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# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

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Tuesday, April 20, 2021

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Section of ParLAmericas respecting its participation at the 12th gathering of the ParLAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality, held virtually on September 23 and October 2, 2020.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-289, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to table this important piece of legislation. For many rural communities across Canada, crime has reached a crisis point. Rural Canadians too often do not feel safe in their own homes, many are victimized, often they have given up reporting property crime altogether and they cannot get affordable insurance, if they can get any insurance at all. My constituents are tired of being victims. They are tired of the revolving door of the justice system and of crime not being taken seriously. They are losing faith in the justice system because too often it works in favour of the criminals, to the detriment of the community and the victim.

My bill is taking a step toward protecting these vulnerable Canadians and putting the needs of lawful citizens ahead of criminals. It would create a new aggravating factor at sentencing for crimes committed where there is evidence that the offence was directed at a person or a person's property that is experiencing increased vulnerability due to remoteness from emergency, medical or police services. It would make the aggravating factor associated with home invasion more inclusive of rural properties by ensuring outlying structures are included. It would ensure that the use or possession

of a weapon in home invasions can trigger the aggravating factor and ensure that if offenders do something so egregious that they do not receive bail, the judge considers that rationale for why they remain in custody when giving credit for time served.

I want to thank all of my colleagues for helping me with this bill, my colleague from Lakeland and all of the citizens in Alberta, who helped me come up with this idea.

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## PETITIONS

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am tabling the following petition in the House of Commons.

We, the undersigned citizens of Canada, draw the attention of the House of Commons to the following:

Whereas, a new report published by the Associated Press has revealed that there has been an ongoing campaign of Uyghur birth suppression by the Chinese Communist Party which includes methods such as forced sterilization and abortion; and,

Whereas, in addition to the recent news of coordinated Uyghur birth suppression, there is also a body of mounting evidence showing that Uyghurs are being subject to political and anti-religious indoctrination, arbitrary detention, separation of children from families, invasive surveillance, destruction of cultural sites, forced labor, and even forced organ harvesting; moreover, it is estimated that up to three million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities have been detained in what have been described as concentration camps; and,

Whereas, evidence now makes clear that the Chinese Government's treatment of the Uyghurs meets most, if not all, of the criteria for genocide as outlined in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; and,

Whereas, Canada cannot remain silent in the face of this ongoing atrocity.

Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the House of Commons to take the following actions to address the situation:

1. Formally recognize that Uyghurs in China have been and are being subject to genocide.
2. Use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act ("Magnitsky Act") and sanction those that are responsible for the heinous crimes being committed against the Uyghur people.

**The Speaker:** I would like to remind members to be concise and specific and make sure they do not take too much time.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting several petitions this morning.

The first petition is from Canadians across the country, and these petitioners are calling the attention of this place to the prime importance especially relating to human death and Bill C-7 and the current amendments that would protect those suffering from mental illness.

Petitioners are calling on the government to support measures to protect human life, as all human life should be regarded with great respect from conception to natural death. Petitioners say that we should support Canadians who are most vulnerable and defenceless and not facilitate their death.

- (1010)

## FIREARMS

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting today is from Canadians across the country who are concerned we are the only G7 nation in which the use of sound moderators is not allowed. They say this is a violation of section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Sound moderators, for the firearms community, dramatically increase the safety of their use in preventing folks from losing their hearing. They are calling on the government to allow for a legal acquisition possession in the use of sound moderators on firearms by all licensed firearm owners in Canada and call upon the provinces and territories to amend provincial and territorial prohibitions and allow the use of sound moderators while engaging in all legal hunting and sport shooting activities.

## CONVERSION THERAPY

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am presenting today is from Canadians across Canada who are concerned about Bill C-6 and the definition of conversion therapy.

Petitioners are calling on the government to fix the definition. They are also calling on the government to ban conversion therapy, a degrading practice designed to change a person's sexual orientation; ensure there are no laws discriminating against Canadians that would limit the services they could receive based on their sexual orientation; allow parents to speak to their own children about sexuality and gender, to set house rules about sex and relationships and to allow free and open conversations about sexuality and sexual behaviour; and avoid criminalizing professional and religious counselling voluntarily requested by consenting Canadians.

## PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am presenting today is from petitioners across Canada who are calling on the government to recognize sexually explicit material online is many times depicting sexual violence and could be easily accessed by young people. The consumption of sexually explicit material by young persons is associated with a wide range of harms, including pornography addiction, the

reinforcing of gender stereotypes, and the development of attitudes favourable to harassment and violence, including sexual harassment and sexual violence particularly against women.

Petitioners are calling on the government to recognize the harmful impacts of the increasing accessibility of sexually explicit material online for young persons. They are calling on the quick passage of Bill S-203 in the other place and for the government to recognize it. They are calling for the government to rapidly pass this bill.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the final petition I have this morning draws attention to the plight of the Uighur people. When we in this country say “never again”, we do mean never again. I am not sure if members have had a chance to see the pictures of the Uighurs lined up on the train station platform being loaded on to trains, but the plight of the Uighurs is an incredible thing that we are called in this place to recognize.

Petitioners are calling for the government to formally recognize the Uighur situation in China, the plight of the Uighurs in the face of the communist government there, to recognize that as a genocide and to use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, also known as the Magnitsky act, to sanction those responsible for these heinous crimes so when we say never again we mean never again.

## CONVERSION THERAPY

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today.

The first petition brings to the attention of the House that conversion therapy has historically referred to coercive, degrading actions that seek to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity which are wrong and should be banned. Bill C-6 defines conversion therapy as “a practice, treatment or service designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual, to change a person's gender identity or gender expression to cisgender or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour or non-cisgender gender expression”. This broad definition, the petitioners indicate, wrongly applies the label “conversion therapy” to a broad range of practices, including counsel from parents, teachers and counsellors encouraging children to reduce sexual behaviour.

Bill C-6 expressly allows counselling, medical and surgical efforts to change a child's gender, but prohibits support for a child seeking to de-transition to his or her birth gender. Bill C-6 could restrict the choices of LGBTQ2 Canadians concerning sexuality and gender by prohibiting access to any professional or spiritual support freely chosen to limit sexual behaviour or de-transition.

Petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to take the following actions: ban coercive, degrading practices that are designed to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity; ensure that no laws discriminate limiting the services that individuals can receive; allow parents to speak with their own children and to set their own house rules; allow free and open conversations about sexuality and behaviour; and avoid criminalizing professional and religious counselling voluntarily requested and consented to by Canadians.

• (1015)

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my second petition is in regard to the ongoing campaign against the Uighur people by the Chinese Communist Party. It involves such things as forced sterilizations and abortions for birth suppression, subjecting them to political and anti-religious indoctrination, arbitrary detention, separation of children from families, invasive surveillance, destruction of cultural sites, forced labour and even forced organ harvesting.

It is estimated that up to approximately three million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities have been detained in what have been described as concentration camps. Evidence now clearly indicates that the Chinese government's treatment of the Uighurs meets most if not all of the criteria of genocide as outlined in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

These individuals, like so many, are calling on our government to formally recognize that the Uighurs in China have been subjected and are being subject to genocide and to use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Magnitsky act, and sanction those who are responsible for the heinous crimes being committed against the Uighur people.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the Speaker just prior had indicated to members about the length of speaking on petitions and I just want to reinforce this. I did not want to interrupt the member, but when presenting a petition, members should be sticking specifically to the petition and it does not necessarily mean that one reads the petition. It is supposed to encapsulate the essence of it briefly and hold back on the commentaries. I just wanted to reinforce what the Speaker had said earlier.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is noted.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am disappointed my greatest fan interrupted me before I even got started.

I, too, am presenting a petition to have the Uighurs recognized in such a way that the people who are pushing it forward are prevented from benefiting further by invoking the Magnitsky act. We know the government finally agreed to declare this horrible act a genocide, but we need to go further.

I hope that satisfies my greatest fan.

#### Routine Proceedings

##### HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my friend from Winnipeg North on his campaign for Speaker. I am sure we will be hearing more views from him on the rules in the coming days.

