and recognize that funds, the origin of which was not transparent, had in fact been distributed inequitably. It turns out that this is not the case.

I will therefore explain it one last time. According to what is written in the program, the Canada carbon rebate was to be paid in advance, because it was known that this measure would not be popular when it was introduced. No one likes to pay taxes, which is to be expected. The government therefore announced that a payment, which was compensation covering the next three months, would be made in advance to prevent having individuals bear the immediate costs, particularly by putting it on their credit card.

The government obviously could have done a better job at public communications, an area where it has done very poorly in recent years and where it has been completely dominated by the official opposition. The government should have explained more often that nearly 80% of individuals, especially those with low incomes and those in the middle class, were getting more money than they were paying and that they were getting it in advance.

That is the issue at stake today. The cancellation of this tax was announced on April 1. The payment scheduled for April 22 was just a few days before the general election, and the government decided that it was better not to cancel it because people might have thought that their cheques were being taken away. Those people might not have wanted to vote for the Liberals anymore. The government then decided to go ahead with the payment.

I heard all sorts of things today. Luckily for me and my general state of mind, I did not listen to speeches all day. If I had, it would have done me in. It already has. I am a sensitive kind of guy. When I hear nonsense, it bothers me.

I was told a whole bunch of things. I was told that people were expecting a payment and no one wanted to blindside them. People had budgeted for it. Even if they no longer had to pay the tax and so should not have received the payment, the decision was made give it to them anyway.

At the very least, we are willing to accept this argument and give the benefit of the doubt, but this is nothing new. Using public funds in this way in the run-up to an election looks like an attempt to buy votes. I think that the official opposition will agree with us on that. It was a very questionable move.

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However, let us show even more good faith than usual and say that all of this is fine. The government did not want to catch people off guard and take money away from them for the coming month. We can agree on that. That said, this money should have been given to everyone. The money that the government handed out was supposed to be covered by the tax that it had planned to collect over the next three months. However, that is not what it did. It would no longer collect the tax, but it would still issue the compensation payment that should have been financed by that tax that no longer existed.

Some of my colleagues have called it a magic trick. We saw a few of those during the election campaign, including when the government talked about the budget. Some people are able to promise that they will cut taxes while increasing spending, and they can say that without batting an eye, without trembling, and with a steady voice. We cannot wait to see that. That is why we are all so eager to see a budget.

• (1800)

The tax was not collected, but the cheques were sent out. The money did not just magically appear. It came from somewhere. It came from the state coffers. The Bloc Québécois is working to change things one day, but for now, Quebec represents 22% of the tax-paying population. Quebec therefore paid 22% of the \$3.7 billion that was handed out as election goodies, as giveaways. The Liberal Party gave out a nice little cheque in the hopes that it would win some votes. That is the problem.

We disagree with the idea of giving out cheques to buy an election, and we find it appalling. If the explanation is that poorer people were waiting for the cheque and the government did not want to upset them or catch them off guard, then it should have at least treated everyone fairly. That is where the problem lies. Neither British Columbia nor Quebec received this compensation because they were not on the list.

These two provinces were not on the list because over the years they decided to handle their own responsibilities. They decided to tackle climate change head-on, to change their ways and create a serious incentive for businesses to make an effort to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

There are different ways of doing that. I think that Quebec found one of the best ways of doing it with the carbon exchange, which is working well with one of the biggest partners in North America, California. This system works so well that there are far fewer repercussions on the citizens than the former carbon tax system that the federal government had chosen to impose on the provinces and territories that did not handle their own responsibilities. Let us not forget that, originally, this type of intervention fell under the jurisdiction of the provinces and Quebec.

That is the injustice. We have done the math, and approximately \$800 million is what has been confiscated, taken away and stolen from us. I am using the word “stolen” to express my surprise that members of the House refused to allow us to table a definition of this very simple word, which is being used to make sure that everyone understands what we are talking about.

When we speak here, not everyone can hear us. First, there are the unilingual anglophones who never use earpieces. Second, there are all those who talk while we are speaking and create a lot of background noise that is getting louder and louder. That is a constructive comment on my part. At some point, we have to make ourselves heard. We felt that people did not understand what we were saying, so we wanted to give them the definition of the word that we were using.

Besides, we are nice. We work in French and we promote French, but my colleague from Mirabel is so generous that he wanted to table the definition in both languages. He was shut down with very little consideration. Allow me to make a request to the members of the House. The next time that we are so generous, they should welcome it and accept our gift instead of snubbing us. We may end up understanding each other. That is the problem.

I want to talk about money again, because some big numbers have been thrown around. It is about \$814 million, or about \$10 million per riding in Quebec. I would like to explain things in practical terms for the people watching us at home. The Canada carbon rebate is \$110 to \$228 for the first adult, depending on the province in which it is paid. For the second adult, it is between \$55 and \$114, and it is between \$27.50 and \$57 per child. These amounts cover a three-month period. That is the money that others got and that Quebecers did not get, but paid for. If I do a more simplistic calculation, in Quebec, we have graciously given \$100 per person. We are truly generous, but we are called whiners and quibblers because we say that the government made a mistake and that something iniquitous had happened.

We humbly ask the government to fix this inequity. It should refund the money that Quebecers paid because, as we have been told all day, we did not participate in carbon pricing. We do not have to pay for that. We have our system that works. That is the problem.

• (1805)

However, I am being told no. That is Canadian history in a nutshell. Sometimes, people wonder why there are damned separatists and why the sovereignist movement exists. People think that Canada is a very beautiful country. That is true, but it is simply not ours, because we do not have the same priorities as a nation.

On top of that comes a slew of inequities. Unfortunately, the carbon tax rebate during the election campaign only adds to a long list of times when Quebec was shortchanged. When we say that out loud, however, we are called malcontents and reminded about equalization payments, told that we should get down on our knees and thank Alberta. However, when they tell us that, people never remember to say that among the seven provinces receiving equalization payments, Quebec is the one receiving the least per capita. People need to be educated about these things.

Personally, I am sick and tired of listening to people talk about equalization. I want to remind people just how much we subsidize the heavy polluting oil and gas industry every year. Indeed, of the subsidies it receives from the government, we pay 22%. The government gives oil companies tax credits; in the next few years it is going to give these companies money so they can keep polluting while they try to sequester carbon in sinks or rock. Good luck with that. Every time it was tried in the past, it failed. As for us, we are going to have to pay for it.

Now, when we stand up and say that the government made a mistake, that it gave a cheque to certain provinces but not to two others, that this is unfair and that it should right this wrong, they call us malcontents, point out the equalization payments we have received and tell us to repent. We will not repent. I have plenty of examples like that.

This system is one of the most malicious that exists, because on top of everything else, less money is being invested in Quebec. That affects how equalization payments are calculated, requiring additional payments and leaving Quebecers with the impression that they are poor. God forbid they realize that they are good people, that they are great, strong, intelligent and capable of shining far more brightly in the world and then decide to separate. What a tragedy that would be.

We have resources that benefit Canada. I will just mention the St. Lawrence Seaway. I invite the few members who are listening to me to do a bit of research. They are the exception, but we will talk to them anyway, because we have to talk to the audience that we have. Out of curiosity, they should find out how much it costs for a ship to pass through the Panama Canal. After that, they should look up how much it cost to rebuild the new Samuel de Champlain Bridge in Montreal, and how much it would have cost had the bridge been lower. It is very high because it is the seaway, and ships have to be able to pass through. It is a good idea, but it came at a price. Who paid for that?

People can always present whatever figures they want. Let them ask more questions about equalization payments, and I will be happy to answer them. Actually, they can keep their equalization. I do believe that Quebec would be much richer and more prosperous and would have a better future without equalization payments if it controlled all of its taxes. That is because the fundamental problem with this federation—I started talking about confederation and federation—is once again poor presentation and yet another opportunity for Quebecers to be cheated.

It is in the contract of 1867, where the responsibilities and areas of jurisdiction were set out. In order to properly exercise these areas of jurisdiction, we need to have the financial means. However, we have discovered over time that Canada is a federation and that the federal government constantly wants to centralize power here in Ottawa without fulfilling its obligations. We see it every day.

I will just talk about the health care system, which is underfunded. Canada's contribution is now 20% or 22% of health care costs, down from 50% in the early 1970s, when the system was introduced. We need to put ourselves in the shoes of a federal government that wants to be popular and says it cannot simply transfer money to the provinces because they will provide the services and

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take all the credit so people will like them. The federal government cannot do that.

● (1810)

Jean Chrétien understood that. He cut transfers. He even bragged about it abroad and talked about what a great position he was in. He was cutting transfers and people were protesting in front of the provincial and Quebec parliaments, while he was sitting back with his feet up, with plenty of money to do whatever he wanted, including the ability to encroach on any area of jurisdiction he wanted.

I could go back even further. There is a debt somewhere. My colleague from the Quebec City area, whose full riding name I would not dare try to pronounce because I am not familiar with the indigenous portion and would not want to be disrespectful to anyone, will be pleased that I am quoting the Act of Union of 1840. I know that he is a history buff. When he asks his question, he will surely tell me that he is in a good mood today and that he wants to encourage me by saying that I am right when I say that the debts of Upper Canada and Lower Canada were merged, even though they were of a completely different order of magnitude, and that the debt of Upper Canada, which was Ontario at the time, was paid off. No one is bothered by that today, just as no one will be bothered in two years when we talk about today's \$814 million. It will not keep anyone in Canada awake at night. This is another example of Quebec being cheated, although I will agree that it is on a smaller scale.

All those who stand up and tell us that Quebec did not participate in the carbon exchange and that it is not true that Quebecers got cheated lack objectivity. I am being very polite when I say that they lack objectivity. I will say again that the credit for the carbon tax was paid in advance for the next three months.

The election date was approaching, and the Liberal government decided to scrap the consumer carbon tax in order to pull the rug out from under Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre—I can mention him by name because he is not here, which is rare, so I am taking advantage of it. They took away his arguments. I have to admit that it was a very smart and strategic political move. It seems to have worked, since the Liberals are still in power. However, the government decided that it could not stop the cheques that were supposed to arrive a few days before the election because people would not like that. It therefore decided not to stop the cheques, even though it had not collected the taxes to pay for them.

I have explained this twice. I hope that it is starting to sink in. I almost feel like saying it in English in order to make sure that I am understood, but we do have principles that we will uphold to the very last. I therefore invite those who are interested to put on their earpieces and listen carefully to the extraordinary work that the interpreters are doing here.

An hon. member: Hear, hear.

Yves Perron: I am glad to hear that. I can even hear several of you. Hear, hear.

Business of Supply

If the Liberals did not collect the money they handed out in advance, where did it come from? It came from the public purse. However, the money in the public purse is not separated by province. Quebec's money is in there, too. That means that 22% of that money should flow back to us. That is all. This is not a malicious separatist gesture or an act of bad faith. What we want is fairness for our citizens. It seems to me that this is a very reasonable request. Unfortunately, I have the very sad duty of noting that the House does not seem to want to recognize this fact. I find that very disappointing. I hope our citizens see this, realize what is going on and remember it, because we do not want an injustice like this to happen every week. Any time someone comes along to extol the virtues of beautiful, great Canada, we will have one more piece of evidence to show that it is not working.

People tell me about *Beautiful Canada*. That is all very interesting, but why does it not bother anyone that Quebec has never signed the Constitution? It is rather ironic that we are the parliamentary group that respects the Constitution the most. Since we sit here and we are obliged to work within these structures, we are constantly reminding people that jurisdictions need to be respected. We constantly have to tell them that was not what was written behind our backs in the night. One signature in the night, while the premier was sleeping. You cannot make it up. I would not say it in this chamber if I did not know it to be true. I think it is awful to see that no one is bothered by this. Then there are people with good will, like the Conservative leader who had the most common sense, Mr. Mulroney, who tried to fix this. He was not asking for much, but it was a categorical no. Still today, what do we get? We get a categorical no. We will remember.

• (1815)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I have been listening to the discussion all day, and one thing that keeps coming up is the fact that Quebec did not pay this tax, so Quebec did not receive any payment.

I hear my colleagues saying that their constituents need government support to buy homes and to do many of the things that are covered by bills we have introduced in the House.

Can my colleague tell us whether he will support these bills and therefore answer his constituents' questions?

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I will do what I always do. When a bill is introduced, I look at what is good for my constituents. If it is good for my constituents, I will vote in favour of it. If it is not good, I will try to change it. That is what the Bloc Québécois is doing.

I want to set the record straight on something. The member was probably mistaken when she said that Quebec has not paid. I just explained for 20 minutes that Quebec paid, because the tax did not fund the last rebate. It comes from the general coffers, for which we provide 22% of the money. I wish someone would understand that.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his kind words. Yes, I love history, but I also love the future.

I know that the Bloc members have talked a lot about the referendum they dream of having and about Quebec's independence, which they believe in and which I am not comfortable with, but that is part of democracy. If my colleague really wants a referendum, if he really wants a country, he will have to vote for the Parti Québécois and have the Parti Québécois form the provincial government in a year.

I completely disagree with the leader of the Parti Québécois. I think that the leader of the Bloc Québécois ran a very good federal election campaign. Yet despite that fact, the Liberals elected 44 members with the exact situation the member described.

How does he explain the fact that Quebecers elected 44 Liberal members, when they knew full well that the situation he so carefully described would happen as he said?

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague. I am glad he asked me a question. Earlier, my speech was almost an invitation.

I, too, believe in the future. Have no fear, we will vote for the Parti Québécois at the first opportunity. What we want is to achieve independence. We are not against Canada, but for Quebec and for continuing to work with Canadians. That is the issue. The reason is because of the injustices, like the ones we called out today. I wish that some of the Conservatives had stepped up today to say that we are right.

This comes from the government. Why? It is because the election campaign stirred up a lot of media attention. It was a fear-driven campaign. Throughout the election campaign, people were told to be careful of the big, bad President Trump. We need "Mr. C", the Prime Minister I cannot name. That happened throughout the election campaign. Now, however, three weeks on, here we are and no one is talking about it at all.

Was it a manoeuvre to use fear for electoral purposes? Maybe it is like using a cheque for electoral purposes. Why not?

What next?

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his eloquent speech. It was very good.

During the last Parliament, the Bloc Québécois held opposition days on issues we consider important, such as Bill 21, secularism, the oath to the King and the monarchy. Each and every time, the Conservatives stood up and asked us why we were not talking about the real issues. They spoke about the cost of living, how much Quebecers have in their wallets, the prices Quebecers are paying. They asked us why we were not talking about money and purchasing power.

Tonight, we are doing exactly that. This is a concrete issue, not a symbolic one, and it has a direct impact on our constituents' wallets. The member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk has been standing up and giving us election results since 9 o'clock this morning.

Why is he not congratulating us?

• (1820)

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I almost feel like giving him the floor to answer. That is such a great question. Indeed, it is surprising.

My colleague from Mirabel also raised another example of lack of respect that I could have added to my long list. I had a lot of things on my sheet. However, 20 minutes sometimes goes by very quickly. I am thinking about the injustice and the lack of respect that we have to endure.

Last year, we asked the House to respect our conscience and to allow us to swear an oath to our constituents, rather than swearing an oath to a king, which is something we do reluctantly, out of obligation, for the sole purpose of serving our constituents. In response, some of our colleagues sang *God Save the King*. Talk about pathetic.

When Quebec wants something, it is told to just forget it. That is the message we are getting again today.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that I have been here for this entire debate, but it is very difficult to get a chance to speak.

As he said, there is concern about fossil fuel subsidies. I want to add that, during the election campaign, the Green Party asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer to tell us how much these subsidies amounted to. We wanted to know how much money was being paid to businesses. It is a huge waste of public resources. In fact, most of the companies receiving these subsidies are foreign companies, and they are wealthy. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that he could not get that answer because of obstacles put up by the Department of Finance.

What does my colleague think about the mystery surrounding these subsidies—

The Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the member to give the hon. member the opportunity to answer the question.

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, my colleague raises some very interesting points. She should be given the floor more often. She was talking about fossil fuel subsidies. It seems that the finance department is putting up obstacles that are preventing us from getting better numbers.

I am going to throw something out there: The member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain could tell the people in his circle to provide numbers and be objective. Not only do the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain's constituents expect the government to table a budget, but they also expect the government to be transparent.

I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I can tell her that several billion dollars have been paid in subsidies. In the next few years, more than \$82 billion in tax credits will be given, and 22% of that money comes from Quebec. It is time to stop harassing us over the infamous equalization payments.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the member when he tries to give the impression that the people of Quebec were tricked in the last election.

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I believe the people of Quebec, much like the people in Manitoba, understood that the primary issue in the election was no doubt that of genuine concern over Trump's tariffs and trade. I think they looked at what was out there and voted accordingly. The Bloc had the opportunity to make its case. It did not make its case strong enough. I respect what the people of Quebec, and equally the people of Manitoba, voted for. To try to say that our constituents or the voters were being tricked is not appropriate. The voters in Quebec did a fine job in recognizing the important issues of the province.

[Translation]

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I am almost happy to see my colleague from Winnipeg North again.

When he says he disagrees, I am never surprised, but I never said that the election was stolen. What I said was that, today, people are being cheated out of that \$800 million. He should acknowledge that. A cheque was issued for a tax that has not been collected. That money was taken from somewhere.

The Liberals are real magicians, but at some point, there is a limit. Everyone knows that the money comes from somewhere. Where does it come from? Twenty-two per cent of that money comes from Quebec. I will quote a former Quebec premier who said, "Give us back our loot". Today, that amount is \$814 million. We just want our money. It is simple and it is reasonable. We are asking nicely. I think that the Minister of Finance is hearing these demands because he is from Quebec. I am glad to see him smile.

• (1825)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is as follows.

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

The Deputy Speaker: If a member participating in person wishes that the amendment be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 11, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent at this time to call it 6:43 p.m., which would allow us to continue on with the estimates.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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The Deputy 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 resolve itself into committee of the whole.

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), Tom Kmiec in the chair)

The Chair: 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.

• (1830)

[Translation]

Each member recognized by the Chair will be allocated 15 minutes. These periods may be used for both 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 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 Tuesday, May 27, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

The hon. member for Calgary East.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time three ways.

During the election, the Prime Minister said he would collect \$20 billion in U.S. tariffs. Can the minister confirm on what date they will be fully collected?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Chair, first of all, let me congratulate you on your role as the Chair this evening. As well, I thank the officials for being with us tonight.

As the member should know, we had the largest countermeasures to face—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, there was no date in there. On what date will \$20 billion be collected, as the Prime Minister had said it would be?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, it is a real privilege to be with you tonight and to answer questions from the member. As he knows, we have mounted the largest number of countertariffs, probably in Canada's history, to face the unjustified and illegal tariffs that have been imposed by the United States.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, the minister refuses to answer on what date they will be collected. Will the \$20 billion be collected by the time the minister gets around to making his budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, it is a pleasure to answer that question.

The member will know, as we have been public about this, that we have collected \$1.7 billion so far in countertariffs in Canada—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, will the rest of the tariffs be collected by the time the budget comes out, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, as I said, my hon. colleague is a very experienced member of this House. I have already answered that question, saying that we have collected \$1.7 billion. These sums will be used to support our workers and our industry.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, when will the minister collect the remaining amount of the \$20 billion?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the member is an experienced member of this House. He will know that we have countertariffs in place and that we have collected money. We have been very clear that these sums will be used to support workers and industry in Canada.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, will the minister collect the rest of the \$20 billion that is outstanding from what the Prime Minister said?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, in this House, what we all want is to have no tariffs on Canadian industry or workers, because this is affecting our economy. It is affecting communities across the country—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, I will take that as a “no”. How much in tariffs will be collected this month, in June?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, I have already answered that question a couple of times.

We have collected \$1.7 billion so far, and that sum of money will be used to support our workers and our industry, as we have said.

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Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, how much in tariffs will be collected in July?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the member will be able to see that when the tariffs have been collected. We always render the number publicly, but so far it has been \$1.7 billion.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, if the minister does not know, the officials are sitting there, and he can ask them as well. How much in tariffs will be collected in September?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, all Canadians expect and hope that by September, we may not have to collect any tariffs. The Prime Minister has been clear that we are going to fight. We are going to protect and build this country.

• (1835)

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, tariff collection was a part of the Liberals' costed platform. Now there will be a downfall. How big will the deficit be if the remaining amount will not be collected?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, as I said already, what we want is for there to be no tariffs imposed on Canadian industry or workers. This is not just the government but, I would say, all Canadians. That is what we are fighting for every step of the way.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, can the minister tell us on what date the budget will be tabled?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, we have already answered that question. We said there will be a full budget, a great budget actually, a budget that looks forward, that is ambitious, that is going to make Canada resilient. It is going to be in the fall.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, in that budget, how much will they project will be collected from the U.S. tariffs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, we would hope that by that time, there would be no tariffs imposed on Canada.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, if there is a shortfall in that budget from U.S. tariffs, how does the minister plan on addressing that?