I have three petitions to present to the House today.

The first petition is in support of Bill S-204, a bill that would criminalize Canadians going abroad to receive organs that have been taken through forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

I am pleased to share with the House that the bill has just passed the committee stage in the Senate and will be headed very soon for third reading. I congratulate Senator Ataulhjan and all the senators involved in that important work.

• (1020)

##### ETHIOPIA

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the second petition is with respect to the ongoing humanitarian situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The petitioners draw the attention of the House to the human rights abuses involved in the conflict, as well as the ongoing humanitarian challenges. They call on the Canadian government to be strongly engaged with the governments of both Ethiopia and Eritrea on working to improve the situation.

##### CONVERSION THERAPY

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the third and final petition I am tabling this morning is with respect to Bill C-6. The petitioners are very supportive of efforts to ban conversion therapy, but they are very concerned about the drafting of the bill, in particular the definition used for "conversion therapy". The definition of conversion therapy used in Bill C-6 is like no other definition of conversion therapy used in other statutes, at other levels, that address this practice. The definition is erroneous in such a way that it would restrict private conversations—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, you have clarified the rules regarding petitions. This is not a form of debate; it is just to present petitions. The member is using this as a platform, which is not within the rules.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I would ask the hon. member to present the petition succinctly so we can address the rest of the orders of the day.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I was finished presenting the petition, but I will say on the point of order that this is a very long petition. It fills up an entire page with text. I think a few sentences offering a summary is not the same as—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Now we are getting into debate. Is the hon. member finished presenting petitions?

*The Budget*

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, my comments were with respect to the point of order. I am done presenting petitions, and I have completed my intervention on the point of order.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**THE BUDGET**

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from April 19 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this House again to continue to respond to the 2021 budget that was tabled by the federal government yesterday.

As so many parliamentarians, members of the media, stakeholders and even some ordinary Canadians have done, I too have spent hours poring over the contents and the backgrounders, the annexes and other finer details of this budget. Since this is the first budget we have seen in over two years, to be true, a dubious record for Canada, and given the unprecedented health and economic circumstances we are in, I was very eager to receive and review the budget to determine what it would mean for Canadians in the short, medium and long term.

Before I get into the details, let me once again congratulate my colleague the Minister of Finance for making history yesterday as the first female finance minister to table a budget in this House. As I said yesterday, this consequential achievement is long overdue. My four daughters will undoubtedly take inspiration from her.

That said, they certainly will not take inspiration from the budget that the minister has laid before us. This is by far the biggest-spending budget in the history of our nation. It has delivered an avalanche of spending the likes of which our country has never seen before, and yet for many this budget will be a major letdown.

With well over two years since the last budget, the government has had ample time to get this right. For way too long, Canadians have been left without a comprehensive plan for our economy to guide us through what has now become the stormiest season of our lifetime. One would have expected that, with so much time to prepare, the government would have offered Canadians renewed hope and confidence that a secure future would still be theirs. One would

have expected a revised and hopefully more effective plan to get Canadians vaccinated in short order. One would have expected a clear plan to safely reopen our economy and get Canadians back to work again. One would have also expected a bold strategy to help struggling small businesses back on their feet again. Finally, one would have expected a responsible government to come forward with a credible plan to manage the massive financial consequences of this COVID pandemic, consequences that future generations of Canadians will be saddled with and have to pay for.

Those who were hoping to see these things in the budget will surely be disappointed. This not a budget that has been developed to fight the pandemic; this budget was developed to help Liberals fight an election. Of that, there can be no doubt.

To be sure, there are a number of positive measures in this budget, some of which we will undoubtedly support and promote, especially those that continue to help Canadians through this very difficult time and also those investments that secure our long-term prosperity. They should expect our support for those.

For example, we are pleased to see that the government listened to us and to the many business organizations across Canada and extended the Canada emergency wage and rent subsidies. We are supportive of a number of important small business measures, such as the new hiring incentive program, the promise of lower credit card processing fees, and supports to help businesses move online in a digital economy.

Sadly, what is completely missing from this budget is emergency support for new businesses, which have somehow fallen through the cracks because in early 2020 they did not yet have the established revenues to qualify for the government's emergency support measures. They are still falling through the cracks.

We also support the introduction of a policy that would allow companies to expense the full value of qualified capital investments in the same fiscal year in order to encourage companies to reinject their corporate savings back into our economy on an expedited basis. We welcome the extension of the student loan interest waiver and the making of additional investments in broadband to improve connectivity within Canada.

● (1025)

Similarly, we welcome additional steps to eliminate the inter-provincial trade barriers that measurably undermine our economic growth. We also support the decision to extend sick leave for seriously ill Canadians to 26 weeks. This is precisely the type of spending we are inclined to endorse.

*The Budget*

We Conservatives have consistently supported the government in its efforts to help Canadians through the health and economic crisis of our lifetime, and members can be sure we will continue to do so, but there is more to a federal budget than just borrowing and spending. Budgets are about promoting economic growth, including the setting of priorities. They are about exercising fiscal prudence and probity and delivering to future generations a bright and economically sustainable future, and that is what is missing in this budget.

In the lead-up to budget day, we provided both the Prime Minister and his finance minister with a list of must-haves for this budget for the government to win our support. These were measures that we believed were absolutely essential to safely reopen our economy, get Canadians back to work again and provide future generations with the hope and confidence that they can still live out their Canadian dream. As I mentioned, a number of these measures have made their way into the budget. It is amazing what happens when the official opposition does its job by prodding and poking the government from time to time, so I commend the minister for acting upon at least some of our asks.

However, instead of creating a sustainable road map for economic recovery, and I emphasize the word “sustainable”, this budget appears to represent a wasted opportunity to do right by future generations of Canadians. It does not deliver a comprehensive plan to position our economy for long-term success. Spending a loan is not an economic plan. The budget fails to sufficiently address the most important structural weaknesses in our economy, including our declining productivity. Nowhere does it meaningfully address the dramatic flight of foreign capital from our country, nor does it commit to comprehensive regulatory and tax reform.

This budget is notable for its marked pivot away from our natural resource sector, another vote of non-confidence in a sector whose contributions to our national prosperity have been immense over the years. There is no mention of our world-leading and ethical oil and gas sector. There is no critical minerals strategy, just half-hearted measures about consultations, research and a centre of excellence. The government's failure to meaningfully address the skyrocketing cost of housing means that millions of Canadians will see their dream of owning a home slip through their fingers. This is another failure.

Some two billion dollars' worth of trade crosses our common border with the U.S. every day, yet the budget scarcely touches on border security and trade facilitation, and it makes no mention whatsoever of what steps are being taken to plan for an eventual safe reopening of our border. The budget also fails to measurably address the state of Canada's health care and, most importantly, the mental health wall that our country faces. Fortunately, our Conservative leader has identified this significant vulnerability and has committed to addressing this challenge in a future Conservative government.

We had called for the current Liberal government to stop supporting and investing taxpayers' money in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which is an institution that delivers no meaningful or measurable benefit to Canadians. With Canada's current bilateral relationship with China in utter disrepair, giving taxpayers' money to this China-led organization is completely futile, indefensible and unacceptable. Did the minister respond to our request?

No. For the Liberal government, it is business as usual with the communist regime in Beijing.

● (1030)

We are judging the government's budget not on the quantity but on the quality of its spending. Based on that standard, we have found this budget to be wanting. Notwithstanding the additional benefits that the budget would deliver for Canadians who continue to struggle through this pandemic, measures which we support, it is enormously expensive, as members know, and it would dramatically expand the role of government in the lives of Canadians.

Last year's deficit will be a staggering \$354 billion, and the government has no plan whatsoever to eliminate its deficits. Our national debt is expected to reach \$1.4 trillion this year, with the government signalling that this debt is likely to hit an eye-popping \$1.8 trillion by 2025. That is why the Liberals asked for an increase in the debt ceiling to \$1.83 trillion.