Would it be by borrowing, taxing or cutting?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, on this side of the House, we want to build Canada strong. We want to invest in this country. We want to invest in workers. We want to invest in our industries. I know that the member wants a very ambitious and prosperous Canada.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Chair, can the minister confirm this: Is he saying that he will not collect the total \$20 billion in U.S. tariffs, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, as I am sure we hope, and as all Canadians hope, there would be no tariffs. Therefore, as we would appreciate, this is not something we wish—

The Chair: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Chair, what will the deficit be for the fiscal year 2025-26?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am happy to respond as to what the deficit number is today. With respect to the future, the member will have to be patient.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, what is his projection?

Ordinarily, would the finance minister not have a deficit projection for the year-end 2026?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, it is very public. I know that the hon. member is a very experienced member. He is a man who knows the numbers. If he looks at “The Fiscal Monitor”, which is a great document—

The Chair: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, ordinarily, would a minister table a budget that would show Canadians what the deficit projection would be?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the colleague will be very happy when we table the budget in the fall. He will have a chance to review that. For now, what I can say is that “The Fiscal Monitor”—

The Chair: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, does the finance minister have the budget deficit projection for this year, 2025, year-end March 2026?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, “The Fiscal Monitor” for April to March 2025 stated \$43.2 billion. The member would be able to see it. It is public.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, does the minister believe that this will be the number?

Is that the number we can expect in the budget that has not been tabled yet?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the hon. member is an experienced member, and I know he likes to read. I would refer him to “The Fiscal Monitor”. It is a great document for him to read.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, what about a budget?

When will the budget be tabled?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, I know he is anxious. It is going to come in the fall, and it is going to be great. We just have to be a bit patient, but it is going to be great. He is going to like it. I see it in his face.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, what is the current projection for unemployment?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, again, in May, the unemployment rate in Canada was 7%. That is a public figure.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, is that up or down from the government's previous projection, and what would the projection be for the budget?

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Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the unemployment number always comes back, looking retrospectively. The number, as of May 2025, is 7%.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, is that number rising?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, 7% is 7%.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, does the minister then believe that the unemployment rate will not exceed 7%?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, that is not what I said. Seven is seven, and I know the member is able to count to seven.

• (1840)

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, I hope the member can count too.

I asked the member what his projection will be. What is the projection for unemployment? Does he project that unemployment will rise?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, we want to build a resilient economy, so by building a resilient economy, obviously we would expect that the unemployment number would remain steady, because we want to build a very sustainable—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, so will the number remain at seven or lower? Will it exceed 7%, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, he asked me this all evening. I am an old guy, and I will answer the same thing: Seven is seven.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, this exchange will age if the rate should happen to exceed 7%. Ordinarily, these projections would be in a budget that would be tabled in March or maybe April at the latest, so this is ordinarily something the government would project.

Is the minister giving an assurance to this House that the unemployment rate will not exceed 7%?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, what I said to this House and to all Canadians is that the unemployment rate in May was 7%, and the member is well aware of that.

With respect to projection, I will let him guess what he thinks, but what I can say on this side of the House is that 7% was the number in May 2025.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, the projection is 7% and will not exceed 7%: Is it a yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, seven is seven.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, on what date will the budget be balanced?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, we said we would be presenting a great budget, and I know the member will have—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, in 2015 the government was elected and promised a balanced budget by 2019. It is 2025. The fall economic statement had no date for a balanced budget in sight.

On what date will the minister project having a balanced budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, we have been very clear to Canadians that we would balance the operating budget of this government within three years. I know the member is looking forward to the budget. It is going to be great. I know he is so anxious, but he will just have to wait a bit—

The Chair: The hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City has the floor.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Chair, can the minister tell me how much federal debt needs to be refinanced over the next five years?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am sure the member can find this number in the estimates, and she can look at “The Fiscal Monitor”.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, it is a simple question, Finance 101.

How much will need to be refinanced over the next five years?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, it is Finance 101: The member can look at “The Fiscal Monitor” and the estimates. It is a great read. I would suggest it to the member.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, the PBO confirmed for me that the amount is \$3.27 trillion. Over \$2.8 trillion of that is just to refinance old debt we have never paid off.

Is this sustainable, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, I know the member knows that a lot of the expenses incurred are to support transfers made to provinces to—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, it was a simple question: yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the member would know that a good part of the federal budget is transferred to provinces to support great programs that help people in her riding—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, the remaining \$270 billion is new borrowing, fresh deficits on top of old.

Does the government plan to stop adding debt to the pile, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the member will be very happy tonight, because she will learn that Canada has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. It is a great position to be in, and we will—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, again, the question is simple. Is the answer yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the answer is that Canada has an AAA credit rating. It is a great position to be in.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, the federal government plans to divide the budget into two with operations and investments. Is that correct?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, I am impressed that the member has been listening to the Liberal campaign, and she can draw her own conclusions.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, can the minister explain what exactly will qualify as an investment?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, we have been very clear during the campaign that we will lay that out very simply. However, I can say that, when a person buys groceries, they spend, and when they buy a house, they invest.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, ArriveCan was called an investment in digital innovation. Would that be on the investment budget?

• (1845)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, Canadians watching at home tonight, and I know there are many, want to understand the difference between expenses and investments. If a person buys groceries, they spend, and if they buy a house, they invest.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, the \$1.4-billion boost to CBC was called an investment in culture. Would that be on the investment budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, I will come back to an example that folks will be very familiar with. They know that, when they do their groceries, they spend, and when they buy a house, they invest—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, the GST holiday, which the former finance minister admitted was unaffordable, was also labelled an investment in affordability. Would that be on the investment budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, as I said, when we lay out the budget, it is going to be very clear what are expenses and what is capital, and I know the member—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, is this not just creative accounting to give the illusion of a balanced budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the member will be pleased to know that the United Kingdom also divides between operating expenses and capital. She would know that other G7 countries are doing that.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, would the minister agree that the bond markets we need to borrow from do not care about political word games, but want real numbers like debt-to-GDP?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, I know that the bond market cares a lot about the AAA credit rating, which is what Canada has to offer. I can tell the member that the markets are very appreciative of Canada.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, can the minister tell me how much the current debt-to-GDP ratio is?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, it is public, but as of the projection for 2024-25, it was 41.9%.

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Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, can the minister tell me how much the federal debt is?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, it is public, and I would be happy to, but there will be more questions. I am sure the member can look at the estimates, and she would know.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, I am just looking for the number.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the number is in the document.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, the number is around \$1.3 trillion, but how much does our debt servicing cost?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, the member is a very experienced member, but the number is \$1.27 trillion.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, the question was, what are the debt-servicing costs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, we might as well be precise. The federal debt, from “The Fiscal Monitor” for April to March—

The Chair: The hon. member has less than eight seconds.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Chair, it is around \$60 billion. How much is the current deficit?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, as I just said, if the member wanted to be precise with numbers, she would know that the federal debt is \$1.27 trillion.

The Chair: The Minister of Finance and National Revenue.

[Translation]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is a great pleasure to be with you this evening and with my colleagues, whom I truly appreciate. We will be spending a wonderful evening together.

I want to begin by thanking all the deputy ministers who are with us this evening. This is an important evening during which I will have an opportunity to address this important committee of the whole. I would also like to thank all the senior officials who helped prepare for this evening, as well as my opposition colleagues, who play an important role in our democracy by asking questions, as they will this evening.

I would like to speak specifically to some of the spending measures outlined in the main estimates that are helping to support Canadians during this period of great economic volatility while preparing us for the opportunities available to us as a nation.

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From increasing federal transfers that uphold the core Canadian values of equal opportunity and social stability, to helping Ukraine in its fight against Russia's war of aggression and investing in the infrastructure projects that transform our communities for the better, our government is delivering the change Canadians want and deserve. I look forward to outlining these measures further as they pertain to building a greater, more inclusive and more robust economy for everyone.

[Translation]

Our government is committed to helping the provinces and territories deliver the social programs and supports that Canadians need to maintain their financial, personal and social well-being, no matter where they live in our great country.

That is why—and I know my Conservative colleagues will be very interested in this part of my speech—the Canada health transfers will increase by \$2.6 billion. This will ease immediate pressures on health care systems across Canada and ensure that more people can get to the hospital, receive emergency care and see a doctor quickly and efficiently. This increase reflects the federal government's February 2023 commitment to a minimum growth rate of 5% until 2027-28.

● (1850)

[English]

The Canadian social transfer, which I know my Conservative colleagues care a lot about as well, will increase by \$507 million as a result of the legislated 3% annual growth rate. What we call the Canada social transfer is intended to support three broad areas of social programming plus post-secondary education, social assistance and social services, as well as early childhood development, and early learning and child care. These all contribute to improving the social determinants of health from coast to coast to coast.

Together, these transfers will promote more equity, boost social inclusion and cohesion and support a comprehensive safety net so vital to the Canadian way of life. My colleagues on this side of the house, the Liberal government, have always been there for Canadians. I know Canadians watching know we have their backs.

I think we can all agree that people in one part of the country should not have to pay more to receive the same basic services compared to their fellow Canadians in other parts of the country. This is all about fairness. It is why we have equalization and territorial formula financing, which, as members well know, provides funding from federal revenues to provinces and territories with a weaker ability to raise revenues, ensuring these regions can provide reasonably comparable services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation. The territorial formula financing also takes into account the higher cost of delivering services in our beloved north.

We are increasing fiscal equalization by nearly \$970 million and territorial financing by almost \$330 million so we can continue promoting equity across our great nation.

[Translation]

Another increase worth mentioning is the allocation of \$200 million to the World Bank's Ukraine relief, recovery, reconstruction

and reform trust fund, which will assist the country in its courageous fight against Russia's illegal invasion. This amount is part of Canada's contribution through the G7's extraordinary revenue acceleration loan initiative for Ukraine. It will be used to support projects, programs and activities that address Ukraine's budget, recovery and reconstruction needs.

[English]

Finally, I would like to touch on one important increase in the main estimates, which is to the Canada Infrastructure Bank. It was established to ensure that all Canadians can benefit from modern and sustainable infrastructure through partnerships between the private sector and all levels of government.

[Translation]

Specifically, the federal government can provide up to \$35 billion to the Canada Infrastructure Bank to invest in priority sectors, including public transit, green infrastructure, clean energy, broadband access, trade and transportation.

By making this investment, we will build a stronger, more inclusive and more sustainable Canada for all Canadians. I can already see my Bloc Québécois colleagues smiling, because we are united in building a strong Canada. I can see it in their eyes. They are proud to support us as we build a strong Canada together.

[English]

Before I conclude, I would like to highlight some crucial measures the new government is taking to make life more affordable while building a single, interconnected and resilient Canadian economy, the one economy that I think everyone in the House and people at home are wishing for.

To make buying a new home easier and to boost the construction of new homes across the country, including in the beautiful Quebec City, the government is eliminating the goods and services tax, what we call the GST, for first-time homebuyers on new homes up to \$1 million and reducing the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

This is a great moment for Canada, and I can see how much you appreciate that, Madam Chair, because it is going to help people in your riding as well.

As a result, first-time homebuyers would be able to save up to \$50,000 on new homes, and it would deliver \$3.9 billion in tax savings to Canadians over the next five years. We should all be very happy to support people who want to buy a new home for the first time, as a new buyer.

• (1855)

[Translation]

In addition, we are putting forward our proposal to reduce the marginal tax rate for the first tax bracket of personal income from 15% to 14% effective July 1, 2025. This will provide much-needed tax relief to nearly 22 million Canadians. Twenty-two million Canadians will be able to benefit from this tax cut, which is important for the middle class.

To make Canada's carbon pricing system more equitable and efficient, the Government of Canada has adopted regulations terminating the federal fuel charge effective April 1, 2025. The government has removed the requirement for provinces and territories to have a carbon price for consumers.

[English]

In conclusion, the measures in the main estimates presented before the committee today are an important part of the federal government's plan to put people first and build a single, hyper-connected economy where everyone has a real and fair chance at success. We want to build the strongest economy in the G7.

We are ensuring Canadians receive the health and social services they need to thrive. We are supporting Canadians through the current global challenges we face, by cutting taxes and making housing more affordable. We are catalyzing infrastructure investment and creating well-paying jobs across the country.

Let us be proud. We are the true north, strong and free.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Chair, examining estimates provides members of the House the opportunity to examine the government's finances in granular detail, but if we take a step back, I would also like to ask the minister some macro-level questions.

Just as he was also sent here, London West residents sent me to the House to make sure that our government takes concrete measures to make life more affordable. Can the finance minister expand on the steps that the government has recently taken to make life more affordable for Canadians and how it would impact the Canadian economy and our finances going forward?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, this is a great question. My colleague is spot-on.

What I said was that we introduced a ways and means motion that was voted for unanimously in the House, which contains three things.

The first thing is cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians. This is probably one of the most important things we could do to help people with affordability because we are leaving more money in the pockets of Canadians. I know people watching at home care about that, and we have reduced the first bracket of imposition from 15% to 14%, which would be a real help to families across the nation.

The second thing we did is really for first-time homebuyers, which is very significant. For first-time homebuyers we have eliminated the GST for houses up to \$1 million, for that represents \$50,000 in savings. This is very significant for young families

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and for people who want to get in and buy a house. I know people are rejoicing at home tonight.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Chair, the election was about who can fight for Canadians against the unjustified tariffs. How have the unjustified and illegal U.S. tariffs impacted Canada's economy forecasts, and what measures is the government taking to counter American tariffs to support Canadian industries and workers in our regions across Canada, especially in southwestern Ontario?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, my colleague raised a very important question.

The Prime Minister has been clear from day one that we are going to fight. We are going to fight the unjustified and illegal tariffs that have been imposed on Canada, on our communities, on our workers and on our industries. At the same time, we are going to protect our workers and our industries, because we said we will have their back; that is what we are doing on a daily basis, but at the same time, we are going to build Canada.

I know that the members of the House care about that, and the Prime Minister said something that really resonated with me and with many Canadians: We can give to ourselves far more than anyone can take away from us as Canadians. We are the true north strong and free, and the mission we have to build a strong, resilient and ambitious Canada is resonating from coast to coast to coast.

I am happy that my colleague, the member, is supporting that agenda. She is great, and she is doing great work. The people in her riding really appreciate her work.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Chair, does the minister recall Conservative MPs expressing similar amounts of false outrage about fiscal discipline when the Harper government routinely ran up deficits that ran for nearly a decade?

• (1900)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, we all remember the years when we had a government that was spending but at the same time did not necessarily have the back of Canadians.

We understand that, in times like this, what we want to do is be there to support Canadians with programs. I can think, for example, of the dental care program. I can think of the programs we have put in place with respect to social security. I can think of the program we did for child care and early learning in this country. Those are the kinds of programs that are part of the fabric of this country, and I know that Canadians watching at home are very attached to these programs.

If we look at the main estimates, we see that a good part of the amounts refer to transfers that would be done to provinces and territories and that also support great services for Canadians.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Chair, can the minister tell the House how building one Canadian economy, versus 13 Canadian economies, will benefit productivity across our country?

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Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, this is probably the most important question tonight. I do not want to pre-judge the rest, but honestly, once we have one Canadian economy, as I have heard economists repeating time and time again, it is going to unlock GDP growth in this country.

I want to praise the Prime Minister and the premiers across this country, because they came together very recently to say we need to build this country, we need to act as one, we need to make sure that we have one assessment and one project, and we need to make sure that we move to faster approval of projects so we can work together as one nation. This is the time to build. This is the time to be ambitious. This is the time to build the resilient Canada that we all hope for.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Chair, could the minister talk just briefly about the benefit of the middle-class tax cut that is in Bill C-4?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, very briefly, it would be great. What can I say? It would be great for Canadians, and even the Conservatives are smiling tonight. What more can we ask for?

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Chair, I salute my colleagues in the official opposition.

I also want to salute the minister. We did not have a chance to talk, and we were not supposed to. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his election.

In early January, the incentive program for zero-emission vehicles was suspended. We were told that there was a lack of funding. People in Quebec who bought an electric vehicle could no longer get the federal credit.

As a result, dealerships, most of which are SMEs and many of which are located in my riding, have to pay \$700,000, \$800,000, \$900,000 and even \$1 million. Dealership associations told us that the minister had personally committed to budget the funds in order to repay the subsidy advances made to customers.

Does the minister remember that commitment?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would first like to congratulate my colleague from Mirabel on his election. He is a colleague whom I have always enjoyed working with. He is a colleague who is always there to advance the interests of Quebec and his constituents. We always enjoy working together.

My colleague will know that we have made major investments in Quebec. We brought Quebec into the automotive industry when I was the industry minister. This is a major achievement that we accomplished with our counterparts in the Quebec government, because we knew that Quebec had to play a role in the automotive industry. We will continue to fight to ensure that Quebec can be part of this great electric vehicle supply chain in this country.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, does the minister remember the commitment that he made to dealers to provide the necessary funds to reimburse these amounts?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I have had several discussions with the automotive sector in Quebec and Canada. The stakeholders know that I have always worked hand in hand with them, which has allowed us to attract record investments.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, has the minister provided the funds to reimburse these people?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, as I said, we are proud of what we have achieved together, and we will always be there for the auto industry, in both provinces.

• (1905)

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, 70% of electric vehicles in Canada are sold in Quebec.

Does the minister acknowledge this statistic?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I am very proud of that. I am a proud Quebecker, and I am pleased to see that Quebecers have chosen electric vehicles. That is why we will continue to invest in the battery industry.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, can the minister tell us how much of the unreimbursed funds are owed to Quebecers?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, what I can say is that we have been there. Let us remember the major projects that we have undertaken. I would invite the member for Mirabel to come and visit Bécancour, in my riding. He will be proud to see what we have managed to build together.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, he was unable to secure the funding that he promised.

Does the minister believe that he owes money to these dealers?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the dealers know me well and they appreciate the work that we have done because they know that Quebec is now part of the automotive industry. We are always ready to look at what more we can do together.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, with regard to carbon pricing, eight provinces had a federal tax.

Does the minister acknowledge that cheques to individuals and families were sent out before the tax was collected?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the member for Mirabel is very experienced. He knows very well how the carbon pricing system worked. I do not think that I can add anything to what he knows already. He knows the facts quite well.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, the member for Mirabel has enough experience to know that the minister is playing for time.

Can the minister tell us whether the cheques were sent out before the tax was collected?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, as I said, I have a lot of respect for the member for Mirabel. I am not here to tell him things that he already knows.

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Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, the minister does not have enough respect for the member for Mirabel to answer the question. Perhaps he does not know his file.

Were the cheques sent out before the tax was collected?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I have the utmost respect for the member for Mirabel, but he honestly knows the answer to his question. I do not want to add anything to his knowledge. He is very familiar with the file.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, I am a very humble man. I insist.

Could the minister add anything to my knowledge?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I come from Shawinigan and I do not presume to try to explain to an hon. member from Mirabel things he already knows.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, with all due respect, I think that is what the minister is presuming.

Were these carbon tax rebate cheques that were sent out in the middle of an election to buy votes in eight provinces delivered without the tax that funded them being collected?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the answer is no.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, it took a lot of energy to get the opposite of the truth. I thank the minister. He is very good at that.

When the minister does the accounting reform, he is going to separate the capital and operating accounts.

What part of the budget is he going to exclude from the calculation of the operating deficit?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, transparency is one of the values that we all defend as Canadians. Every member of the House stands up for these values as well.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, the minister told us that this type of accounting is used in the United Kingdom. I would like him to confirm that.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I do not need to confirm what is being done in the United Kingdom. It is public information.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, so says the person who confirmed it earlier. Could the minister tell us what percentage of public capital held by governments in Canada is held by the federal government?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, this is public data that the member for Mirabel, who is very experienced in doing his own research, is free to access.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, it is approximately 4%. I do not think the minister has the numbers at hand. We will do him a favour.

Can the minister tell us which level of government in the United Kingdom manages hospitals?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, it is common knowledge that the United Kingdom is a unitary state.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, I got an answer. I will mark my calendar.

Can the minister confirm which level of government in the U.K. is responsible for education?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I would never claim to be an expert in British law, but I know that it is a unitary country. We recently welcomed King Charles III, who was here with us for the Speech from the Throne. I think that my colleague was very pleased to be able to listen to the Speech from the Throne.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, are we to understand that once the accounting is reformed, and we are told that the model is the United Kingdom, a country that has a different model of government than ours, all the transfers to the provinces will count as operating expenses instead of capital expenses?