Presumably with this in mind, the Prime Minister gave the finance minister a revised mandate letter in which he laid out three clear directives to safeguard our national finances. Those directives were: first, avoid creating new permanent spending; second, review Canada's debt management strategy; and third, present a new fiscal anchor. That is the standard the Prime Minister himself has set, and Canadians should be able to take him at his word. Therefore, we are going to measure this budget against that standard.

How did the Prime Minister and his finance minister do?

Let us look for a moment at permanent spending. Remember that the finance minister was instructed to have no new permanent spending. Instead of complying with the Prime Minister's instructions and mitigating against the immense financial challenge facing our country, the finance minister and her government have triggered a plethora of new permanent spending commitments that will likely hobble the prosperity of generations for years to come and mean massive new taxes under the Liberal government.

Similarly, the minister's half-hearted attempt to present a debt management strategy falls far short of the rigour expected of an accountable and responsive government. Indeed, the budget failed to justify why the minister felt that further economic stimulus in the amount of \$100 billion was needed when GDP growth has strongly rebounded. She should be happy about that. Preloaded stimulus in the form of savings is primed for release. American stimulus and infrastructure investments well north of \$4 trillion are ready to wash over into our economy.

*The Budget*

Then we found out in the budget and from exceedingly frank finance officials that much of the stimulus was not stimulus at all. It was emergency support funding, much of which we support, and it was programming that bore absolutely no relation whatsoever to stimulating the economy. Imagine our surprise when a departmental official opined “Oh well, all government spending is stimulus.” No, it is not. All the minister had to do was be transparent about her \$100 billion, as we would likely support a number of the initiatives that this fund would support. However, we know that there is an election around corner, and it is now very clear that this funding of \$100 billion is simply intended to stimulate the re-election of the government.

Then there is the Prime Minister's directive to present a new fiscal anchor. It was very clear to the finance minister that she present a new fiscal anchor.

● (1035)

The minister referenced that anchor on page 53 of her budget. That is another fail. The closest this anchor comes to being a true anchor is its vague commitment to “reducing the federal debt as a share of the economy over the medium-term.” That is it. That is not a new anchor. That was the government's own anchor, the debt-to-GDP ratio, except that this one, the so-called new one, does not even have a target and will tempt the government to run up further debt in the years to come.

As the Prime Minister blithely stumbles into the fiscal unknown, Canadians should take little comfort in the government's promises to manage our debt and get our deficit situation under control.

Based on the Prime Minister's own mandate instructions to his minister, this budget must be considered a fail.

I began my speech by saying that I was very eager to review the budget to determine what it would mean for Canadians in the short, medium and long term. In the short term, yes, there are a number of investments and programs that will help Canadians make it through this economic and health crisis. We are supportive of many of those measures. However, in the medium and especially the long term, there is very little to get excited about, just endless debt and deficits with not even a pretense of the Liberal government ever wanting to return to a balanced state, even in the long term.

As a responsible official opposition, we are still carefully reviewing and analyzing the budget and we will discuss it with our caucus tomorrow before casting final judgment on it. Suffice it to say that, so far, I am not encouraged.

One thing Canadians can be confident of, absolutely confident of, is that a Conservative government, led by the member for Durham, will implement a true Canada recovery plan that secures our future by getting Canadians back to work, by helping small businesses recover, by restoring Canada's reputation and competitive advantage and by prudently managing the massive financial burden with which the pandemic has left us. The Conservatives have done this before; they will do it again.

I therefore move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following:

“given that the budget:

(a) adds over half a trillion dollars in new debt that can only be paid through higher job-killing taxes;

(b) contains over \$100 billion for a re-election fund while doing nothing to secure the long-term prosperity of Canadian; and

(c) fails to rule out the introduction of capital gains taxes on the principal residences of Canadians, currently being studied by Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, as a way to pay for the government's spending;

the House demand that the Liberal government's budget be revised in order to focus on accelerating the vaccination plan to end the dangerous third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and policies that will create jobs and stimulate economic growth

● (1040)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his generous comments toward the finance minister on her remarkable achievement as the first woman in our nation's history to table a budget Canada's House of Commons.

I note that the member has outlined some of the measures he does support, but I find it curious. Over the course of our pandemic response, there are certain rather obvious policies that the Conservatives have come out against. In particular, I note that the Leader of the Opposition has voiced his strong opposition toward CERB, the Canada emergency response benefit, on a number of occasions. Similarly, after everything we have been through with our long-term care facilities, he has indicated he does not want the federal government to make investments to improve the quality of life for residents in long-term care facilities and would rather leave that exclusively to the provinces.

My question for the hon. member, specifically, is whether he supports the historic proposed investment to create Canada's first national early learning and child care strategy which would ensure women have a fair shake at participating fully in Canada's economy and would reduce the cost of child care for parents.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Speaker, I find it passing strange that the member was not listening carefully as I gave my speech, as our opposition has been articulating its views on a child care strategy. In fact, our letter to the Minister of Finance expressly calls for the government to implement policies that support women, helping them to engage in the workforce. This is critical for our long-term productivity.

What we do not support is an Ottawa-knows-best, one-size-fits-all approach. We know that many families will be left behind, that do not avail themselves of institutionalized day care. They have family, friends and neighbours who help out with that. On top of that, the member's party has been promising this for 30 years.



*The Budget*

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Madam Speaker, during the 2019 election campaign, the Bloc Québécois sounded the alarm about seniors' inadequate incomes. We think the government should address that insecurity by increasing seniors' benefits.

We know that the pandemic has made things even worse. Health consequences and isolation hit seniors first. In July, the government finally gave in to pressure from the Bloc Québécois and gave seniors an extra \$300 plus \$200 for the guaranteed income supplement. The Bloc Québécois insisted that there should not be two classes of seniors and demanded that the increase be monthly and systematic.

In this budget, the government is creating two classes of seniors, which is exactly what the Bloc Québécois rejected in the first place. We do not understand why the government would increase benefits for those 75 and over but not those aged 65 to 75. That does not—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. The hon. member for Abbotsford.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Speaker, as the member has noted, there is some support for seniors in the budget, but before we embark upon any new permanent spending programs, we need to place of all this in the context of the long-term fiscal sustainability of our country. That is why the mandate letter to the Minister of Finance clearly says that there will be no new permanent spending, yet the budget completely breaks her responsibility to follow that directive.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my colleague is a fellow British Columbian, so he knows very well that my constituents in New Westminster—Burnaby are hard working. They are running small businesses. Families, people with disabilities, seniors and students are all struggling through this pandemic and we have now hit this tragic third wave, which is the worst yet in the pandemic. My constituents are shocked with the fact that the Liberal government will be cutting the supports that people so desperately need during this pandemic and are angered by the profiteering we have seen during this pandemic. Canada's billionaires are adding \$78 billion to their wealth at a time when so many people are struggling.

My question for my colleague is very simple. The budget gives a free ride to the ultra-wealthy in the country. Does he feel it is appropriate, at this critical time, that the Liberals are giving a free ride to Canada's ultra-wealthy?

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Speaker, this is a question the member has asked me before in the House. I appreciate him repeating it, and I will repeat my answer.

The real way of supporting Canadians and introducing fairness across all sectors of our economy is to generate economic growth. We had gone into this budget saying no new taxes, especially on our hard hit small business sector, and we are pleased that for the most part there is not a dramatic increase in tax burden on those businesses that are still struggling, although there is some.

These businesses are still calling for help from the government, and new businesses are not receiving it because of the reasons I

outlined in my speech. I wish this member of the NDP would focus on economic growth and generating wealth within Canada so every family across this country benefits from that prosperity.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my question is around credit ratings. Last June, Fitch downgraded our national credit rating. At the same time, S&P warned it could downgrade our credit rating over the next couple of years, “should the deterioration in the government's fiscal position become more severe and prolonged than we currently expect.”

My colleague pointed out very aptly that the Prime Minister has now stumbled blithely into the fiscal unknown. Does my colleague think Canada might be in danger of a credit downgrade again, and what effect might that have on our prospects fiscally?

• (1050)

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Speaker, I certainly do. My letter to the Minister of Finance outlined the fact that we had serious concerns that Canada's credit rating was going to be downgraded because of a declining fiscal situation. That is a result of unmanageable debt and deficits and unmanageable stimulus spending, which overheats the economy and leads to inflation. We want to make sure our economy is on sound, solid footing.