• (1910)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, my colleague will have to wait for the budget to be tabled. I know that he is looking forward to it. It is coming in the fall. When fall arrives, he will be very happy to see a budget that will build a strong and ambitious Canada.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, indeed, we look forward to having a budget. We have said that several times.

Does the minister agree that if health transfers are counted as operating expenses, the transfers to the provinces will artificially run up the deficit?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, for the people of Mirabel and Saint-Maurice-Champlain who are tuning in, I am going to keep this simple. People at home understand that when they go to the grocery store, they are spending money, and when they buy a house, they are investing money. People at home understand the difference in no uncertain terms. We will be extremely transparent about the accounting rules we apply.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, do the estimates account for the government's election campaign promise to reduce the size of the public service?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I want to take this opportunity to thank all the public servants here with us this evening. They are doing a tremendous job. What we said was that we are going to be responsible. The Prime Minister has already spoken on this issue. We deeply appreciate the work of the public service, but at the same time, we want to make a service—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Mirabel.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, can the minister tell us by how much consultants' fees are increasing, in the estimates?

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Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, we have tried to reduce the use of consultants and focus on the ample expertise and experience available to us within the Canadian public service.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, can the minister tell us by how much the government is going to reduce spending on civil servants compared to what was expected? By how much is it going to increase spending on consultants?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, let us look at the numbers. I know he is eager to get to that. Ninety-nine percent of the content in the Department of Finance estimates is statutory spending. Only 1% is operating expenditures for the Department of Finance. That accounts for over \$200 million. That is a direct transfer to Newfoundland and Labrador for the Hibernia project.

I am sure my colleague is happy about getting into the numbers.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, I will ask the question again. I would just like to know how much of an increase there is with respect to the planned expenditures on consultants.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the goal is to reduce them, not increase them. We will therefore continue to work together, particularly with our colleagues in the public service, to be as efficient as possible and to provide Canadian citizens with the best possible services.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, the Income Tax Act has been under the minister's purview since the early 1960s. The Income Tax Act provides that Canadian advertising expenses incurred in foreign media are not deductible for income tax purposes. However, the act is extremely outdated. Today, we have companies that are deducting costs incurred for advertising with foreign web giants, specifically the big American groups that we are trying to avoid and that are often at the heart of the disinformation campaigns we are seeing today in our democracies.

Does the minister intend to reform the Income Tax Act to ensure that these tax deductions are no longer accepted?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I thank the member for Mirabel. I really appreciate his question, because this is one of the issues I have discussed with various industry representatives. Like me and my colleagues on the other side, we all want to promote national, local and regional media.

Yes, this issue is very important to me. I sincerely thank him for this question, because it is an issue that concerns me personally, specifically how we can support local media here in Canada and ensure their prosperity. Yes, we are looking at that.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, I would like to point out that since 2018, approximately 40 daily newspapers, 400 community newspapers, 42 radio stations and 11 television stations have disappeared in Canada. Their revenues have partly gone to web giants like GAFAM. The government has done nothing and has ignored the industry's demands.

I would like to know how much this tax expenditure costs the government every year. I am talking about the tax credits Canadians get to then send their money to Americans who contribute to disinformation.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, on the contrary, I am very much in tune with the various stakeholders in the sector. I would like to point out that my colleague may be open to the idea of having a parliamentary committee look into this issue and advise us. I am very interested in his question. I will continue to talk to the industry. We will work hand in hand.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, I would like the minister to tell me whether he needs a parliamentary committee to provide me with the value of the tax expenditure associated with these tax credits. Is he able to obtain that figure for us?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I was reaching out to the Bloc Québécois. What more can they ask of someone than to reach out to them to move forward on taxation in this country?

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, the minister's problem is that he is reaching out instead of providing figures. I am asking him for the value of a tax credit. How much do Canadians pay annually in tax credits, in money that goes directly to American web giants like GAFAM that contribute to disinformation in our democracy?

• (1915)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, as I have already said, we want to do more with regional and local media. It is a concern, as I said.

The member should be happy. I am answering his question by going to the heart of it. I am saying that I am concerned about this issue. I have talked to people in the industry. It is a cordial question. I am even reaching out to the member so that he can make suggestions to the Standing Committee on Finance to move the issue forward. It is something that is near and dear to my heart.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, I would like to know how much revenue will be collected as a result of the retaliatory tariffs against the United States during the current fiscal year, the government's fiscal year.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the member for Mirabel knows things. What we want is to avoid having tariffs. To date, we have already collected \$1.7 billion, but the end goal is to have no tariffs. That way, there will be no retaliatory measures against the tariffs imposed by the United States. We will always be there to defend industry.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, what the minister is saying would be true if, during the election campaign, the government had not included \$20 billion from retaliatory tariffs against the United States in its financial platform to fund operating expenses.

The "Fiscal Monitor" shows us that, as of March, \$600 million in retaliatory measures against U.S. tariffs had been collected. If we multiply that by 12, it is just under \$8 billion. Since then, the government has suspended certain measures. How is it going to get to \$20 billion?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, my colleague knows full well that things move quickly where tariffs are concerned. That is why I told him that we had already collected \$1.7 billion.

We want to be clear that our objective is to fight for an end to tariffs. Then there would be no need for retaliatory measures. My colleague understands that well. That is why we said we would reinvest everything we collect in defending our workers and our industries.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, can the minister confirm for me that the Liberal campaign platform proposed to use this \$20 billion for operating expenses, not for ad hoc programs to help workers and businesses?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I am pleased to see that my Bloc Québécois colleague has spent enough time reading the Liberal platform for it to inspire him. I encourage him to continue his reading.

Clearly, what we said was that we were going to fight these tariffs, protect our industry workers and build a strong Canada.

Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Chair, the minister says it is false that a large part of the retaliatory measures against the U.S. tariffs have been suspended. Contrary to what Oxford Economics says, the Department of Finance has not submitted any documents and there is no evidence to support its claim.

Does the minister think that publicly squabbling with consulting firms that are trying to help their clients contributes to predictability and a good business climate in Canada?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, it is common knowledge that we have retaliatory measures in place against the tariffs imposed by the United States targeting \$95 billion worth of imported goods. I know my colleague, in his heart, wants to support us in fighting against these U.S. tariffs so we can protect our industries and, at the same time, build a strong Canada together.

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Chair, as this is my first time rising for a speech in this House, I would like to take a moment to thank my incredible team of volunteers, my family and, of course, the residents of Brampton East for their support and for putting their trust in me to serve them here in Ottawa. I would also like to take a moment to congratulate all members of this House on their recent election wins. I look forward to working across party lines as we support Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Prior to politics, I spent 13 years facilitating international trade with businesses across Canada, and I have seen first-hand the impacts that international trade can have on jobs in communities across Canada. The four years I have spent at Global Affairs Canada have strengthened my relationships with international partners as I take on this new role as Canada's Minister of International Trade. It was truly the honour of a lifetime to be appointed to this new role a few weeks back, and I am grateful to the Prime Minister for his trust in me in this vital role, especially at a time of great uncertainty in global trade.

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First and foremost, I want to assure members of the House that this new government stands ready to defend Canada's interests. We will do what is best for Canadians and we will do what is best for the Canadian economy. That means supporting businesses and jobs here in Canada across various sectors as they expand into new markets around the world. We have what the world needs.

This commitment extends to Canada's international trade agenda. Canada is very fortunate to have 15 trade agreements with over 50 countries around the world, giving us access to over 1.5 billion consumers.

The new government will take a bold and ambitious approach to meet the needs of the moment, while remaining clear-eyed about our objectives for resilient growth. Establishing a new economic relationship with the United States is a priority. The United States is Canada's top export market, and Canada is a top destination for U.S. exports. A renewed framework for strong trade and commercial partnership is vital to prosperity on both sides of the border, and I look forward to supporting my colleague Minister LeBlanc as he advances discussions on this with our American counterparts.

• (1920)

The Deputy Chair: The member knows not to use any names.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, I look forward to working with the Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade as he advances discussions on this with our American counterparts.

At the same time, Canada is ready to strengthen our trading relationships overseas, especially with partners who share our commitment to rules-based trade. Trade diversification is not just about avoiding the risks that come from relying too much on certain markets. It is also about helping us reach our full potential and positioning ourselves for success in tomorrow's global economy.

Take, for example, the Indo-Pacific region. This region includes nations such as Brunei, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia and many others. The Indo-Pacific is home to over four billion people and \$47 trillion in economic activity. It is the world's fastest-growing region and home to six of Canada's top 13 trading partners. As a country, we cannot afford to forego opportunities for growth in overseas markets around the world.

Canada remains committed to pursuing an ambitious trade agenda that opens new doors for our businesses and workers. Our new government will pursue trade agreements with the potential to open new opportunities and new markets for Canadian companies. These markets will give Canadian businesses opportunities to grow and succeed around the world.

Business of Supply

We will continue to push forward with negotiations for a free trade agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. This is a dynamic group of 10 countries representing more than 600 million people. For Canadian businesses, that means access to a vast and growing market, with opportunities across a wide range of sectors. Canada's trade and investment in Southeast Asia are expanding quickly across many sectors, including in natural resources, clean technologies, agriculture and agri-food, information and communication technologies, financial services, aerospace infrastructure and consumer goods.

In addition, late last year, Canada concluded negotiations toward the Canada-Indonesia comprehensive economic partnership agreement, better known as CEPA. Indonesia is a fast-growing economy, and this agreement will put Canadian companies in a strong position to compete and succeed as Indonesia continues to grow. We look forward to bringing these new partnerships into force soon.

We will also look to strengthen our relationships with European partners. The Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, also known as CETA, the free trade agreement in place between Canada and Europe, has already accelerated trade and investment between us and the European Union. We will keep working to further strengthen these transatlantic ties and ensure more opportunities for Canadians.

While we look to expand and sign new agreements, we also must not forget that we have much more room to grow our utilization rates for our current trade agreements. Take, for example, CETA, which I previously mentioned. At this moment, our utilization rate is around 60%, and we can get that much higher. That tells us there are opportunities out there for growth, and I will sharply focus on showcasing Canadian expertise in multiple sectors in the region. They include agriculture, fishing, food products, consumer goods, energy, defence and aerospace.

Building these international connections is key to expanding our reach and realizing the full benefits of these agreements. That is why it was a great privilege for me to represent Canada in Ecuador at the inauguration of President Noboa just a couple of weeks ago. While there, I focused on strengthening the relationships that will help both our countries implement and benefit from the free trade agreement we negotiated and concluded recently. I also had the opportunity to connect with regional leaders to strengthen ties between our respective nations.

Our new government will ensure that Canadian companies are well supported as they pursue new opportunities in overseas markets, including those created by Canada's free trade agreements. Team Canada trade missions will be a part of this effort. In recent times, trade missions have introduced nearly 800 Canadian organizations to new partners and opportunities in nine Indo-Pacific markets. They have generated over 4,000 business meetings, and they have led to concrete outcomes for Canadian companies, many of which I visited.

I would like to congratulate Canada's chief trade commissioner on leading the most recent team Canada trade mission to Thailand and Cambodia in May. This was an opportunity to showcase Canadian innovation and capabilities in fast-growing markets. In seeking out new opportunities overseas, Canadian businesses will be able to

count on the support of Canada's trade commissioner service. Based in over 160 locations, Canada's trade commissioners provide tailored and practical advice to help businesses make the best decisions in their international business development.

The trade commissioner service has offices all over Canada and the world, connecting real Canadian businesses with opportunities in other markets. This navigation is crucial to breaking down trade barriers for these businesses. Over 98% of businesses in Canada are small businesses, and we need to do whatever we can to support them.

● (1925)

In terms of impact, I will let the numbers for last year speak for themselves. The trade commissioner service served over 10,000 Canadian clients. Let me highlight the fact that 80% of the services were for markets outside of North America. The trade commissioner service facilitated 1,300 business deals. Clients estimate the value of these deals to be over \$6 billion. What is more is that the trade commissioner service boasts a client satisfaction rate of over 90%. The trade commissioner service also administers the CanExport program, which includes about \$38 million approved last year to help over 1,700 small and mid-sized businesses enter new export markets.

The new government will ensure that the trade commissioner service has the right tools and resources to continue providing effective support to Canadian companies as they look to diversify abroad. Trade diversification also means helping under-represented groups such as women, youth, indigenous peoples, visible minorities and 2SLGBTQ2+ entrepreneurs reach new markets. Canada's trade commissioner service is there to support members of these groups along their export journey, in collaboration with EDC and other partners.

The new government will also provide the necessary policy direction to other partners in the trade portfolio. This includes Canada's export credit agency, Export Development Canada, better known as EDC. I am also pleased to report that EDC is continuing to help drive Canada's diversification. The corporation served over 1,500 customers and facilitated \$13 billion in business in the Indo-Pacific region, just last year. EDC has also opened new representation in Japan, Vietnam and Philippines and served over 1,500 clients, as I said, with \$13 billion in trade in the Indo-Pacific.

Business of Supply

The new government is committed to supporting businesses in expanding and diversifying their trade in markets around the world. Fortunately, we have a real advantage. I know that Canada is home to some of the most driven and competitive entrepreneurs, innovators and workers on the planet. Every day, they are out there building, creating and pushing themselves in new directions. That is why this government will make sure that we do everything possible to help them realize their full potential on the global stage by building up new opportunities and encouraging trade diversification.

I would also like to take a moment to thank all of the officials, including my deputy minister, for all their support in making sure that businesses are able to diversify trade. Together, we can make Canada the G7-leading economy.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would like to take the time to congratulate the minister for his new role. As someone who has worked with him on the Canada-Africa file, it is very nice to see the role that he is taking in advancing trade for Canada.

I have some questions for the minister. As the Prime Minister received a mandate to make sure that we can establish new trading partners around the world and build new economic and security relationships, can the minister tell this House how free trade agreements come to fruition and how we can create well-paying jobs both here in Canada and abroad through trade missions?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, that is a very important question around trade agreements and why they are important to our economy.

Currently, Canada has 15 trade agreements, opening access to over 50 countries and 1.5 billion consumers. When we sign a trade agreement, it is not only about trade; it is also about investments, so that sends a clear signal to Canadian investors and Canadian expertise to create jobs in communities across Canada. It is very important to note how many trade agreements we have and how much more room we have to grow those trade agreements.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Chair, I appreciate the minister's answer. As I said earlier, I have had the opportunity to work with him on different files, including the Canada-Africa file. I know that the minister has extensive experience as a parliamentarian as the parliamentary secretary for trade in the past.

I just want him to talk about what is the importance of the role of engaging all parliamentarians in advancing trade and how they can also bring that back home to their communities and engage with stakeholders in that way.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, that is a very important question from my colleague.

Canada is very lucky to have a diverse group of citizens from all around the world who help bring relationships together. In my community of Brampton, we have a growing African diaspora, including Kenyans and those from Nigeria, who are coming together and really pushing trade.

I was actually in Kenya last year, where we talked about some of the relationships that we can grow and some of the opportunities around clean technology and sustainable energy. The diaspora across Canada, from different regions around the world, plays an

important role in bringing trade together and really expanding our relationships.

• (1930)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Chair, part of the minister's mandate is also to find new partners amidst these unjustified and illegal U.S. tariffs that we have experienced as a country. I saw that the minister was recently in Ecuador to participate in the inauguration of the president. Maybe the minister can expand on why that was important and how creating that corridor of conversations and discussion could actually lead to good-paying jobs in Canada and Ecuador as well.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, I got sworn in, and in my very first week we were running out the door and making sure we are representing this country really well. I attended the inauguration of President Noboa. Ecuador is an important market for us, roughly 20 million people. We have marked the conclusion of negotiations on a trade agreement that will be coming to Parliament for ratification very soon.

There are regional partners we want to work with, so it was important for me to attend that inauguration to connect with regional leaders. We know, especially when we talk about Mercosur and our mandate letter, that there are many opportunities in the region that we want to continue to grow.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Chair, the minister mentioned earlier that he has four years' experience with Global Affairs Canada. He was a parliamentarian before he became a minister, and he knows, through his mandate, how important it is to work with all members of this House.

The minister was elected under the same mandate that we were all elected under, and the Prime Minister gave him the mandate of creating new trade partners across Canada. How is he going to engage all of us to make sure that we can go back to our ridings and respond to the mandate that we were given by our electors?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for that very important question about working with all parliamentarians. It is about working with committees. It is about working to grow existing trade relationships, but also creating new ones. In working together, working with ambassadors in this country and working with committees, it is very important that we all play a role, because trade impacts all of our communities. One in six jobs depends on trade.

It is very important that we continue working together as parliamentarians through committees and through our relationships to grow trade.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am very encouraged, as I know the minister is, with regard to the Prime Minister's attitude in terms of ways we can explore trade opportunities. I had the opportunity to actually visit the Philippines last year, in 2024, on two separate occasions. One was to open up an agri-food office and the other was a trade mission.

Business of Supply

One of the biggest advantages Canada has is its diversity, and the Philippines is a great example of that. I wonder if the minister could provide his thoughts on how we can explore opportunities for trade abroad.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Yes, Madam Chair, the Philippines provides ample opportunities. Earlier today, I met with leaders from the agriculture sector who talked about the agriculture office that we opened in Manila, Philippines, and the type of opportunities that office is providing. Now we see more of our beef going to that region and more of our meat products going to the Philippines.

It is an important region that we want to continue to build on, and of course the Filipino community in Winnipeg plays a crucial role in growing those relationships.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Chair, does the minister know how many Ontarians regularly used a food bank in 2015?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Chair, the member would appreciate that by reducing taxes, we are helping all Canadians. The measure we just announced will help 22 million Canadians.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has to indicate how he will be sharing his time.

Kyle Seeback: Madam Chair, I am splitting my time three ways.

The answer is, 353,000 Ontarians regularly used the food bank in 2015.

How many Ontarians are regularly using the food bank as of today?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, my colleague will be pleased to learn that the tax cut we have offered is going to help 22 million Canadians, and obviously a number of Ontarians. I am happy he voted in favour of that particular—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

• (1935)

Kyle Seeback: Madam Chair, the answer to that question is one million.

Over a decade of your government, you being a minister, the number of people in Ontario who regularly use a food bank has tripled. It has gone up by almost 700,000. Will you apologize to those 700,000 Ontarians who now must go to a food bank to put food on their table as a result of your government?

The Deputy Chair: I would remind the hon. member to speak through the Chair and not directly to another member.

The hon. minister.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, in terms of apology, I think the member should apologize to all Canadians for having voted against every measure that would support Canadians. Whether it was about child care, dental care or any program that helps Canadians, the member voted against it. That is not exactly good.

Kyle Seeback: Madam Chair, I find the minister's indifference to the one million Ontarians regularly using a food bank to feed their families, quite frankly, disgusting.

How many Ontarians were full-time employed and went to the food bank in 2015?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, one thing every member in the House should be careful about is being authentic. When members vote against measures that help the people they represent, they cannot stand in the House and moralize to other members.

The member has voted against measures to help Canadians, and he knows that very well.

Kyle Seeback: Madam Chair, if the minister does not know the answer to the question, he can just say it. We are talking about people who have to go to a food bank. That is the Liberals' track record. The answer is 8%.

How many Canadians using a food bank regularly in 2025 are full-time employed as opposed to in 2015?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I am sure people watching at home tonight are wondering, "What is the member going to tell the people who are using the food bank about why he voted against programs that would help them?" That is really the question people watching at home are asking tonight.

Kyle Seeback: Madam Chair, these programs were in place for the last 10 years. These programs have been in place, yet the numbers at food banks keep rising. The minister knows the number of people using food banks now who are employed full-time is 25%. It has also tripled after 10 years of the Liberal government.

Will the member apologize to those people who are employed full-time and now must go to a food bank to feed their families?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, would the member apologize to the children of Canada, including the children in his riding, for voting against a food program for children?

When we make an allegation in this House, we have to be careful of the answer. He voted against a program to help children.

Kyle Seeback: Madam Chair, one in three people regularly using food banks in Ontario is a child. Your programs do not work.

Minister, you said in 2023 that you were going to make grocery prices—

The Deputy Chair: Can I remind the hon. member to speak through the Chair, please?

Kyle Seeback: Madam Chair, the minister said in 2023 that he was going to work hard at making groceries more affordable. Did grocery prices go up or down after he made that statement?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I have a lot of respect for the member, but why did he vote against a national school food program for children? That is the question people are asking tonight. If he wants to go with this line of questioning, I am happy to answer, but people—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Kyle Seeback: Madam Chair, the minister knows that grocery prices have gone up every single month since he made that statement.

He either misled Canadians or was completely incompetent in his job to bring down grocery prices. Which one was it?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, again, I do not want to go down this line of questioning with the member, because he is an honourable member, but why did he vote against a program to support children, the national child care program?

If the member wants to go down that line of questioning, he has to be able to take the heat from his constituents, who are going to ask, “Why did he vote against the program?”

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Madam Chair, the minister prepared a spending plan, but he did not make the time to prepare a plan for how he was going to pay for it. Why is that?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Chair, can I take the opportunity to welcome the member to the House? I will be happy to answer all her questions, but first I think she deserves to be welcomed in the House. We are delighted to have her with us tonight.

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, many thanks for that. I do request an answer, though.

Why did the minister make the time to prepare a spending plan but not a plan for how he was going to pay for it?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, my colleague will be pleased to see that in the main estimates for Finance Canada, 99% of the funds requested are for statutory programs. Only 1% of it is for the operation of Finance Canada.

● (1940)

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, for 60 years, governments have tabled budgets in the spring. Why can the minister not do the same?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, since 1994, five budgets have been tabled after the fiscal year began, and a number of times it has been under a Conservative government.

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, does the minister not have the will to prepare a budget this spring?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, not only do I have the will, but I have the desire to present a great budget for Canadians that the member can be proud of and set in her own jurisdiction and her own riding.

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, if the minister has the will, does he not have the time, then, to prepare it?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I know the member is anxious to present it to her constituents. It is going to be a great budget. We are going to build Canada strong. We are the true north, strong and free.

Business of Supply

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, if the budget will be so great, why is the minister afraid of tabling it this spring?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I know the member is eager to present it to her constituents and have her constituents look at this great budget, but she will have to wait just a bit longer. It is going to be great, and she is going to be proud of the budget.

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, there is an affordability crisis. People are going hungry, and they are going to the food bank. The hunger and the affordability crisis are not going to wait until the fall. We need a budget this spring. Why is the minister forcing Canadians to wait?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the Liberals did not wait. The first thing we did in this House, which the member voted in favour of, was a ways and means motion to reduce taxes for 22 million Canadians. She should be proud. She can put that in her householder to inform all her constituents that she voted—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, the measure was going to reduce taxes by \$800, but the cost of food is also going up by \$800: \$800 minus \$800 equals zero. Canadians are not going to be better off.

Will the minister please deliver a budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, humility in politics is the best thing someone can have. I do not want to correct the member, but in fact the member should know that people in her riding can save up to \$840 for a family with two incomes. This is great news, and I am sure she is going to put that in her householder.

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, we are talking about a difference of \$40, but I have another question.

If single mothers can budget to feed their kids, why can the minister not budget to run this country?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I am sure the member will appreciate that the government's first order of business was to reduce taxes for 22 million Canadians. There are people in her riding watching tonight, and they will be happy to see that she voted to reduce their taxes and support the Liberal government.

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, we are talking about the respect for taxpayers' dollars. I have a scenario, an example, for the minister.

Business of Supply

Will the minister hand me \$486,000 today if I give him a list of the investments I am going to make but I cannot tell him how I am going to pay him until the fall?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the member should take comfort that the first measure passed by this government in this House was a tax cut for the middle class. I know this is good for her because she is going to be able to go to her riding and say she voted in favour of a great Liberal proposal to reduce taxes for 22 million Canadians.

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, it sounds like the answer is no, so why is the minister asking Canadians for a blank cheque for his spending?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, again, the member should be very happy because the first order of business was to reduce taxes for people. That is what Canadians care about. It is up to \$840 for a family with two incomes. This is great news for people in her riding.

Sandra Cobena: Madam Chair, does the minister actually think it is right to show the deficit after the money is spent?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, a great thing, which is responsible, is to cut taxes as quickly as possible for Canadians. They need a break, and the Liberals are there for them.

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Chair, I am very pleased to be able to speak with my colleague on the government side.

From 2014 to 2015, it took 42 days for the former Quebec finance minister, who is now the member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, to present a budget.

My question is simple. Did the minister have a good conversation with his colleague about how to prepare a budget in 42 days?

● (1945)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to thank my colleague for mentioning my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

I had an excellent dinner with my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin. We had a great discussion about budgetary measures. We are going to continue in that vein because I know my colleague is eager to see the budget. He will have to wait just a little longer, but he will be so proud. He will be able to tell everyone in his riding about it.

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Chair, can the minister give us a date?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, even better, I specified the period during which we would table the government's next budget. I know that he is looking forward to talking about it to the people in his riding. It is coming this fall. He will be proud. It is a budget that will build Canada. I see in his smile that he is looking forward to building Canada.

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Chair, if the minister is working so hard, it must be because he wants a balanced budget. His colleague, Quebec's former finance minister, now the member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, said that balancing the budget is not an obsession, but rather an obligation.

I asked him the question earlier. I would like to know what the minister thinks about it.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I find there is a lot of wisdom in the words spoken by the member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin. That is why, as my colleague saw, we said during the election campaign that we would balance the government's operating budget within the next three years. That is good news.

I can already see it in my colleague's smile that he is pleased to see that he could speak to the people in his riding about a balanced budget within the next three years.

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Chair, I would like the minister to tell us in all honesty this evening that he is waiting until the fall to present the budget because it will be a catastrophic budget with a historic deficit.

Is that the real reason why he is waiting until the fall?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, that is not the case at all. On the contrary, Canadians will be proud of this budget.

My colleague must know that there is a great deal of economic uncertainty at the moment. Major decisions need to be made between now and then. I know he is impatient and looking forward to reading this document. He is going to have to wait just a little longer, but he will be so proud. He will be able to talk about it for—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Chair, if there is one thing I am certain of today, it is that I would be very surprised if I ended up being proud of the budget that will be presented.

The fiscal year began on April 1. That was over two months ago. The minister is going to wait another four months before presenting his plan.

Can he at least tell Canadians how much revenue has been collected since April 1?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, it is even more important to tell Canadians that they are going to get an income tax break. Some 22 million Canadians will be eligible for it, including people in Richmond—Arthabaska. I know several of them. They are people who keep up with current events. They will have seen that their tax cut starts on July 1. That is important.

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Chair, with all due respect, I was not talking to the minister about the tax cut, but about the revenues collected by the government since April 1, 2025.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, let me remind my colleague that he can find that information among the figures published in the "Fiscal Monitor" for the period from April 2024 to March 2025; the figure given is \$495 billion.

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Chair, what is the projected deficit for 2025-26?

Business of Supply

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, once again, my colleague, who is very experienced, can look in the “Fiscal Monitor” for the period from April 2024 to March 2025 and he will see the deficit is listed as \$43.2 billion.

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Chair, I am asking to know the projected deficit for 2025-26.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I know my colleague is eager to hear the numbers, I can see it in his eyes, but he will have to wait a little longer. He will get them when we present a budget in the fall.

I can say that he will be proud to present the people of Richmond—Arthabaska with an ambitious budget that will build Canada. I know he wants to build Canada too, because I know him.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Dieppe, Lib.): Madam Chair, let me begin by thanking you for the opportunity to speak this evening before the committee of the whole. I would like to use my time today to describe some of the ways that our government can maximize investments to stimulate growth and produce positive results for our country.

The main estimates tabled in May outline priority investments in housing, the Canadian Armed Forces, indigenous communities, dental care, border services and veterans' benefits. They also include transfer payments to the provinces and territories, such as payments for health care and payments to individuals, like benefits for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Today I will highlight some of these important investments that our government believes will have a lasting impact. The federal government provides significant ongoing financial support to provincial and territorial governments to help them deliver programs and services through four main transfer programs. The largest overall federal transfer is the Canada health transfer, which has increased by \$2.6 billion for 2025-26. This will provide predictable long-term funding for health care and supports the principle of the Canada Health Act.

This important federal transfer is provided to the provinces and territories to support health care. It increases every year based on a three-year moving average of nominal gross domestic product growth, with guaranteed funding that will increase by at least 5% per year until 2027-28, and 3% per year thereafter. We all know that a strong and effective health care system is essential to a strong and healthy Canada. We need to work together to improve health care for all Canadians.

The second-largest overall federal transfer to the provinces and territories is the fiscal equalization program. This important program ensures that less prosperous provinces have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation, thereby reducing fiscal disparities between the provinces. Total equalization payments increase each year based on a three-year moving average of nominal GDP growth. The \$917-million increase reflects the 3.6% escalator based on GDP for 2024-25.

The Canada social transfer, or CST, is the third-largest federal transfer to the provinces and territories. It supports three broad areas of social programs: post-secondary education, social assistance

and social services, as well as early childhood development, early learning and child care. The 2025-26 main estimates increase the CST by just over \$507 million, reflecting the 3% annual growth rate provided for in the legislation.

The fourth federal transfer is made through the territorial formula financing, which enables territorial governments to provide their residents with programs and services comparable to those provided in the rest of Canada, at comparable levels of taxation, taking into account the higher costs of services and the unique circumstances of the north. The \$330-million increase reflects the indexation of the program, which is based on total provincial, local and territorial government spending, adjusted to account for differences in population growth and changes in revenue-raising capacity in the program formula set out in the legislation.

This important program helps territorial governments fund essential public services such as hospitals, schools, infrastructure and social services, and recognizes the high cost of public services in the north and the challenges territorial governments face in delivering services to many people in small, often very isolated communities.

• (1950)

In these uncertain times, it is especially important that we invest in major national interest infrastructure projects to help make Canada an energy superpower. We want the government to become that superpower. The federal government can provide the Canada Infrastructure Bank, or CIB, with up to \$35 billion to support infrastructure projects across the country.

The CIB focuses on priority areas of investment, including public transit, green infrastructure, clean energy, broadband access, and trade and transportation. The \$26.1-million increase reflects payments made to the CIB to carry out approved activities outlined in its 2024-25 to 2028-29 corporate plan.

In addition, we are committed to expanding the types of projects the CIB can support to be more aligned with first nations, Inuit and Métis priorities, because we know that efforts to build a strong Canada must include all indigenous communities.

Business of Supply

In addition to the important investments we are making at home, we are committed to remaining united with our allies and partners to support Ukraine as it fights for its freedom and security. The \$200-million payment to the World Bank Group's financial intermediary fund in support of Ukraine is part of Canada's contribution through the G7 leaders' Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration Loan initiative, which will be used to support projects, programs and activities that meet Ukraine's budget, recovery and reconstruction needs.

In conclusion, the measures in the main estimates that have been put forward today are a very important part of the government's commitment to transparency and the responsible use of public funds to produce results for Canadians.

After the election, not so long ago, we took immediate action to support Canadians. This includes building a more affordable Canada by cutting the goods and services tax, or GST, on new homes up to \$1 million for first-time homebuyers to help them save up to \$50,000, by lowering the GST on new homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million, and by providing tax relief to nearly 22 million middle-class Canadians. Finally, it means that millions of Canadian workers will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money to build a better future.

Responsible spending is about making prudent investments in the priorities that matter most to Canadians. Canada has the tools it needs to succeed, and we remain committed to working every day to protect our workers, families and businesses. The main estimates clearly describe how the government, our government, is responding to the priorities of Canadians who are taking up challenges and seizing opportunities.

With these important investments, we will help build a stronger Canada from coast to coast to coast.

Again, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak today.

Now, I have a few questions for the Minister of Finance.

First, I want to thank my colleague and friend, the Minister of Finance, who is doing incredible work, hard work, to support Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

• (1955)

Lastly, a key aspect of our government's plan is a tax cut for nearly 22 million Canadians from one end of the country to the other.

I wonder if the Minister of Finance could explain to the committee the importance of this tax cut.

• (2000)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for her excellent speech.

She truly gave us an overview of all the measures. She is an experienced colleague who has been serving the people of New Brunswick for a long time. I understand why the people of New Brunswick are proud to have her as their MP. She truly presented all the important things. She talked about the transfers we deliver to the provinces. She talked about the transfers we deliver to individu-

als. She also talked about national interest projects. She truly gave us a terrific economic overview of what is happening in Canada.

She mentioned several things, but one thing really stands out. She talked about the tax cut for Canadians. Twenty-two million Canadians are going to benefit from it. I even see some of my Conservative colleagues smiling. They know that helping 22 million Canadians is important. We are lowering the first bracket from 15% to 14%. This is very important at a time like this, when people—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Moncton—Dieppe.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Madam Chair, I want to thank my hon. colleague, the Minister of Finance, for his work.

In my speech, I mentioned the issue of affordable housing. We recognize that here in Canada, and especially in my riding of Moncton—Dieppe, creating more housing continues to be a top priority.

I wonder if the minister could elaborate further on the importance of the policies we have put forward to create more housing in New Brunswick and across Canada.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I understand why the people of Moncton—Dieppe are so proud to have a representative like my colleague, who speaks up for them here.

She is absolutely right. The motion we moved included a tax cut, but it also included another important measure, namely eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers. This is important because for homes worth up to \$1 million, people can save up to \$50,000. This is the kind of help that young families need when they want to buy their first home.

As my colleague from Moncton—Dieppe is well aware, one of our Liberal values is to help people. I think such a measure is important—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Moncton—Dieppe.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Madam Chair, once again, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his comments and the work he does on an ongoing basis to help Canadians with the whole issue of affordability.

The minister introduced a measure in the House that eliminated the carbon tax for consumers. I was wondering if he could explain to the committee what steps the government is taking to build the strongest economy in the G7 while investing in making that economy clean.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, again, that is a very important question.

My colleague shone a light on all the tax credits we announced to encourage green investment in Canada. She knows as well as I do that we have succeeded in attracting historic investments in the area of electric vehicles, for example. We even managed to expand the electric vehicle supply chain across Canada.

We have important measures. We want to build the strongest economy in the G7. I would say that Canada is a country that attracts a lot of investment because it provides stability, predictability, the rule of law, which is what investors around the world are looking for.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Madam Chair, again, I want to thank my colleague for his comments.

Would he like to comment further on what the federal government is doing to support the middle class as it relates to affordability? What are we doing to help people who often have a hard time making ends meet?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, it is true. We have a major affordability program.

I would like to point out one thing, since I have the Minister of International Trade nearby. I chaired the G7 finance ministers' meeting recently held in Banff. Canada is the envy of the world as the only G7 nation to have a free trade agreement with every other G7 nation. That is quite remarkable. We talked with businesses in New Brunswick about economic diversification and market diversification. That is important.

Once again, I want to thank my colleague from Moncton—Dieppe—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Madam Chair, I would like to thank the minister for his presentation, and we now have an opportunity for dialogue.

It has been exactly 88 days since the minister took over the finance portfolio. Members will recall that, on February 4, his predecessor publicly announced that there would be a budget this spring. On March 14, when the current minister took office, did he tell his officials to continue preparing the budget or to stop that work?

• (2005)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would first like to salute my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk. He has a lot of experience and he knows that I have a great deal of respect for him.

I am pleased to see that he is keeping track of the number of days I have been Minister of Finance. I always learn something from my

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colleague. I just learned that it has been 88 days. I can tell him that I plan to keep on being the finance minister for a long time.

The Deputy Chair: Before we continue, could the hon. member tell us how he will be sharing his time?

Gérard Deltell: Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with two other colleagues. I will only use a third.

The Minister of Finance is very nice, but he did not answer my question. When he took office, did he tell his senior officials to continue preparing the budget or to stop the work?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, an experienced colleague like the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk knows that, when a minister is appointed to a new portfolio, they have several discussions with departmental officials. What I told them was to build—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Gérard Deltell: Madam Chair, once again, I did not get an answer.

Following the first cabinet meeting on May 14, the Minister of Finance publicly announced that there would be no budget this year, but rather an economic update. However, the Prime Minister rebuked him two days later and said that there would be a budget this fall. Did the minister make a mistake, or did the Prime Minister call him to heel?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, that makes me smile. I can tell my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk that the Prime Minister of Canada and I are as close as close can be. We are working together to grow the Canadian economy. We are going to build the strongest economy in the G7, and that will benefit my colleague's constituents. He is very happy; I can see it in his smile this evening.

Gérard Deltell: Madam Chair, I am not smiling when the minister does not give us an answer. What is certain is that the Prime Minister rebuked him.

The government has committed to capping spending at 2%. What is the increase in the consulting budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I am glad to see that my colleague is paying so much attention to Liberal proposals. What we announced was that we would cut the growth in operating spending from 9% to 2%. He saw that in our platform.

Gérard Deltell: Madam Chair, a few hours after the Liberals said that they would cap spending at 2%, we learned that the budget for consultants had increased by 36%. That is not good management.

My colleague has been finance minister for 88 days, but he has been a minister in this government for more than 3,073 days, and this government is responsible for \$500 billion in debt. What is the interest on the debt at this time?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, as I was saying, I am always learning from my colleague. He tells me that it has been 3,073 days. I intend to remain the Minister of Finance for a long time yet, although I can tell him that he knows very well that the figures that he is referring to come from the “Fiscal Monitor”, which looks backward. I am forward-looking.

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Gérard Deltell: Madam Chair, he should have been forward-looking 3,000 days ago instead of increasing the debt of Canadians by \$500 billion.

The minister is also the Minister of Revenue. Did he read Marie-Ève Fournier's article in *La Presse* on May 16?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I do not wish to offend the journalist, but unfortunately I have not had a chance to read that article. However, I am sure that my colleague is about to tell me what it said.

Gérard Deltell: Madam Chair, the newspaper *La Presse* conducted a survey on the current relationship between taxpayers and the revenue department. It appears that things are not going well at all.

When people call to inquire about TFSAs, they are unable to get straight answers. People are complaining that they do not have enough training. Employees feel inadequately prepared to answer questions. What will the minister do to address these urgent needs, which are spelled out in black and white in *La Presse*?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I would first like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who works at the Canada Revenue Agency, particularly those in Shawinigan, in my riding. I can tell you that each and every one of them strives to deliver the best possible service to Canadians. We are looking closely at the concerns raised by my colleague.

[English]

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Madam Chair, it has been seven days since President Trump announced unjustified 50% tariffs on Canadian aluminum and steel. On what date will the trade dispute be resolved?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Chair, first I would like to welcome the member. I think he is a new member, and I want to welcome him to the House. I look forward to answering his questions. I think we are going to be together for another two or three hours.

• (2010)

Michael Guglielmin: The minister did not answer my question, Madam Chair. On what date will the trade dispute be resolved?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, as I said, in the tariff world, things move very quickly. If the member wants to make a prediction, I am sure Canadians are willing to listen to him on—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, will the minister commit to removing the industrial carbon tax on Canadian steel and aluminum producers?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, what I can commit to is working hard for the sector. I have been in touch with the leaders and the unions because we want to fight for the steel and aluminum sector in this country. It is important that we have them to build Canada strong.

Michael Guglielmin: I would like a yes or no, please, Madam Chair.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I will always fight for Canadian workers and Canadian industry.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, will the minister guarantee that industrial carbon pricing will not hurt Canadian steel and aluminum producers, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, what I can guarantee to the member is that I will, like all my colleagues, fight for Canadian industry and Canadian workers, because we need a very strong steel industry to build Canada strong.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, does the minister think it is important to know the fiscal impact of the trade war when budgeting, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I think it is important for the Minister of Finance to know many things when preparing a very ambitious budget that is going to build Canada strong.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, how much will a prolonged trade war with the United States drive up federal expenditures?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I am not in the job of guessing. I will let the member guess in front of Canadian viewers tonight if he wants to make projections.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, does the minister not track and make projections as part of his budgeting process, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, what we are doing is fighting against the tariffs. The best thing for Canadian workers and industry is to have no tariffs. That is what we are fighting for.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, how much are Canadian businesses projected to lose in revenue due to U.S. tariffs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, every member of the House knows that the tariffs are hurting our workers across the nation and our industry. That is why the Prime Minister and my colleagues are seized with fighting against the tariffs.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, U.S. tariffs on the auto sector are still in place. How many Canadian workers have lost their job? I would like just the number, please.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, we have rebuilt the auto sector in many parts of the country, and we are going to continue to work with the leadership and the union—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, how many jobs have been lost?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I can say that the member would see that Canada has been ranked top in class when it comes—

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The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, how many sawmills have been closed due to the ongoing lumber tariffs on softwood lumber?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I am fighting every single day for forestry workers, for steel workers and for auto workers, and they know I have their back. We will keep fighting for them.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, how many jobs have been lost? I would like just the number, please.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, as I said, what folks watching at home want is to have a government that has their back. That—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, the Canadian canola industry is facing 100% tariffs from China and 25% tariffs from the Americans. When will these trade issues be resolved?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is important that we protect the industry. Today I met with representatives of the canola industry, and we talked about tariffs and about markets we can open up. These are discussions that are happening at the highest levels to—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, how many jobs have been lost in the sector, just the number?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, it is important to note that we are working hard to make sure that discussions continue to flow, and President—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Michael Guglielmin: Madam Chair, will the minister apologize to Canadian workers who have lost their job due to the Liberals' inability to resolve these issues?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, as I was saying, the Prime Minister had a discussion with the premier in China. These discussions are ongoing at the highest levels to ensure that we continue to ensure that Canadian companies have—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Calgary East has the floor.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Madam Chair, the Prime Minister, in the throne speech, said that the Liberals would cap government spending at 2%. It took only an hour and a half after that, and when the main estimates were released by the minister, they said that they were going to spend at 8%.