When Fitch downgrades us, as it recently did, it should sound alarm bells to all of us to ask what the Liberal government is doing wrong.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the first question from the parliamentary secretary, because the member did not answer it and skated around the answer. He was asked whether he supports the child care initiatives here. What he said was that one size does not fit all and that we have to look for different solutions.

This is a tested program in Quebec. It is a successful program in Quebec that has gotten more women into the workforce. It has done a lot for gender equality in the workforce.

Which is it: Does the member support the initiative or think the model has been a failure in Quebec?

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Madam Speaker, first, we support the provinces in making their own decisions in these areas. Clearly, Quebec has made its decision to establish this program, and we laud them for that, but there is nothing in the budget I have seen that says the minister is going to adopt the Quebec system. She has praised it, but we have no details in the budget about what this system will look like, other than that it is going to lead to \$10-a-day daycare and a reduction in child care costs by 50% over the next few years.

*The Budget*

There is no detail attached to this proposal, so this member is asking me to judge something I have not even seen in its entirety. I will repeat that what we want to see is a system that creates new child care spaces but also incorporates flexibility for families that have other models of child care they want to access. We believe in the rights of parents to choose for their children. I wish this member would.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Madam Speaker, let me begin by saying that the Bloc Québécois stands in solidarity with the people of all Canadian provinces, and especially Ontario, who are dealing with a resurgence of the pandemic, which has become alarming in many respects. Quebec seems to be managing a little better for the moment. Let us hope we can get out of this situation as soon as possible.

Quebec and Canada, like the rest of the world, have been hammered by a devastating and unexpected pandemic, the scale, scope and devastation of which no one anticipated. This was followed by a serious, significant economic crisis that has rocked key sectors of our economy, including everything from self-employed workers and small, local businesses to big multinationals and the greedy giants that the airlines have become.

The government has done the right thing in one respect, specifically, taking advantage of its huge borrowing capacity, which compares favourably with most other OECD countries, to be able to inject significant amounts of money into the Quebec and Canadian economies. It is the right thing to do. Some \$50 billion will be spent this year, followed by \$100 billion over the next three years, to invest in the actual economic recovery. That is something the government can do, and it is certainly what needs to be done.

In some ways, it listened to the Bloc Québécois—not just the Bloc, that is not what I am saying—when it came to addressing the interests and needs of Quebec and what Quebec was calling for. The government did listen, to some extent. In some cases, there was more talk than action, but the government did pick up on some of the themes that we, together with the National Assembly of Quebec, deemed to be absolutely essential for stimulating economic activity.

I am thinking about the aerospace sector, which appears in a Canadian budget for the very first time. I am thinking about the biopharmaceutical industry, which is now gaining prominence under the current circumstances after being neglected in recent years. Canada and Quebec in particular, were a hub of pharmaceutical research until the sector was decimated after years of neglect.

I am thinking about the electrification of transportation. Let me say from the outset that this is very much a Quebec issue, subject, and expertise. Quebec is an undisputed leader in this area just as it is in the aerospace industry.

I am thinking about the forest-based bioeconomy. I suspect, and I will say it with a smile, that it would not be in the budget if not for the very eloquent and strongly worded statement, addressing the reality of the Quebec regions, made by what we call the Bloc Québécois “caucus du bois” at the initiative of the member for Jonquière and the member for Lac-Saint-Jean. We agree that it is not

huge. More money has been allocated before, for example to fight the spruce budworm. However, it is a good start that some funding will be invested in forest-based bioeconomy and that intent is what we were looking for. We will see later whether it is significant or not.

I have to admit that there is some concern associated with that. Where will this money be invested? For example, had the federal government decided in 2021, as it did in 2009-10, to inject a massive amount of money into the automobile industry, we would not expect it to go to Drummondville or Val-d'Or. We would expect it to go to Ontario. If the government injects substantial amounts of money in aerospace, we expect that half this funding will go where half the aerospace industry is located, that is, in Quebec, which is a world leader in that sector.