Can the minister confirm that the deficit will not be larger than the \$46.8 billion that was projected in the Liberal platform?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Chair, the member is an experienced member. He would have seen in “The Fiscal Monitor” that the deficit in the budget from April 2024 to March 2025 is at \$43.2 billion.

• (2015)

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, can the minister confirm today that when the budget comes out this fall, it will not be a dollar over that?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I am happy to confirm what the member can read in “The Fiscal Monitor”. The number in “The Fiscal Monitor”, from April 2024 to March 2025, in terms of a budget deficit, is \$43.2 billion.

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, can the minister tell us how much his government will borrow to cover the debt for the new spending?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the member would know that we are very fiscally prudent, and with our team, we are managing the finances of Canada in the way that we are bringing—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, just giving the number, how much will the minister's government borrow this year on the debt?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, my colleague would be pleased, because I know he is a man who likes the numbers, to see that we have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, a great position—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, Desjardins is predicting that the number could be \$600 billion. What will that do to the debt interest cost? Will it go up, or down?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, again, the member will be very pleased to know that there are only two countries in the G7 that have a AAA credit rating and that Canada is one of them. He should be very proud of that.

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, that was not my question. In the FES, the total debt shows as \$1.27 trillion. That means the amount that is going to be borrowed will be half of the total debt that Canada has.

Can the minister confirm whether the debt interest costs in the budget will go up, or down?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, my colleague will be happy to learn that the public debt chart is a percentage of nominal GDP. If he looks at the last few years, more than a decade, he will see it is always around 1.5%. This is going to be—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, this is not very hard. The minister can easily answer. Will debt interest costs this year go up, or down, from what was projected?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the member would be pleased to see that in 2023-24, the percentage of the public debt chart, as a percentage of nominal GDP, was 1.8%. This is a great position to be in as a country—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

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Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, obviously the number must be very bad, because the minister keeps avoiding answering a very simple question. The current Prime Minister is projected to spend more than Justin Trudeau did, by more than \$225 billion over the next five years. How big will the debt servicing costs get, just the number?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, I hope that the member will have seen that this is a new government with a new Prime Minister: a government with ambition, a government that wants to build a Canada strong and a government that is going to build the infrastructure that is going to be needed to be resilient in the economy—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, the Parliamentary Budget Officer is projecting that in year 2029-2030, the debt servicing costs will be \$70 billion. Last year, the debt servicing was more than what goes to health care transfers to the provinces. Can the minister confirm whether, at \$70 billion, that will be more, or less, than what gets transferred to the provinces in health care transfers?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, the member should take comfort in the fact that Canada has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 and has a AAA credit rating. Only Germany and Canada, of the G7 countries, have that rating, so it is a great position to be in.

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, is it fair, according to the minister, that bankers and bondholders are getting more money than what goes to the provinces for health care transfers? Is that compassionate, according to the minister?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, my colleague will be pleased to see that in the estimates that we published, the Canada health transfer will increase by \$2.6 billion. That is going to be important to support—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor for a very brief question.

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Chair, will the amount that goes to the provinces in health care transfers be more, or less, than the debt servicing costs next year?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Chair, my colleague will be happy to learn that in fiscal equalization, we will have an increase of \$916 million, so they are going to be transferred to support—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons has the floor.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am going to speak for 10 minutes and have five minutes of questions this evening.

I want to talk about two issues. It is interesting that this evening we actually have a Prime Minister who made it very clear during the campaign what the priority issues are going to be, and I like to believe that this evening we actually have two ministers who play such critical roles, so I am a bit torn as to which minister I should actually be focusing my questions on. However, it will be the Minister of Finance and National Revenue.

I am talking about two issues in particular. One is the issue of trade. We have a Prime Minister who made it very clear during the whole election campaign that Canadians in every region of the nation had a great deal of concern. The concern was very genuine, and it came primarily from comments President Donald Trump had made. It is all related to the issues of tariffs, trade and the impact these are going to have on Canadians.

I truly believe that Canadians contrasted Pierre Poilievre with the current Prime Minister, and that they felt that the Prime Minister and the types of things he was saying in terms of how we would be able to address the issue, along with his background as a former governor not only of the Bank of Canada but also of the Bank of England, and his being an economist, someone who truly understands how an economy actually works, contrasted with a career politician, Pierre Poilievre. Canadians made the decision to elect a new Prime Minister and a new government.

Look at what the legislative agenda is. In a very short window, the Prime Minister was able to identify a cabinet and the priority issues. We saw that in the ministerial mandate letters—

An hon. member: They are all the same.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Chair, that was very good; they are all the same, which emphasizes what it is that Canadians were saying at the doors, and that is one of the reasons 8.5 million Canadians voted for the Prime Minister and the Liberal candidates throughout the country. The Liberal Party was the only political party to actually get a member elected in every province.

I believe that this evening we have heard from two of the ministers who are playing a very important role. I think of the issue of international trade. In the past 10 years, we have actually had more trade agreements signed off on than in any other administration in the 40 or 50 previous years, and now there is a minister who has really taken charge of what the Prime Minister has said. The Prime Minister wants us to be able to diversify and to look at other countries and how we can increase exports.

That is why I was really encouraged, even in the off-the-cuff question I had for the Minister of International Trade, when I made reference to the Philippines, a country I am very passionate about because I see the potential that is there and match it with some of the things the Prime Minister is talking about. There are many countries we can look at and enhance trading opportunities with. This is actually incorporated into our legislative agenda.

There is also the Minister of Finance and National Revenue, who has done a fantastic job of getting the legislation that is so critically important.

● (2020)

Again, in the last election, what commitment was made? To deal with the issue of affordability, the Prime Minister made it very clear that he wanted to give Canadians a tax break. That is what the Minister of Finance has been working on, bringing forward legislation that not only gives a tax break to 22 million Canadians but also brings in a first-time homebuyer tax break on the first \$1 million for people who are purchasing new homes, thereby helping first-time homebuyers while at the same time encouraging and promoting housing construction.

These are two very important initiatives that complement what the Prime Minister committed to prior to the election being called, which was to cancel the carbon tax. We have a new Prime Minister with a new mandate and a new government that have brought these initiatives forward for debate and ultimately passage here in the House of Commons, as has been demonstrated this evening with the ministers presenting on the estimates, estimates that the Conservative Party voted for.

The Conservatives were not alone. Every member of Parliament voted in favour of the ways and means motion, which is the estimates, and we appreciate that vote of confidence. At the end of the day, I truly believe that what we need to do is not just give the government a vote of confidence, thereby saying, yes, we are fulfilling in part a very major aspect of the last campaign, but, as part of that, also look at the legislative agenda.

The legislative agenda does just that. It gets rid of the carbon tax in law, the consumer component. That is actually incorporated into Bill C-4. Not only does it have that aspect, but it also ensures the tax cut for 22 million taxpayers. Eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers is also incorporated into Bill C-4.

Think about it. These are three major initiatives in the legislation, a part of the Prime Minister's campaign to deliver for Canadians. I believe that every member of the House supports it. After all, they supported and voted unanimously in favour of the ways and means motion. One would think they would support this legislation.

Why is the legislation important? It is because the tax break is to take effect on July 1, which is coming up soon. Everyone needs to be aware of that. I hope the Conservatives will recognize the value of passing that particular piece of legislation.

The good news does not stop there. The Minister of Finance talked about having the strongest economy in the G7. The Minister of Finance is not alone. The Prime Minister has been talking about that fairly extensively. We want to build that strong economy.

We can talk about Bill C-5. Bill C-5 does just that, recognizing one Canadian economy. That will make a difference. There are also the border controls in Bill C-2. These three are wraparounds to address election platform issues that every member not only should be looking at but should be getting passed, I would suggest.

● (2025)

My question for the Minister of Finance is related to Bill C-4 in particular: How critically important is it that we deliver tax breaks on July 1? We need to see Bill C-4 passed, as well as the other two pieces of legislation. Can he provide his thoughts with regard to the

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Prime Minister's commitment, how this legislation in good part delivers for Canadians, and the responsibility of the opposition, in particular the Conservative Party, to see the legislation go through?

● (2030)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to see you.

What a great speech that was. In such an eloquent way, the member went over every aspect of what we have offered to Canadians. I even saw Conservative members listening with a lot of intent and attention. They appreciate our colleague.

He always has very important questions. What is in Bill C-4 for Canadians? Everything in Bill C-4 is about Canadians. The first thing we are doing, which I know will make the Speaker happy, is giving 22 million Canadians a tax cut. This is very significant. Why is it so crucial? It was the first motion we put forward in this House. That is why I think we have everything to rejoice about.

Not only did we do that, but we will help families and first-time homebuyers acquire a first home by eliminating the GST on homes up to \$1 million. We talked about it, but we have to talk about it even more because this kind of news can make a difference in the lives of Canadians. I know that what every member of the House wants in their heart and mind is to help Canadians.

I hope the Conservatives will continue to support us, because they know it is the right thing to do for their constituents.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a wonderful day, a good-news day, for the Canadian Forces. I had the privilege of serving in the forces. Over the years, especially during the Harper years, when Pierre Poilievre was part of government, we have seen the GDP contribution to the Canadian Forces drop to just under 1%. The good news is the Prime Minister has made it very clear that we are now going to hit 2%, which has been recommended for many years.

I know the Minister of Finance is a very strong advocate of what the Prime Minister announced yesterday. I am wondering if he could provide his personal thoughts in regard to why that was such an important announcement.

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Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, like the member, I served in the army cadets. Those were some of the best years of my life. I learned about discipline. I learned about respect. I learned about service, in a way. I was very young, and it taught me a lot. I want to thank all members of the armed forces for their commitment and dedication. They always put the country first.

The member is right. Yesterday was a great day for Canada because we invested in our sovereignty. We invested in our industry. We invested in our workers. We know that our investments in defence are going to support our industrial base.

I was in the media saying that every company in this country should have a defence strategy. If companies are selling a service, product or solution, they should look to see whether their product, solution or service can help build Canada strong.

This is a moment that reminds me of C. D. Howe in 1945. Mr. Speaker, you are too young to remember C. D. Howe in 1945, but you may have read about him. C. D. Howe was the great architect of a new industrial base in Canada, and I see a parallel between 1945 and 2025. This is the time to build. We are the true north strong and free.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I know there is an area of interest that all members of the Quebec caucus have, because I hear about it on a regular basis. It is the issue of CBC/Radio-Canada. This is where we see a great deal of contrast. The Conservative Party is looking at eliminating CBC/Radio-Canada, whereas I believe the people of Quebec, and in fact the people of Canada, very much want to retain it because it plays such a critical role in who we are as Canadians.

I will look to the Minister of Finance on that. I feel confident in knowing that he is going to ensure there are funds for CBC/Radio-Canada into the future. Could he provide his thoughts on the contrast between the Conservatives and the Liberals on that particular file?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the contrast could not be stronger. On this side of the House, we think a vibrant democracy needs a vibrant media. I am happy my colleague, the member, asked this very important question. On this side of the House, we said we would support CBC/Radio-Canada.

This is because we believe in democracy. We believe in Canadian values. We believe in a strong Canada. We believe in being proud of our nation, talking about our nation, giving a place for our great speech, those who are the producers, the actors, those who are making these stories about Canada. We should all be—

• (2035)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here tonight. I want to congratulate the new Minister of International Trade on his appointment. It is a pleasure to be here with everyone today.

It has been reported that Canada and the U.S. are in trade negotiations and these are nearing completion. Can the minister confirm that these discussions are, in fact, occurring?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member on his critic role. I look forward to working with him.

Of course, the U.S. is an important trading partner, and discussions are happening at the highest levels.

The Speaker: Before, the hon. member continues, does he have the intention to split his time?

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you reminding me of that. I will be splitting my time three ways.

It has also been reported that the digital services tax and Canadian imposition of the electric vehicle mandate are trade irritants for the Americans. Can the minister confirm whether or not that is the case?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what really matters is that we will always be there to defend Canadian industry and Canadian workers. Not only will we look at what our American colleagues may put on the table, but Canada is always going to be there to support our industry and support our workers. This is sometimes the best—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, does either minister over there currently support the electric vehicle mandate and the digital services tax that the government imposed last Parliament?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, of course, our EV sector, our auto sector, is very important, especially in my neck of the woods. In Brampton, we have Stellantis, right in my riding. I think it is important that we continue to support the workers and the industry through innovation and through—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I would like just a confirmation: Does either minister support both the digital services tax and the electric vehicle mandate that the government imposed last term?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I see there are even more Conservative members joining. It must be fascinating at this time of the evening to listen to the great things we have been doing for the automobile sector in this country.

Whether it is Windsor or Brampton, the workers there know we have their backs and we are going to continue to attract investments. I see more Conservatives cheering now.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, we have confirmed discussions are ongoing with the Americans. We have confirmed the digital services tax and electric vehicle mandate are, in fact, trade irritants that the government imposed.

Will either minister admit that the Liberal government's previously imposed digital services tax and electric vehicle mandate are the reason we have challenges with the American relationship?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important, when we come back to it, that the U.S. is an important partner for Canada. We know companies rely on trade with the U.S., but as we rely on that trade, we want to make sure we open up new markets around the world. That is what our businesses are asking for at this time, and I will continue to focus on that as the Minister of Trade.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, can either minister answer whether they were aware of the remission order that was signed prior to the election that would provide relief to Canadian companies that are facing tariffs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, not only I was aware, there was a press release with my name on it. I was more than aware. I would say I am happy the members read the press releases from the Government of Canada, because it is important for them to be informed about the important issues that are being raised and that—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, to read the press release, which would only become more clear after the election. Will the minister answer whether he believes Canadians who voted for reciprocal tariffs and elbows up did so with full knowledge that the government, quietly and secretly, under the cloak of a vague press release, removed tariffs during the election?

● (2040)

[Translation]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Chair, allow me to read this: “Canada announces new support for Canadian businesses affected by U.S. tariffs”.

This press release is dated April 15, 2025. To my knowledge, there is nothing more public than a Government of Canada press release. It is a way of informing Canadians. I am proud to see that my colleague has read this press release in both official languages.

[English]

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the new Minister of International Trade on his appointment. I know he is a former trade professional, so I look forward to his work on this.

Did the Minister of International Trade read the Auditor General's report, released today, on GC Strategies?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, my mandate is to help diversify trade around the world for Canadian businesses. That is what Canadian businesses expect us to do, especially when we go through some difficulties with our neighbour down south, and that is what my focus will be as a trade minister.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, just to clarify, did the minister not read the report?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, Canadians have given us a mandate to diversify trade, and that is what we will stay focused on, because that is what those watching at home want us to focus on.

Business of Supply

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, is the minister aware of all contracts that are related to his portfolio in international trade, yes or no?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, one in six jobs depend on trade, and Canadians expect us to continue to focus on trade at this very moment. We are in a crisis, and we need to stay focused here.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, was GC Strategies awarded any contracts respecting the CBSA's new e-commerce platform, the e-commerce low value inspection system?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite very well knows, I am not the Minister of Public Safety, and this is outside my scope.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, is the minister a member of cabinet?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, today we are answering questions as ministers on our respective files. I think that is very important to note for those watching at home.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, does the minister know what colour tie he is wearing? We are not getting a yes or no on anything.

Can the minister confirm, yes or no, was GC Strategies awarded any contracts with respect to the CBSA's new e-commerce platform?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I think we need to come back to the issue at hand. Canadians want us to stay focused on trade diversification, especially the Minister of International Trade. That question would be more related to CBSA and to the Minister of Public Safety.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, does the minister believe that e-commerce is a matter of international trade when goods cross the border?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, trade flows in many different ways through services and through merchandise. I think it is important to note that Canadian companies, and today I met with members of the agriculture sector, expect us to diversify our trading markets, especially in—

The Speaker: The hon. member for York—Durham.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I am assuming this is in the minister's bailiwick, though he is not exactly sure what he is responsible for. Last year, his predecessor told the House of Commons that ending the softwood lumber dispute was “a top priority” for her. Does the minister believe the same?

Business of Supply

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber industry, whether in B.C., in Ontario, across Canada, in Quebec or in eastern Canada, is a very important industry to us as a government and to the workers. We will continue to support them, but we want to make sure we get the best deal possible.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, is it a top priority for the minister to solve this dispute, yes or no?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I am working with the Minister responsible for U.S.-Canada Trade to make sure we are able to work through this with our American allies. It is important to note that the softwood lumber industry is very important to our government.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of International Trade know how much Canadian softwood lumber producers are currently paying in duties?

• (2045)

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that while the previous Conservative government capitulated and signed any deal possible, we want to make sure we get the right deal for Canadians by protecting the industry and ensuring that tariffs do not apply to our important softwood lumber industry.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important, and Canadians probably think it is important, that the Minister of International Trade knows how much in duties Canadian softwood lumber producers are paying. Let me tell him. It is over 46% for Canfor, over 26% for West Fraser and over 34% for all other producers.

The Conservative government got a deal done in a matter of months. Why has it taken you nine years, with no deal?

The Speaker: Ask questions through the Chair, please.

The hon. Minister of International Trade.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, the deal that was referred to involved quotas; it involved restrictions on Canadian softwood lumber. That is not the deal we want to get signed. We want to make sure we get the best deal possible for Canadian lumber.

Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, has the minister's department estimated the economic impact of China's 100% tariff on canola oil, meal and peas, including revenue losses and supply chain effects?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the canola industry is very important to this government. That is why, today, I met with leaders from the canola industry. I was also in Paris last week, where I sat down with China's minister of commerce, Wang Wentao, to work through some of these issues.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, has the minister's department estimated the economic impact of China's 100% tariffs on canola oil, meal and peas?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, today I sat down with agriculture leaders, especially in the canola sector, and what they asked me to do was to work through issues with China and to open up new markets. That is exactly what we will be focused on.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, has there been direct ministerial contact with China?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, last week in Paris, I met directly with my counterpart, Minister Wang, the minister of commerce, to work through these issues. The Prime Minister talked to the Chinese premier to work through issues as well. Conversations are happening at the highest levels.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, with which countries is Canada currently negotiating new market access for agricultural products, especially for canola? What progress has been made?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that Indonesia is a market that we recently concluded negotiations with. Ecuador is another market that we recently concluded negotiations with. Indonesia is a big market, with over 250 million people; also, the Philippines is having conversations as well.

What I heard today from the agriculture sector is the Indo-Pacific region—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, what new markets for canola oil and meal have been secured since tariffs were introduced? How much volume is expected from these deals?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the canola industry is very important to our government.

Today I heard about opportunities in the Philippines. The Philippines is a large market for the industry. We also opened up a new agriculture office in Manila to help with that.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, what is being done to deal with non-tariff trade barriers for canola in the U.S., such as inconsistent grading and inspection delays?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, coming back to the conversation at hand, the U.S. is an important partner for Canada. These are some of the issues and irritants that our Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade is working through with his U.S. counterparts.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, is Canada preparing a case at the WTO to challenge the legality of China's 100% tariffs under the new international trade rules?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, the World Trade Organization plays a very important role. Last week I had meetings in Paris through the WTO. There are important mechanisms in place, and we already have that in action.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, does the lack of a strong response risk encouraging other countries to target Canadian agriculture with unfair trade practices?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, trade is at the heart of what we do. It is important to note that the WTO plays a very prominent role to make sure that trade rules are protected. These trade panels could take up to a year, but we want to make sure that we are dealing in fair trade with all of our partners.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, what message is the government sending to global partners about Canada's willingness to defend its trade rights in agriculture sectors?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, last week in Paris, I met with over a dozen trade ministers from regions all around the world. They want what Canada is producing, so we have a lot of opportunities for trade diversification, and that is exactly what I will be focused on.

● (2050)

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to a clear plan that includes direct engagement with China, concrete steps to open new markets and immediate support for affected producers?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, last week in my meeting with Minister Wang, we talked about reopening JETC, which is the Joint Economic and Trade Commission, to have ongoing discussions to work through disputes, which is a great step forward.

Also, the Prime Minister had a conversation with the Premier of China to talk about what more we can do to have more of these conversations to resolve these disputes.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, is the minister's department offering any compensation or support through programs like AgriStability to help producers affected by these tariffs?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that we will always be there for our agriculture sector, but that is out of my scope. That is a question for the Minister of Agriculture. However, I want the agriculture industry to know that we will continue fighting for it and opening up new markets.

[Translation]

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to this committee of the whole today.

I would especially like to speak to some of the spending measures outlined in these main estimates, which aim to support Canadians during a time of significant economic volatility while preparing for the opportunities that lie ahead.

[English]

I want to maybe focus a bit more specifically on budgets and estimates being moral documents. They are statements of values, and that budget is coming. Meanwhile, we have the estimates in front of us. Really, with the finance estimates, it is riches, because we could describe any number of issues—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member for London West, on a point of order.

Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is trying to give a speech. We cannot hear him because there is—

The Speaker: That is a problem, so we should be a little quieter.

Business of Supply

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, these documents, these estimates, are statements of values. These are moral documents. They are statements of values and principles, and they are right in front of us today.

I want to talk, in particular, about some of the initiatives in here that speak to the fundamental things a federal government does, and it is really around national unity. What I was hearing a lot about in the recent election, and what this document speaks to very clearly, are concerns around safety and security. If a government cannot offer and take proactive measures to ensure the safety and security of the people in its country and abroad, then it has an issue. We know that safety and security for Canadians has been on their minds for a long time, especially since the U.S. presidential election, and I will talk about three items in these estimates that I think really speak to those concerns.

There is a set of concerns that are very important to my constituents in Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, which are concerns around security in eastern Europe. For me, this really became crystallized in a different way on the U.S. presidential election night when I spoke to a constituent who was in Estonia that night. She was reporting back to me about what the people in Estonia were realizing was happening, and they were maybe realizing it more immediately than we did. It took us a few weeks, a few months really, to realize the full measure, but in Estonia, on the U.S. election day, they realized that the game had changed and the security guarantees, the security protections they had taken for granted from their main ally in the United States, were not going to be available to them anymore. That evening, the very night of the U.S. presidential election, the people in Estonia were looking to Canada for increased security and increased reassurance that we were going to be there for them.

Subsequently, in my conversations at the doors during the election campaign, my constituents, many of whom are Ukrainian Canadian, were really looking for that protection. They were asking me, “Will Canada continue to be there for us? You've been there for us all along, but it's about to get harder for us. Will you be there for us?”

Business of Supply

A few weeks ago in the riding, and maybe members in the House may have celebrated in their own communities, we celebrated Vyshyvanka Day, which is a day of celebration of Ukrainian culture and heritage. We know that the best way to try to eliminate a nationality, to try to dominate in an imperial sense, is to try to wipe out a country's culture, a nationality's culture. Vyshyvanka Day is actually a fairly recent phenomenon, developed by university students just 20 years ago, which reclaims this very traditional, very important piece of embroidered clothing, the vyshyvanka, and has now been celebrated in Canada and around the world for almost 20 years.

We were wearing the vyshyvanka. We were Ukrainians, Ukrainian Canadians, people who had arrived in the country a few weeks ago, people who had been reclaiming their heritage and allies who were not Ukrainian Canadian themselves, and we marched all the way to High Park in my riding. Along the way, I was presented with a key chain that reads, "Made in Russia. Recycled in Ukraine". It is a piece of the remains of a Russian tank that was destroyed by the Ukrainians in the war. It is an effort that continues, and Ukrainians and Ukrainian-Canadians, with this war now in its third year, are wondering, "Is Canada still there for us?"

Budgets and estimates are moral documents, and I am so pleased that these estimates provide money through the World Bank to support Ukrainian relief and economic development efforts. More importantly, the supplementary estimates are coming. They are tabled through the Department of National Defence and have yet more funding for Canada's support effort in Ukraine.

Ukrainians are wondering if we are we going to be there for them. These estimates are moral documents. These estimates show, as well as the supplementary estimates, that yes, Canada is there for Ukraine and in this battle. Even though some allies may have drifted away or even perhaps changed their position, Canada will be there.

Canadians are looking for safety and security from their national government, so they look for that outside of Canada. What can Canada do to project its power outside this place? Again, the estimates do that with support for Ukraine. However, they are also looking for it closer to home. When we think about what the national government does to help support the safety and security of Canadians, obviously there is the federal government's role in health care, not as a deliverer of health care, but as a funder, as a transfer partner, as an ally with provincial governments, which are supporting the health care initiatives in their provinces, something that is very important and is reflected in these estimates.

● (2055)

I recall that, about two years ago, the federal deal was being made with the provinces to support an enhanced multi-year investment in health care with conditions, such as accountabilities around data and primary care. At the time of this historic agreement in February 2023, which, I believe, was a 5% escalator in spending all the way out to 2027-28, I was teaching public policy at Toronto Metropolitan University. We had a little unit on health care. If students are going to understand how their government works, how public policy works and how this place works, then one of the

biggest expenses, definitely, for the provincial government, and the thing that is in their day-to-day lives, is health care.

As I was explaining this complex system of transfers and the British North America Act and all the things that go into how health care is delivered in Canada, they really just had one main question for me, and that was, "What will this mean for me in my community?" They wanted to know what it meant for their mother or their grandmother who is looking for primary care, what it meant for the health care system they are dealing with in Ontario. They also wanted to know, maybe, what is happening with their own health care situation or what is happening with their health care data. They had some ideas around how to make the health care system work better. These are the questions that were coming to me as a teacher.

I had to say that there is some complexity here. The federal government is a funder. It puts conditions on some of these transfers, but it is really up to the provinces. I am very pleased that these estimates continue the commitment that was made two-plus years ago.

Governing is about making these decisions, but these estimates are moral documents. They are statements of values. We have the statement of values in this ongoing commitment to funding health care, including all the primary care commitments that are in that particular agreement, and I commend to people the platform of our party, which goes beyond and redoubles its commitment to the Canada Health Act and makes very specific commitments around funding medical school spaces, funding more primary care, and again, safety and security.

Canadians are looking for safety and security from their national government and these estimates communicate the kind of depth of concern that, I think, we have on this side, based on a strong set of values and on one of the most fundamental Canadian values of Medicare. It is one that I commend to the House.

Finally, safety and security are expressed through the economic lives of our constituents. As I was campaigning, I recall going to an area in the northwest part of Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park called "the Valley". There is a street there called Old Dundas Street, and there is an apartment building. A lot of my constituents there would be in their forties, fifties and sixties. They are still working, but they are looking around the corner to when they might have that chance of a little relief, maybe taking that little vacation, getting some support from their children, after they have given so much to their children.

Business of Supply

We have a lot of immigrants from eastern Europe in that particular part of the riding, the Valley, also known as Warren Park. I remember going to one particular building. A constituent in her sixties was asking me what the offering would be for her in this campaign. I explained to her the different things, and she understood the bigger things that were at stake. She understood the bigger picture. I think she understood some of how our proposals were meeting her safety and security needs, but for her, it was about the end of the month. It was about how much money she was going to have to be able to take that vacation she had been putting off this year.

I explained to her that there was a tax cut coming, and that we did not have all the details at the time. It is not in the estimates. It is in our ways and means motion and in the bill. I am going to be happy to be communicating to her that, in July, there is an immediate action. There is an immediate action in these estimates and in the measures that this side of the House is putting forward in this session that are going to meet her concerns, and, I think, more broadly, the safety and security concerns of Canadians.

To follow up with a question about the income tax cut that is in the legislation, I want to ask the minister his perspective on what the motivation is and what the understanding is around how we came to this particular proposal for the income tax cut.

• (2100)

[Translation]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his election and his very important role as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Industry. I just listened to an eloquent speech.

[English]

I think we can all agree that the member gave a very thoughtful speech, in which he raised a number of important issues. I am proud to have him as a colleague in caucus. We will learn a lot from him. He was involved as a teacher for years and is someone who cares about Canada.

The member mentioned two things. I will come back to his question, but I cannot resist saying that at the last G7 meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors, we had a special guest, which was the minister of finance of Ukraine. I can say that at that time, there was a moment when the world or at least the G7 colleagues were standing shoulder to shoulder. We understand that Ukraine is fighting for democracy, and for all of us really. They are fighting for dignity.

The member will be pleased to hear that, since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Canada has committed \$19.7 billion in different supports for Ukraine. This is something my colleague will be happy about. In the estimates, he will see that there is an increase in the development of financial intermediary response for Ukraine of \$200 million. The message is loud and clear that we are there for Ukraine and will be shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine. I am also pleased to say that, for the upcoming leaders' summit in Kananaskis, the Prime Minister has invited the President of Ukraine. He will be there. That is another show of solidarity.

My colleague mentioned the health transfer. He and his students, who are probably watching tonight, because I know they are keen to see their former teacher, will be happy to hear that we are looking at these issues. If we look at the main estimates, there is an increase of \$2.6 billion in Canada health transfers. The Canada health transfer in 2025-26 will be a total of \$54.7 billion. This is very significant. The member's students would be proud to see that their former teacher is part of a government that believes in providing Canadians with services that are dear to their hearts. When I think of the Canada health transfer, I think of us investing to support services in hospitals and medical care for Canadians. This is the very essence of who we are as Canadians.

I know the member not only cares about Ukraine and spoke about the health transfer, but he also raised a very important issue. One of my colleagues, the former finance minister in Quebec, from whom I learn every day, mentioned one of the first things we did.

I know the students watching at home believe in deeds. Words are easy. We have to listen to them every day. I have been here for almost a decade, and I have listened to a lot in the House coming from the Conservatives. What people at home are wondering about and care about is action. It is deeds.

The first thing the Prime Minister did in this new government was to present a ways and means motion to reduce taxes for 22 million Canadians. This is a promise made and a promise delivered. That is the kind of thing that builds trust in a society. When political parties put forward platforms and deliver on what is in them, it builds trust. These are confidence-building measures.

I am sure the member's students would be proud to see their former teacher in the House tonight, at what is a late hour for some of us who are a bit older, responding to questions to make sure that our democracy is functioning well.

Let us look at the estimates. I say that because I know my Conservative colleagues are very keen to read the main estimates. If we look at the 2025-26 main estimates, we present a total of \$486.9 billion in budgetary spending. What the member's students will find interesting, and they will pay attention because there might be a question on the exam, as will my Conservative friends, because sometimes they learn a thing or two from us, is that the majority of the amount, \$295 billion, is in transfer payments for provinces, territories or individual Canadians. Therefore, 60% of what we see in the main estimates—

• (2105)

The Speaker: I will have to stop the minister there.

The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill.

David McKenzie (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to advise you that I will be splitting time with the member for Beauce and the member for Richmond Hill South.

Business of Supply

My question is for the Minister of International Trade. He said at the time of his cabinet appointment that Canadian businesses are expecting us to open new global markets for them. Can the minister tell us what new markets he is prioritizing for Canadian businesses?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member opposite for his recent election win and welcome him to the House. The member is talking about new markets. My first trip was to Ecuador. I was sworn in, and a week later I was in Ecuador to finalize negotiations on a trade agreement. We are working with Indonesia as well to unlock more markets there, and we have committed to finalizing an agreement with that government as well.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I actually heard an answer to my question in that response, but I would ask the minister to tell us what Canadian products he is prioritizing for new export market development.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, this gives me a chance to highlight our recent announcement in the defence sector. Our defence sector plays a crucial role in our exports, and I look forward to working with the industry to get it into newer markets, as well as growing into existing markets such as the European Union.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, the minister said today in the House of Commons, “Canada has what the world needs.”

Does that include liquefied natural gas?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. At the G7, we will be talking about energy security, as it plays a critical role in Canada's negotiation power. Of course, Canada has what the world needs. We have energy, critical minerals, expertise and innovation, so we have a lot of what the world needs.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, does the minister agree that LNG is the cleanest-burning fossil fuel in the world and helps replace dirtier emissions worldwide, contributing to international climate goals?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, we are known for a lot of different types of energy supplies. We have sustainable energy; we are talking about the nuclear sector, and we are talking about LNG. There are a lot of things that Canada has to offer to the world, and that is what the world wants from Canada. That will be a critical conversation at the G7 coming up on energy security.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, what actions will the minister take to promote LNG exports?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of actions we are going to be taking as the government. This is a new government with a strong mandate from Canadians to make sure that we are able to get our critical minerals, our energy, out to new markets around the world, and that is what the world wants.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, does the minister support LNG exports to Germany?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I support Canadian jobs; I support Canadian industry. I think it is very important to note that the world wants what Canada has. That is what I am hearing in the European Union, that is what I was hearing in Ecuador and that is—

• (2110)

The Speaker: The hon. member.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I am going to make this very simple. Is the minister aware that Germany's Chancellor Scholz stated three years ago that Canada was Germany's partner of choice for LNG supply? It is a yes-or-no question.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, the world is looking to Canada for our expertise in innovation and energy. I was born in Calgary, so I have a soft spot for that part of our country, especially when we talk about energy. I think it is very important to note that people want what Canada is building.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, the minister today told the German chancellor that the Canadian energy industry would be proud to supply Germany with our clean LNG.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, we have products going out to different regions in the world. When we are talking about energy, I think we have a lot of potential. We just recently signed a deal on nuclear with Romania on the CANDU reactors. We are now in phase two. That is supporting hundreds of jobs. We have different types of energy supplies going out to different—

The Speaker: The hon. member.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, does the minister support LNG exports to Greece, yes or no?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about our defence strategy and what we just recently announced, I think energy plays a critical role in those conversations. We are going to see more of that at the G7. It is actually one of the pillars for talking about energy security, talking about critical minerals and what Canada has to offer.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, the minister said today in the House of Commons, “Canada has what the world needs.” Does that include crude oil?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, coming back to the heart of things, I think it is important that our workers and our industries are supported by their government, and that is exactly what we will be focused on. We will be building big things, working with proponents across Canada.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, several businesses back home in Beauce, including steel manufacturers, are being hit hard by the Trump administration's new 50% tariffs. It is very trying. Business owners talk to me about it every day. The programs announced by the Liberal government are clearly insufficient.

How much money has the federal government collected so far in countertariffs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by congratulating my colleague. This is one of the first times I have heard him speak in the House. I want to welcome him.

My colleague has already heard me answer this question. To date, we have collected \$1.7 billion in countertariffs, and we will reinvest this money to support industry and our workers.

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, where is the \$20 billion in countertariffs promised by the Liberal government?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, what I am about to say will interest my colleague. I know he is a numbers guy. I see he is taking notes, so he takes numbers seriously.

The amount that has been received to date is \$1.7 billion. He will be pleased because I know the people of Beauce, and they will be happy to know that these funds will be reinvested—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beauce.

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, of the \$1.7 billion, how much will go to businesses?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, as we have said, these funds will be used to support our workers and our industry. This is already happening. We are here for the steel and aluminum workers in Quebec.

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, how much will be paid to businesses, and when will this payment be made?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, my colleague will be happy. I can see it in his eyes. He will be happy to learn that there are already programs in place to help businesses with cash flow. I recently talked about it with people from the steel industry, including people from Quebec. Since programs are already in place to support them, I suppose that he is going to be pleased tonight.

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, will businesses receive direct compensation, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, there are programs to support the industry and workers. We have talked about this before. These are important programs. My colleague may not be aware, but people in the industry are very familiar with the programs and are very aware of them.

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, what is the action plan to bring these tariffs down?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, it is simple. We have to fight these unjustified and illegal tariffs every day. I would like our Conservative colleagues to join us in this fight. I know that people in the industry support us.

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, what are the Liberals waiting for to give businesses direct assistance?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, we are not waiting; we have already taken action. We already have tools in the toolbox. My colleague is from Beauce, so he should be familiar with toolboxes. We have plenty of tools in our toolbox to help our people.

• (2115)

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, how many jobs will be lost because of Liberal inaction?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, there is no inaction. We are taking action over here. Just talk to people in industry. They know what a tool box is and they know that in our Liberal tool box, there are tools to help them.

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my question. What is the clear action plan for getting rid of these tariffs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I will provide an equally clear answer: It is to fight every day. The Prime Minister is fighting, the ministers are fighting, Canada is fighting against these tariffs. I invite my colleague to join us in this historic battle. He will be able to tell his grandchildren that he did something good for the country.

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, how long does the minister think businesses can survive when the only help they are getting is more loans?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of International Trade, and I are finding new markets for certain steel and aluminum products. It is important to diversify exports and we are working together with the industry.

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, I had a discussion this evening with a local business owner, a family man involved in the community who runs a business with about 100 employees and sales of about \$100 million. That \$100 million is now at risk. I asked him what questions he would like me to ask. He gave me a clear answer.

What is the clear plan of action to get these tariffs removed? When will this plan be implemented to produce real results, and quickly?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I would even invite my colleague to give my number to this Beauce business owner. I would very much like to speak with him. I recently hosted Beauce residents who thanked me for being there for them, for defending them and for providing liquidity to industry. These are tangible ways to help people in Beauce and across Quebec and Canada defend themselves against these unjustified, unfair and illegal tariffs. Our industries know that we will always be there for them and for workers.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does Canada trade more internationally than within its own borders?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, currently, about 3.3 million people are employed due to our exports. They are an important part of our economy. One in six Canadian jobs is supported by trade, and I think it is important, while we work on reducing internal trade barriers, that we ensure that export markets are opened up as well.

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, how much of our GDP is international trade worth?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, thousands of jobs across this country are supported by trade, and it is very vital. We are a trading nation. That is why we have 15 trade agreements with over 50 countries around the world. We have access to 1.5 billion customers, whom we need to continue shipping good Canadian-made goods out to.

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, the answer is 66%, according to his government's website. While he accuses us of not reading, I guess he does not read his website either.

How much of our GDP is interprovincial trade worth?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that these numbers are all available on the website.

What we want to talk about today is workers and Canadian industries. That is what people at home are watching for. This is a time of crisis. Some 75% of our trade that goes to the U.S. is at risk, and that is why it is important that we open up new markets such as the Indo-Pacific region and the European Union. This is what I will be focused on.

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, it is 36%. That is according to the government's website.

Is this imbalance not evidence that the Liberal government has failed to support Canadian companies doing business with each other?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, what our government is doing is supporting industries and supporting workers. Just today I met with the agriculture industry, and they were very happy that we are opening up talks with partners like those in China. As a path forward, we are going to relaunch the JETC, the joint economic and trade commission, to ensure that we are able to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond Hill South.

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, how many interprovincial trade barriers exist in Canada?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the new member to the House, but I hope he studies which ministers do what, because as members know, I am the Minister of International Trade. My focus and mandate are to diversify trade to external markets.

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, the Constitution gives the federal government jurisdiction over interprovincial trade, and that is under the purview of the minister.

Has the Liberal government ever exercised federal jurisdiction in the last 10 years over interprovincial trade barriers?

• (2120)

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that we have a Minister of Transport and Internal Trade. I am not allowed to say her name, but I think it is important that as cabinet colleagues and MPs, we all work together to ensure that we are able to reduce barriers to grow internal trade throughout our country.

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, is it currently easier for a company in Ontario to export to the United States than it is to Quebec?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, internal trade barriers do exist, and that is why it is important that we work with our provincial and territorial partners to ensure that we are able to unlock those barriers and unlock over \$100 billion in economic activity in our country. However, while we do that, we also want to focus on export markets. The agriculture industry is one industry that is highly supported by exports, and we need to make sure that we are able to diversify trade.

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, it would cost the average Canadian \$5,100 per year. To put it in terms the Minister of Transport would understand, that is a lot of Disney+ subscriptions.

Is it not true that the Liberal government has not done anything in the last 10 years to address the interprovincial trade barriers that you just admitted exist?

The Speaker: I have mentioned it many times, but the hon. member cannot address the member directly; he has to do it through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, this new government has a strong mandate from Canadians to make sure that we are able to diversify trade, but while we do that, of course, we are going to reduce internal trade barriers by working with provinces and territories. I think that is important to note for Canadians watching.

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that the minister is talking about diversifying trade. Should it be easier for a Canadian to import wine from California than it is to import wine from Ontario?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, coming back to my scope and mandate, they are to make sure that I am out there diversifying trade in international markets. Of course, we have a Minister of Transport and Internal Trade as well, whom we will be working closely with, but we want to reduce trade barriers, whether they are international or within our own country.

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, does the Liberal government plan to incentivize the provinces to remove trade barriers?

Business of Supply

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, the provinces are very ambitious. The Prime Minister is very ambitious. We have a strong mandate from Canadians to work with the provinces and territories to reduce internal trade barriers.

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in this evening's committee of the whole debate on the main estimates.

Before I get into the topic at hand, I would like to take a moment to highlight some of the measures that are so important to the people of my constituency of Toronto—St. Paul's and that our new government is taking to build the strongest economy in the G7 and bring down the cost of living, measures I know the Minister of Finance in particular has been leading on.

Since being elected two months ago, we are already focused on delivering a plan to address the cost of living challenges that have eroded Canadians' quality of life, change that puts more money in the pockets of Canadians, change that builds a more affordable Canada.

The government is well aware of the affordability challenges that have long impacted low-income and vulnerable Canadians and are now having serious impacts on middle-class households. Rents have gone up, and home prices have gone up. A generation of young Canadians are questioning whether they can afford a place to live today and whether they will be able to own a home of their own tomorrow.

That is why the government is taking immediate action to address this crisis, and key to that plan is bringing down costs so Canadians can keep more of their paycheques and spend where it matters most to them.

The government will be eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes at or under \$1 million. This tax cut alone will save Canadians up to \$50,000, allowing more young people and their families to enter the housing market and realize the dream of home ownership. By eliminating the GST, Canadians will face lower upfront housing costs and keep more money in their pockets. It will also have a dynamic effect on increasing supply, spurring the construction of new homes across the country.

We are also delivering a middle-class tax cut that will provide relief for nearly 22 million Canadians and save families up to \$840. Canadians will start seeing these tax savings on their paycheques as of July 1, when the rate is adjusted.

We are now formalizing the cancellation of the consumer carbon price, which took effect on April 1.

With these measures, together we are delivering change that will affect people in their day-to-day lives, cut taxes, bring down costs and, most importantly, put money back in the pockets of Canadians.

Turning to the main estimates and some of the spending measures we have laid out, a major element of Finance Canada's portion focuses on Canada's universal public health care system, something that is so important to Canadians.

I am proud of Canada's universal health care system and the workers who uphold it, but they are under enormous strain, and it has been a challenge for Canadians to receive the high-quality care they expect. Patients seeking emergency care have found emergency rooms overwhelmed. Surgeries have been postponed or cancelled.

In the past, the government delivered urgent, much-needed investment to strengthen our public health care system. In budget 2023, the government delivered a plan to provide an additional \$198.3 billion over 10 years.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Leslie Church: Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, yes, that does constitute a plan to support better health care, including \$46.2 billion in new funding for provinces and territories. This included additional funding through the Canada health transfer, tailored bilateral agreements to meet the needs of each province and territory, and the renewal of the territorial health investment fund.

I want to be clear. In exchange for this new funding, provinces and territories committed to improving how health information is collected, shared, used and reported to Canadians to manage public health emergencies and deliver better health outcomes.

The 2025-26 main estimates increase the Canada health transfer by over \$2.6 billion, which represents the 5% minimum growth rate guaranteed by the federal government in February 2023. This funding is about working together to improve health care for all Canadians and, most importantly, safeguarding the universal public health care system that we believe in so deeply.

Another important part of ensuring that all Canadians have access to great services like health care is the fiscal equalization program. Fiscal equalization is designed to ensure that Canadians have access to reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation, thereby reducing fiscal disparities among the provinces.

Business of Supply

• (2125)

The allocation of equalization payments is based on a measure of fiscal capacity, which represents the revenues a province could raise if it were to tax at the national average tax rate. Equalization supports provinces that have a lower-than-average fiscal capacity. It is determined across five broad revenue categories: our personal income taxes, business taxes, consumption, property taxes and natural resource revenues. To enhance the stability and predictability of equalization payments, our fiscal capacity is estimated using a two-year lag in the data and a three-year weighted moving average. What does this all mean? In terms of the main estimates before us, equalization is going to increase by \$917 million in 2025-26, which will directly impact the quality of and access to services that many Canadians rely on, an important part of maintaining our federation.

The main estimates also provide an increase of \$507 million to the Canada social transfer, a transfer that is very important to me and to many of my constituents in Toronto—St. Paul's. It is going to provide an increase at a 3% annual growth rate. The Canada social transfer, or the CST, is the third-largest federal block transfer to provinces and territories, after the health transfer and equalization. It is intended to support three broad areas of critical social programs: post-secondary education, social assistance and social services, and early childhood development and early learning and child care. It is allocated on an equal per capita cash basis to provide comparable treatment for all Canadians regardless of where they live. The CST funding has been legislated to grow by 3% annually. It is an important piece of the funding that this government delivers for Canadians across the country to uphold some of the very basic social services that we rely on.

Finally, there is an increase of almost \$330 million in territorial financing. The territorial formula financing program helps territorial governments fund essential public services in Canada's north, such as hospitals, schools, infrastructure and social services. It recognizes the high cost of providing public services in the north, as well as the challenges the territorial governments face in providing these services to a large number of small, isolated communities. These communities are vitally important, particularly now, as we work to strengthen our Arctic sovereignty and defence.

Before I conclude, there are two important funding increases in the main estimates that I wish the House to be aware of. One is to the World Bank's financial intermediary fund for Ukraine, and one is to the Canada Infrastructure Bank. Specifically, the government will be providing a \$200-million contribution to the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for the financial intermediary fund for Ukraine in support of the Ukrainian government. This is part of Canada's contribution through the G7 leaders' extraordinary revenue acceleration loan mechanism and will be used to support projects, programs and activities that address Ukraine's budget, recovery and reconstruction needs at this extremely challenging time.

The Canada Infrastructure Bank has made more than \$15.8 billion in investment commitments in priority investment sectors, including transit, green infrastructure, clean power, broadband access and trade and transportation. In total, the federal government can provide up to \$35 billion to the Canada Infrastructure Bank to sup-

port infrastructure projects across the country. This is a big part of our government's commitment to getting big things done.

In conclusion, the measures contained in Finance Canada's main estimates are an important part of the government's commitment to transparency and to using public funds responsibly to deliver results to Canadians. With these significant investments, we will strengthen Canada's public health care system, address affordability challenges, create opportunities for Canadian workers, and build a stronger, more secure and more sustainable 21st century economy for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, over 60% of households in Toronto—St. Paul's are renters. Would the Minister of Finance elaborate on how the government will be reducing the rising costs of living and, in particular, making purchases of a new home more affordable to Canadians?

• (2130)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague from Toronto—St. Paul's. She is an extraordinary colleague. I have had a chance to see her in action in so many ways. She held various senior posts in finance as well, and we could see that in her speech. I am sure the people of Toronto—St. Paul's have been watching tonight at home and listening to her and saying that this is someone who understands finance; this is someone who understands how to build a country; this is someone who is going to make a great contribution to the House of Commons. I think we should all be listening to her and learning from her.

I even see my Conservative colleagues so enthusiastic about listening and engaging with her because they want to learn as well. I know them. They want to learn. It is great to see so many Conservatives wanting to learn from an hon. member who knows something about finance. She really provided to all the colleagues this kind of overarching chapeau about everything we are doing to support Canadians, and there are a lot of learnings. I saw that the Conservatives were taking notes. That is a good sign. When they are taking notes, they see all the good things we are doing.

In particular, the member talked about the health transfer. She talked about equalization. She talked about all the transfers to help Canadians, the people in Toronto—St. Paul's and across the nation. However, there is one other measure she mentioned. Housing is an issue. It is an issue in Toronto, but also around the country.

The member talked about one of the measures, which is the elimination of GST for first-time homebuyers. On a home of up to \$1 million, people can save up to \$50,000. This is very significant. I can see the impact it is having in Canada. That is the type of policy that Canadians want to see. I can see the enthusiasm even from the Conservatives because they voted in favour. For once, they did the right thing and voted for Canadians.

Leslie Church: Mr. Speaker, the estimates raised an important issue to me and to my constituents in Toronto—St. Paul's around Ukraine. I was wondering if the minister would describe the measures under way to support Ukraine as it seeks to defend its sovereignty, its territorial integrity and its economy at this very challenging time facing the invasion by Russia.

• (2135)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. Like I said, when we had the G7 meeting, we had the opportunity to show the world that Canada and the other G7 finance colleagues were standing shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine. In fact, there is good news in the main estimates: There is an increase in the development and financial intermediary response for Ukraine of \$200 million.

What the Ukrainians want is deeds, is action, and this is Canada supporting Ukraine in a very tangible way. We have been there for Ukraine, we are there for Ukraine, and we will be there for Ukraine because they are fighting for democracy and they are fighting for dignity. Canadians are proud to support our Ukrainian friends at this particular—

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Leslie Church: Mr. Speaker, the main estimates also spend a great deal of time and put funding toward the Canada health transfer. Would the minister be able to elaborate on how this new investment in our health system is going to support Canadians' desire for a strong universal public health system?

The Speaker: The minister has less than a minute.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, it will take me less than a minute to provide good news to Canadians. If we look at the increase for the Canada health transfer, we are talking about an increase of \$2.6 billion. This is money that would go to support health care in Toronto—St. Paul's, in Shawinigan, in Brampton and everywhere across the country. This is really good news. We have a government that is standing up for Canadians and helping them and increasing the health transfer.

I know my colleague participated in these important discussions. The people of Toronto—St. Paul's should be very proud to have a member who has been part of making Canada fairer and making sure that we would support the health transfer and support provinces and territories in providing health care to our citizens.

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to let you know that I will be splitting my time.

Is the Minister of Finance going to be using taxpayer dollars to travel out of the country this week?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am happy to say hello to my colleague. He was my critic when I was a young

man, when I started in this House. Now I see that, 10 years later, I still have the pleasure to have to answer his questions. He comes from a great region. My dad lives next to him—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Niagara West has the floor.

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Finance planning on travelling to the Bilderberg Meeting this week using taxpayer dollars?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to answer questions from my colleague. Like I said, he comes from a great region, where my family is also. I have seen him in action. It is great to see that—

The Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask the finance minister why he believes that he should spend time at the Bilderberg Meeting rather than actually tabling a budget.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I am so glad to hear that my colleague is actually paying so much attention to what I do. I also travel to Shawinigan every weekend, and I would be glad to invite him there as well. He seems to be very interested in where I am going. It is great. I travel—

The Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about tariffs. How does the government come up with criteria for countertariffs on agriculture products? Is there a framework that is followed, or is it on a case-by-case basis?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the member went from travel to tariffs; I guess that is because they both start with “T”. That must be in the order of questions.

Colleagues would know that there is a great framework in place. My colleague is an experienced member—

The Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, are there any publicly available guidelines or processes farmers and businesses in my riding can look at to get a better understanding of how the Government of Canada makes decisions on countertariffs or tariffs in general?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to speak to the member's constituents. I know a few of them, and they are great people. I can refer them to the April 15 press release. There is a lot of good information there. I know our Conservative colleagues would like to read the press releases of the Liberal government—

The Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

• (2140)

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, I have a question on fertilizer and tariffs, specifically cases when fertilizer is available only from nations with which Canada does not have a great relationship. How does the Government of Canada determine the percentage of tariffs imposed on such countries as it relates specifically to fertilizer?

Business of Supply

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question is a very important one. When we are talking about fertilizer and export markets, it is very important to note, as I have been talking to colleagues and trade ministers across the globe, that people are looking towards our fertilizer industry, at potash specifically and how they can get that into their markets.

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, for the products being imported to Canada by a farmer or a business and not available anywhere else except in a country with which Canada has a difficult relationship, is there a process by which the farmer or business owner can retrieve the import tariff imposed by Canada?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that we will continue supporting our agriculture sector. Just today I met with leaders in the sector to talk about diversifying trade and also to support them locally here. The agriculture minister and I sat down to talk about some of the government supports today.

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, what are the precise criteria that the government uses to place an import tariff on agriculture products?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy to refer my colleague to the press release of April 15. He will find a lot of good information there, and he can direct his constituents to apply—

The Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, in terms of countertariffs on the U.S., what is the government's solution and approach to the doubling of the U.S. tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum? I ask him to be specific so my constituents are informed.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I always want to inform the member's constituents. We are going to fight. That is something Canadians understand; they know how to fight. That is why we said, “elbows up”. I think it has galvanized Canadians across the nation.

Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, will the government continue to increase countertariffs on U.S. products coming into Canada? This is a very important question that comes up all the time when I am speaking to businesses and farmers in my riding.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, we always do what is appropriate to defend our industry and our workers. I would hope that our Conservative friends would join us in the fight. This is an existential fight for Canada, and I know that in their heart they would want to be part of this generational opportunity to fight along with us.

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tonight the Liberals have talked a lot about equalization. The minister said, “We are increasing fiscal equalization by nearly \$970 million.” I have spent about seven hours this week so far in committee of the whole, and I am wondering whether Liberal ministers or members are allowed to use the word “oil” in these debates.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members are free to speak. This is the House of Commons. This is the House of the people. Everyone is free to speak their mind, and I would invite every

member to do so. I have been here for a decade, and I have always spoken my mind.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, in August 2017, the National Energy Board issued a decision. It said, “the NEB will consider upstream and downstream greenhouse gas emissions...in determining whether these projects are in the public interest.” That effectively killed energy east or any east-west pipeline.

Does the minister agree that upstream and downstream GHG emissions should be considered before oil and gas projects are allowed in Canada?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I believe my colleague should be very happy. There is a lot for him to be happy about, because now we are talking about projects of national interest. Just recently we had all the premiers get together with the Prime Minister to build Canada strong. We want to build an energy corridor. We want to build this country. I can see in his eyes that he is happy as well because we are going to build Canada strong.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian Energy Regulator, 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.

How important would that \$2.5 billion of revenue be to the Canadian government's efforts to fund things like health care and education in Canada?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, it will not be a surprise that as a finance minister, I like revenue. Revenue allows us to provide services to Canadians, to make financial transfers to provinces and territories for Canadians, and to maintain the social fabric of our country. It will not be a big surprise that a finance minister always likes revenue.

• (2145)

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, that 2.5 billion dollars' worth of oil coming from Nigeria and \$2.1 billion coming from Saudi Arabia, \$4.6 billion, is not subject to the same rigorous reporting on upstream and downstream emissions as oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Does the minister think that is fair?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, what I think is fair is that we join together in building this country. I am speaking with premiers in western Canada. They are very happy to work with this new government so that we can build Canada strong.

I know that Conservatives, in their hearts, want to build this Canada. They want to join us. That is why they voted for the first ways and means motion we presented.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, in addition to the oil coming from Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, we brought in 403 million dollars' worth of oil from Colombia and 202 million dollars' worth of oil from Ecuador. None of that oil was subject to the same rigorous reporting on upstream and downstream emissions as oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Does the Minister of International Trade see that as fair?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since Ecuador came up, it gives me an opportunity to talk about that important relationship. I was just in Ecuador a couple of weeks ago to finalize the conclusion of negotiations of an Ecuador free trade agreement with Canada. That is going to be a trade agreement that opens up a market to close to 20 million people. We already have Canadian companies doing over \$4 billion of business in Ecuador, and we need to continue growing that.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, the top producing countries for oil in the world are the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Russia. Russia is number three, just ahead of Canada.

Do either of the ministers, or anybody in the government, realize that when we refuse to sell Canadian oil and gas to the world, countries are forced to buy that oil from Russia? Therefore, the Canadian government's energy policy is a pro-Russia energy policy. Does that seem reasonable to either minister?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just wish the member had been in Saskatoon recently. He would have seen that there is unity in this country like we have never seen before. People want to build. They want to make sure our resources go to market. That should have been a moment celebrated by all Conservatives. I know many of the western premiers, who text me quite often. They want to make sure that we build things together, and we are quite happy to build with them.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, just one last time, I want to hear an answer to this question. Does either minister believe that oil coming from Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Ecuador or Colombia should be subject to the same rigorous emission standards as oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan or Newfoundland and Labrador?

Please answer the question.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has what the world needs. It is about energy security. I think we have a lot of energy.

Hon. Mike Lake: Are you allowed to say "oil"?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Different types of energy go out to different markets around the world. We need to get these supplies to export markets. Some of these big projects that we are going to be building with the provinces will support jobs across Canada and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is the Government of Canada going to spend on interest payments this fiscal year?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member probably will not be asking if I can say "oil and gas" or something like that.

Business of Supply

I can assure him that we are proud of what we produce in Canada, and we want to build infrastructure so we can—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, the answer is \$49 billion.

How much did the government forecast to spend on interest in the year's estimates last year?

An hon. member: Are you allowed to say "budget"?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I heard the other question, and obviously, I can say "budget" as well.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, how much did the government forecast to spend on interest in last year's estimates?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I know the member is a very experienced member. He reads "The Fiscal Monitor". I know him. He is the type of member who would focus on "The Fiscal Monitor" to get his information. If he is reading—

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, to help the minister again, the answer is \$46.5 billion.

How much did the government miss that estimate by last year?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, it is public record. I know there is not much time left for good questions, and I know my colleague wants good answers, but the time is short. The things in the public domain—

• (2150)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, the answer, of course, is \$2 billion more than it forecast in the estimates last year.

How fast has that interest expense grown over the past 10 years?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, if my colleague were to look at the public debt charge percentage of nominal GDP, he would see that, over the last decade, they have always been in the range of 1% to 1.5%. It is a great position to be in as a country.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, the answer is \$25.6 billion. It has nearly doubled in 10 years.

Of the \$49 billion, what does it represent for each of the 16.9 million households in Canada?

Business of Supply

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, as the member wants to talk about numbers, I will go to the numbers. In 2023-24, the public debt charge percentage of nominal GDP was 1.2%. In 2023-24, it was 1.6%. Canada is in a very enviable position as a member of the G7.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, it is \$2,900 per Canadian household.

How much did these Canadian households spend on interest on Canadian government debt 10 years ago?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, let us look at the chart. Ten years ago, the public debt charge was \$24.2 billion and represented 1.2% of GDP. If we look at 2023-24, it represents 1.6%. Canada has been consistently maintaining a low level as—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, the answer, of course, is \$1,800 per household, so it has gone up significantly.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer foresees the interest on Canadian government debt growing by around 10% per year for the foreseeable future. Does the minister see the economy growing by 10% per year?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance, I always want the economy to grow because it allows us to have revenue to provide services to Canadians and transfers to provinces and territories. I think my colleague also wants to see revenues grow.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, does the minister see the government's taxation revenue growing by 10% per year?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance, I always want to see revenues grow because revenues allow us to deliver services to Canadians. Obviously, we will continue to be fiscally prudent but, at the same time, look at ways to support Canadians.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, given this, does the minister understand that he has inherited a debt spiral from his Liberal predecessors in finance?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, we inherited what we all have as Canadians. We have a country that has a AAA credit rating and the lowest debt-to-GDP. We should be very proud.

I was at the G7 meeting, and next time I might invite the member. He will see how G7 colleagues appreciate Canada—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, is it the minister's plan to kick this debt spiral problem down the road?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the member is talking about the G7. I intend to continue as the chair of the G7 finance ministers' meeting with central bank governors. We continue to provide leadership. We even came out with a communiqué in Banff. It was more than people had expected. We came out with a communiqué.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, is it the minister's plan to masquerade Canada's debt problem with the reclassification of debt announced by the Prime Minister?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, again, the member should take comfort in his heart that Canada, with its AAA credit rating, is the only country, with Germany, in the G7 that has that fiscal position. That is a very strong position, and that is why he should be happy to have a finance minister with fiscal discipline.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the ministers on their appointments to cabinet.

I will start with a simple question. Does the minister not find it a little strange that we are here in this committee of the whole, but we still do not have the departmental plans?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am here at the behest of the members. Members voted for us to be here at 9:55 p.m. I am making myself available to the House to answer members' questions, especially questions from my Bloc Québécois colleagues, whom I hold in high esteem.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that the supply vote will take place next week, if I am not mistaken. We still do not have the departmental plans. It says on the website that we will get them sometime in June.

Can the minister tell us when we will get them?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my colleague is going to like this, since he is a numbers guy. In the spending plan for the Department of Finance, 99% of planned expenditures are statutory expenditures. Less than 1% of these expenditures are departmental operating expenditures.

I think my colleague can see that the Department of Finance budgets are really transfers to the provinces, including Quebec.

• (2155)

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I can ask my question again. When will we see the departmental plans?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I get my colleague's enthusiasm. I know him. He is an enthusiastic guy, and he wants to see things right away. I am sure my colleague will have an opportunity to read the plans as soon as they are available. The important thing is that he already has the financial framework, which he saw in the main estimates. That alone gives him a good overview of the government's priorities.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we are really looking forward to that.

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I am going to ask a question about international trade. The person who is now the Minister of International Trade was once a fellow member of the Standing Committee on International Trade. Trade agreements include safeguard measures that are defined as emergency actions. These measures are taken when there are increased imports of particular products that cause or threaten to cause serious injury to the domestic industry. They can allow for quantitative import restrictions or duty increases to higher than bound rates.

The tariff war with the United States is threatening our steel and aluminum industries. Does the government plan to use these measures to limit steel and aluminum imports from Asia to protect our market?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question. He is a very well-informed man. Obviously, he knows or he will know that we are discussing with the aluminum and steel industry to take the appropriate measures to defend our industries and protect our Canadian industries, while encouraging Canadian procurement to support our steel and aluminum industries.

I can confirm that we are working closely with people in the steel and aluminum sector.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, that option is therefore not off the table. Can we safely assume that?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, we need to look at every possible measure to support the steel and aluminum sector. That is why we are having intense discussions with our colleagues. Both he and I want the same thing. I know him, and I know that he, too, wants to stand up for workers in the industry. We have the same goal. That is why we are working hand in hand with the industry.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, let us get back to the retaliatory measures we have been talking about. We know that the Minister of Finance challenged the study conducted by Oxford Economics. If I am not mistaken, he mentioned that earlier. How many billions of dollars were we at? Can he just remind me of the figure that was given a little earlier—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I have shared several numbers tonight. To date, we have raised \$1.7 billion from the retaliatory measures.

It is important to note that we have imposed tariffs on \$95 billion worth of goods imported from the United States. We have implemented historic measures to protect our industries and respond to this American threat to Canadian industry.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we were expecting \$20 billion. How is the government planning to get the remaining \$18.3 billion?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I am a Quebecker, and I think that Quebeckers and the Bloc Québécois members want the tariffs gone. The main thing we want is no tariffs. Then there would be no retaliatory measures.

That is why our priority is to fight the tariffs and protect our sectors, our industry and our workers as we build one Canadian economy.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I heard the minister's press conference too. He was disputing the 97.5% figure from Oxford Economics. On social media, he said that 70% of the retaliatory tariffs that Canada has imposed on the United States since the beginning are still in place. Can we get the most official figures available this evening?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear that my colleague is looking at my Twitter account. I might even suggest that he follow me. The numbers I post on social media are accurate. We obviously want to keep Canadians informed. I am pleased to see that my colleague pays close attention to what we post on social media, because this is important information for Canadians and for the industry.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I believe I am already following his account, but I do not think he is following mine. I would like to return the invitation.

Let us move on to another topic. We know that starting next January, the European Union will begin imposing tariffs on imports from countries that do not have carbon pricing. It has even stated that it will start with high-emission sectors, including steel and aluminum.

In Canada, the government has made changes to the carbon tax. Earlier today, we even heard the Prime Minister say that he was proud to have scrapped it. What guarantee do we have that this will not negatively impact our exports to the European Union?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed sitting on the trade committee with the hon. member. Speaking of CBAM, the carbon border adjustment mechanism, which came up a lot at committee, it is very important to note that Canada has very progressive environmental policies in place to make sure we are on a level playing field with other countries that believe in protecting the environment. It is important to note that we will continue trading with the EU and like-minded countries, but we do have a leg up in our progressive environmental policies.

● (2200)

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I will clarify once again what I would like to know. Did he get a guarantee from the European Union that the changes made to Canada's carbon pricing system would not have an impact on exports?

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, we talked about the EU, and I believe that measure is coming into force in 2026. That is something we are working on with our colleagues, but it is important to note that, right now, we have progressive environmental policies in place to make sure we protect our industries and our environment at the same time.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, given that Quebec has kept its own carbon trading system intact, will products from Quebec be exempt from customs duties if the European Union decides to follow through on its threats?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that at this current time we are in a crisis, and we need to continue supporting our workers and our industries. CBAM is a very important part of that conversation, which came up at committee.

I remember when the Conservatives were against any type of progressive environmental policy. We knew that it would hurt our workers at the end of the day, and we want to make sure that we remain competitive—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move on to another topic, namely the negotiations for a free trade agreement with the United Kingdom. Negotiations seem to have been stalled for quite some time. It turns out they have been officially suspended for a year and a half. Can we get an update on the discussions?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the United Kingdom is an important trade partner for Canada. Currently, we have a system in place to give us access to 99% of its market. It is working really well.

I sat down with the trade minister when I was in Paris last week to open discussions on coming to a trade agreement. Right now, we have access to 99% of its market.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, has a date been set for negotiations to resume, or are we not there yet?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, what the trade minister and I talked about was a commitment to making sure we are able to restart talks on that. I am sure our officials will get to it as soon as possible. We look forward to having the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom come, this weekend, to Canada, so that we can welcome them, continue to discuss our relationship and grow it even further.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, did the main sticking points come up in the discussions that he confirmed took

place? We know that for them, it is our supply management system. Hormone-treated beef was also a very difficult subject and was one of the reasons negotiations were suspended. Were these things discussed, or was there just a commitment to raise them again when the negotiations resume?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, speaking of our beef and meat industry, I did have a conversation earlier today and last week on access to new markets, including in the United Kingdom, for our sectors. This will be a conversation we will have, and I know officials will follow up as well.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I will address one last subject.

My colleague and I studied the CARM system, the CBSA assessment and revenue management system, twice at the Standing Committee on International Trade. Fears were expressed. The system was criticized by some people, including importers and exporters.

Today, according to a survey of their members, things are not going well at all. Apparently, the situation is verging on chaos.

My colleague and I were initially in favour of postponing the system rollout. Last fall, we both voted to ask the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit.

Is my colleague having discussions with importers and exporters about the problems with the system?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, the issue around CARM is what we studied. It is a new way for Finance and the CBSA to collect revenues. The Auditor General has said it is the way forward to improve accuracy. Of course, there are always kinks to be worked out when a new system is put in place, but I believe this is under the scope of the Minister of Public Safety and the CBSA, and those are discussions I will continue to have with my colleagues.

● (2205)

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, they are working on it, but I imagine that my colleague is in close contact with the Minister of International Trade, because this has a direct impact on importers and therefore a direct impact on trade.

In a situation like the current one, where trade is very difficult and challenging, we do not need to shoot ourselves in the foot with a system that is riddled with problems.

Does the minister have any assessments of the system's performance and his evaluation of it? I would like to know what is planned to improve the situation.

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, the CARM project was put in place way back when, during a Conservative government. This has been going on for over a decade, and we need to continue working together with all parties and my other ministerial colleagues to work through it. CARM is an important adjustment for collecting revenues accurately from importers that bring in goods, but that is a conversation I will actively have with our Minister of Public Safety.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I think that everyone agrees that the old system needed to be replaced. That is not the issue. The concerns that were raised were about the system as it was going to be implemented, along with the lack of preparation.

Is the minister in discussions with importers and exporters about their concerns and the irritants and problems that this is causing?

Are there any assessments, with figures and data, of the system's performance and how it is seen by Quebec importers and exporters, as well as by the chambers of commerce and all the groups that were very concerned and are now dissatisfied?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I have attended many trade shows and have come across many importers that have come across the CARM system, and yes, there are importers that are fully set up and using the system, but there are also other importers that are having some issues. This is what I brought up to our Minister of Public Safety. As I said, this impacts importers across Canada, and we want to make sure the system works accurately.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we know that this initiative is a major source of dissatisfaction. I have the data right here: There are calculation errors in duties and taxes, trouble obtaining technical support, serious system performance issues, and 22 service interruptions.

Everything I just mentioned happened in the first month of the program's existence. Is that what the minister calls a system that was ready to be implemented?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, what I do know is that the CBSA is working very hard to resolve these issues. It is important to note the Minister of Public Safety, whose scope this falls under, is fully aware of them.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we know that importers have recently been required to deposit a financial guarantee themselves in order to participate in the Release Prior to Pay-

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ment Program, since they can no longer use the financial guarantee deposited by their customs brokers.

The transition period ended on May 20. It is a terrible situation.

What is being done about it?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that we want to make sure trade is easy for businesses to do. Why did a previous government, the Conservative government, bring forward the CARM system? It is because it is about the collection of revenues and accuracy. We want to make sure that we are able to bring it into force, but of course, that falls under the scope of the Public Safety Minister and the CBSA, which I will be working—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am splitting my time.

Does the Minister of Finance support the construction of new Canadian pipelines?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this question was addressed with the premiers at the great meeting we had in Saskatoon. Everyone wants to see more being done for energy corridors in this country. We want to bring our energy and our natural resources to market.

• (2210)

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, does the minister support new Canadian pipelines?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we need to bring our natural resources to market, and that includes different things. We are going to be supporting that. It is why we had a great meeting. I wish the member would have been in Saskatoon. Maybe next time we should think of having him with us, because he would have seen how the Canadian premiers—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, it is a really simple question: Does the Minister of Finance support new Canadian pipelines in principle, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, we support in principle all forms of transportation that can bring our natural resources to market, including pipelines, energy corridors and transmission lines. We have been very clear on that. Not only that, the premiers have come together to say that they want to do more to support our natural resources getting to market. The member should be rejoicing about that. The premiers have—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

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Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I had to ask the question three times before I got an answer. I will take that as a yes. The minister has now said that he supports the construction of new Canadian pipelines, so he says. How about the trade minister?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has ambition, and we have a strong mandate from Canadians to build Canada strong. Part of building Canada strong is these major projects to get our resources to market.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of blocking pipelines, is the minister saying in the House of Commons that he now supports the construction of new oil and gas pipelines, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I like this line of questioning. The Government of Canada owns a pipeline. It is called TMX. There is no news there. We have been in the business of bringing our resources to market—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the government chased private capital out of Canada. This pipeline would have been built privately; instead it was built by the taxpayer. How much did it cost to build?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the member is talking to the wrong person asking that. We have brought historic investment into this country. I can think of major projects and major investments. We can look at Dow Chemical and Volkswagen coming into our country. We can look at these—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the member did not answer my question.

What was the cost to the Canadian taxpayer for the construction of TMX, which would have been built with private money had the Liberals not chased the private builder out of Canada?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the member should be proud. It is a bit late, but if my memory serves me well, we ranked number three in the world for attraction of investment just last year or the year before.

Canada is the place to invest and investors know that. We do not need to argue that in the House. Investors—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, once again, the minister did not answer the question.

The Prime Minister has said pipelines will be built only if there is a national consensus. The Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture, the Minister of Environment and the Prime Minister himself have all opposed new pipelines. Is there now consensus in cabinet to build new Canadian oil and gas pipelines?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, since we are talking about foreign direct investments, I would like to quote some numbers. Investment flows into Canada recorded a robust 36% increase from 2023 to reach \$85.5 billion—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is part of a consensus within his cabinet to build oil and gas pipelines. The Prime Minister told Canadians that he supported the government's decision not to cancel the approval of northern gateway.

Has the Prime Minister changed his mind, and is the Minister of Finance part of a consensus to build oil and gas pipelines?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that we received a strong mandate from Canadians to build big projects. The world wants what Canada is building, and we need to continue building—

The Speaker: The member for Simcoe North.

Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is for the Minister of Finance.

It has been reported that the government needs to issue or borrow over \$600 billion of debt this year. Is that true?

• (2215)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member seems to read from “The Fiscal Monitor”, so I would advise him to refer to a publication done by the Government of Canada. There is a lot of good information for him in that.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, is the finance minister aware that despite the Bank of Canada not lowering interest rates, both the 10-year yield and the five-year bond rate for Canada have increased?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I know it is getting late, but I will provide good news, because I like this member in particular, who is a very smart member. He will know what really matters to Canadians is that, with Germany, Canada is the only country in the G7 to have a AAA credit rating. I can see his face; he is smiling because that is something that he should be—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, one of the gentlemen at Fitch recently said that the lack of a budget “raises questions about transparency and contributes to [Canada's] greater economic...uncertainty”.

Does the minister agree with that statement?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, what I agree with is that Canada is one of only two countries in the G7 that has a AAA credit rating, with Germany. I am looking at a former finance minister in Quebec. He knows how important it is to have that kind of credit rating and have the lowest—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, is the finance minister saying that Canada's AAA credit rating is safe?

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Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I will give another number to my colleague, because I know he likes numbers. If we look at the FES 2024 projections, our deficit-to-GDP is 1.6%. He can look at the other G7 countries. He will see that we are in a very good position.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, is the government's AAA credit rating safe?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the member should be proud, and I can see he is proud, that Canada is one of the two countries in the G7 with a AAA credit rating. It is a great place to be. He should have come with us to the G7 finance ministers'—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, the Bank of Canada has warned that 40% of the amount of government debt issuance is purchased by non-bank financial actors, including hedge funds.

If we are issuing record amounts of debt, does the minister agree that this represents a risk to Canada's financial stability, our credit rating and the rate at which Canadians have to borrow to pay for their mortgages?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, my colleague would be happy to learn that the public debt charges' percentage of nominal GDP has been pretty consistent, at around the range of 1.5% over the last decade, and in 2023-24, it was 1.6%. That is a very good place to be. That is why we believe in Canada strong.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, does the minister believe that how much money the Government of Canada borrows impacts the borrowing rate Canadians pay for their mortgages?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the member knows me well; he has known me for a bit. He knows I believe in fiscal discipline, and he knows as well that we are going to present a very ambitious budget, a budget he is going to be proud to present to his constituents.

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, does the minister believe it is reckless to issue record amounts of debt when the Bank of Canada is warning that the market may not be able to absorb that amount of debt, or if there is fiscal uncertainty in the world, that our interest rates will increase when we have record amounts of Canadians renewing their mortgages?

Do they need to pay more, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the question people watching at home have on their mind is whether the member believes it is important for Canada to meet its NATO commitment of 2% of investment in defence. This is really the question people at home are asking themselves: Does the member believe it important to meet our NATO commitment of 2%?

Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, it is getting late, so I will circle back one last time.

Does the minister believe Canada's AAA credit rating is safe?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I know it is getting late. I will say to my colleague, I do believe that it is great for Canada to have a AAA credit rating. I can say that my col-

leagues at the G7 are very envious of Canada's position, because they know that we are the true north, strong and free.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does the finance minister believe that all Canadian taxpayers should pay the tax that they owe, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know it is getting late, but the questions are becoming more and more interesting. I believe in a fair tax system, where everyone pays their fair share.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, when the minister was a Trudeau minister, his government claimed to crack down on wealthy Canadians evading taxes by moving money offshore.

Did the government's efforts capture the current Prime Minister's actions, setting up offshore investment funds worth \$25 billion?

• (2220)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I know the member would have loved to be at the G7 finance ministers' meeting in Banff, because he would have seen Canada's financial call to action on money laundering. This was an initiative by Canada. He would have been proud. He would have been in the room and applauding when he saw Canada standing up to make sure that we are cracking down on financial—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary East.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, the minister is evading the question altogether. When the Prime Minister was at Brookfield, he set up offshore funds in the most notorious tax havens, Bermuda and the Cayman Islands.

Did the government's offshore crackdown cover the Prime Minister's shady activities, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I really feel that the member would have been very happy to be with us, because he would have seen Canada's leadership. He would have seen all our G7 colleagues watching us and thanking Canada for putting that on the agenda as the chair of the G7. We want to combat money—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary East.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy if the minister could actually answer a question.

Of the funds the Prime Minister set up, one was headquartered at a local bike shop. Would the government's actions cover this type of tax evasion, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I told the member we were not in some bike shop; we were in Banff, a great city in Canada. That is where we had the G7 meeting, and there were 175 accredited media. I am sure he saw me on TV and he watched the press conference. I know he is the kind of person who would watch the press conference to celebrate Canada's—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary East.

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Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the minister that no one has enough time to watch him. The minister cannot answer if these types of actions would be caught. The Prime Minister set this up in 2022 and 2024, when he was a financial adviser to Justin Trudeau.

Was there a government effort to turn a blind eye to this tax evasion, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, if the member is wondering who is watching me on TV, I can assure him my mother is.

The other thing he would have seen is that the other G7 countries were proud to see Canada. I do not feel, because I know it is late for them, that the Conservatives are proud about Canada. We are leading the world. We are leading in combatting financial crime.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance, will he commit to ensuring that any company Brookfield is invested in and the Prime Minister has interest in will not unfairly receive government grants, loans or funding?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I have a sense that the member really feels that he should have been at the G7 meeting, because he would have seen the moment where Canada was on the world stage, leading in combatting financial crime. I will think about sending him an invitation next time, because he would really learn from these discussions.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, pipelines are crucial for Canada's economic prosperity. With the weight of his office, will the Minister of Finance push for the construction of new national pipelines?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives will have a great opportunity. They can vote for Bill C-5. I am sure people are anxious. There are people watching tonight. The member was wondering who is watching. Bill C-5 is—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary East.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, does the minister believe a single premier in this country should have the power to veto national energy projects vital for our economic future?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I believe in premiers coming together to build this country. We saw that in Saskatoon. We saw Canadian unity, with Canadian premiers being—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary East.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, does the finance minister believe a single premier can veto a project that is in the national interest?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, again, that is a moment of unity; we should seize it. When we have Canada coming together to build big things, we should be proud. We should really be proud to see premiers and the Prime Minister working together to build Canada strong. We are—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary East has the floor.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance believe that the oil and gas cap is helpful to building national energy projects, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I believe in the oil and gas sector; it is a very important sector in our economy. It provides jobs for Canadians in many parts of our country. I am

proud of the construction workers who are making our country strong, and we will—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has the floor.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to say that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona. I will ask my questions, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Finance.

The International Energy Agency forecasts global oil demand will peak imminently and drop 25% by 2030. Before demand drops that far, OPEC intends to monetize its five-million-barrel-a-day spare capacity, threatening prices under \$60 a barrel for Brent crude. Canadian Energy Research Institute said this would make most oil sands projects' cash flow negative.

For the 2025 budget, how will the minister mitigate Alberta bitumen revenue shortfalls, federal government revenue shortfalls, stranded long-lasting fossil pipelines and other assets, and price-collapse risks?

● (2225)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell all Canadians how much I appreciate the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I wanted to pronounce her riding name properly, and I apologize if I did not do that. She knows that I appreciate her and her questions.

The member will know well that we want to invest in a number of forms of energy, including renewable energy. We want to invest in hydroelectricity, wind, solar, nuclear and SMR. We want to make Canada an energy superpower, and I think there are great lessons to be learned from British Columbia, Quebec, Manitoba and many other provinces that have invested in hydroelectricity and other forms of renewable energy. We are going to learn from them. We are going to work with them. We are going to build—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has the floor.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, in 2017, our current Prime Minister said that most fossil fuel reserves are “unburnable” under any reasonable climate targets. In 2022, he said that transitioning our economies to net zero is an enormous opportunity and that the transition is “capital-intensive” and “job-heavy”, and is what the world needs for the future and right now.

Given that growth in solar, 25%, and batteries, 50%, now outpaces fossil growth by a scale of 12 to 1, will the minister reallocate subsidies to match and fast-track critical minerals for batteries?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, it is true that we have attracted record levels of investment in renewable energy. We have attracted record investment in the EV sector to build a full battery supply chain. I think it was Bloomberg that even ranked Canada ahead of China for the resiliency of our battery ecosystem, so we are going to continue to invest. We have a number of investment stack credits that we have put forward to make sure we attract these investments.

The member is right to say that the biggest challenge for humanity—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona has the floor.

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in March, the government announced temporary EI relief because of foreign tariffs. It was lowering the hours needed, waiving the waiting weeks and suspending the severance clawbacks, but those changes are only temporary. I am wondering whether the government will be making those changes permanent for Canadian workers.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member. She is a great member of the House.

We have made the changes because they were necessary. We wanted to make sure we had tools in our tool box to make sure we can support workers. This was at the core of what we wanted: to make sure that we have a number of measures that we put in place to support workers. She knows that the government really cares, like she does, about workers, their families and their industry.

Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, will the minister be making those measures permanent for Canadian workers, as the New Democrats have been asking for some time?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, we have always paid attention to the requests from members and our colleagues from the New Democrats. Like I said, we have a set of measures that were in place that met the moment to support our workers, and we will always be there for our workers. I know the member will keep—

Business of Supply

The Speaker: The member for Edmonton Strathcona has the floor.

Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, with the ongoing genocide in Gaza by Netanyahu, the expansion of settlements, the announcement of 22 new settlements planned for the West Bank, and Canada's obligation under the Genocide Convention, is your government planning to suspend the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement as New Democrats have asked you to do?

The Speaker: Questions go through the Chair, please.

The hon. Minister of International Trade has the floor.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question, and I will let the Minister of Foreign Affairs answer that as it is under her scope.

Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I would believe that questions on trade agreements would be something that the trade minister should be able to answer, and the fact that the minister is not answering that question makes me think he does not actually want to provide an answer to Canadians.

Will the government introduce mandatory supply chain due diligence legislation requiring companies to address human rights, including forced labour and child labour, as promised in the last Parliament? When can we expect this legislation?

● (2230)

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, we expect all Canadian companies to follow all guidelines and, of course, protections for labour provisions, protections for environment and protections for indigenous peoples. That is what we expect. We do have systems in place to ensure that there is a complaint line and there are follow-ups through the national contact point.

The Speaker: It being 10:30 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.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:31 p.m.)

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