● (1055)

The pharmaceutical industry was seriously gutted. The expertise was Quebec-based and research capacity is still Quebec-based, not exclusively, but for the most part. Initiatives were brought in during the pandemic by Quebec businesses and corporations.

The electrification of transportation is more than just an economic sector in Quebec. It is our identity. Quebec cannot take full credit. Its geography and history have made it a place where clean hydro-electricity, drawn from its rivers, has shaped our province as a leader in clean energy and everything that follows, including the electrification of transportation. It seems only natural that such leadership would be recognized.

Buying Quebec products, such as charging stations by AddEnergie Technologies, and installing them across Canada would be a good way to recognize our production capacity and technology. There are several other companies such as Elmec in Shawinigan.

However, we would have reservations and concerns if the plan is to take our expertise and move it somewhere else, diluting the competence and expertise that Quebec is renowned for, to benefit Canadian provinces with our own money. That goes for the forest-based bioeconomy as well, although there is obviously a large forestry industry in British Columbia and a little in New Brunswick and Ontario. This expertise must not be moved, because that would undermine Quebec's competitive edge in key economic sectors. We will have to be very vigilant.

In the aerospace sector, for example, the federal government had no problem retroactively passing a bill allowing Aveos jobs to be transferred from Montreal to Manitoba. If that is where this is going, we are not interested.

When the government decided it was interested in the electrification of transportation, it initially announced \$500 million for a Ford plant in Ontario. That does not mean there will not be any plants in Quebec, but we in Quebec obviously know that Ontario is not a hub for transportation electrification.

I remind members that the government made investments to combat spruce budworm in the Maritimes but not in Quebec, which was also having problems with that pest.

*The Budget*

Glaring omissions like this have happened repeatedly in the past. Here is another example from this budget: the Davie shipyard, one of Quebec City's economic powerhouses that represents 2% to 3% of a budget merrily hovering around \$120 billion, even though it accounts for half of Canada's shipbuilding capacity. The government says it is because Irving is failing to deliver, so bureaucrats will be hired to go support Irving, which will keep on failing to deliver. There is nothing here for Davie, which makes no sense.

This tendency to cherry-pick Quebec's expertise and use our own money to generously distribute that expertise across Canada could turn into an issue. Are these amounts enough? Bioforestry is a special case.

We certainly applaud the fact that something that has been good for Quebec is being applied to the rest of Canada. Quebec has been innovative and has gained international recognition for the child care policy my premier, Ms. Marois, implemented. According to every economic analysis, not just Quebec-based ones, that policy massively increased women's presence in the workforce. The fact that Canada has at long last decided to implement a similar model is worth applauding.

Now, as I have said elsewhere, students do not tell teachers how to correct their work. The federal government will not tell Quebec how to run a child care system. Instead, it should express an interest in learning how Quebec runs its system. There can be exchanges of ideas and free consent to improvements. Generally speaking, the concept of free consent should be the basic principle underlying Quebec-Canada relations.

● (1100)

If the strange notion of an asymmetrical agreement with Quebec means something other than a simple transfer of Quebec's share of the funding for child care with no strings attached, then that is unacceptable.

This morning, the Quebec finance minister, Mr. Girard, was very clear. He does not intend to negotiate. Quebec just wants its share of the funding. That is the way it should be, even though, yesterday, the Minister of Finance was unable to resist saying that the money should be invested the way she says it should. To put it bluntly, it is none of her damn business.

Quebec does what it wants with Quebec's money. Quebecers have a Quebec government and a National Assembly that deal with such issues. The other Parliament, where we are currently, has no right to tell the National Assembly what to do with its money. That is a bad habit that the federal government has gotten into and is having a hard time overcoming. It is almost genetic. In this case, we are informing the federal government that we will take the money, but we will not be told what to do with it.

The same thing is happening when it comes to long-term care centres for seniors. It is the only federal contribution in health. This is something much larger than an elephant in the room. We are coming out of a pandemic. It is a health issue. Who are the primary victims of the pandemic? Seniors are. We saw that. The loss of life has been dramatic, especially among seniors. What is the budget missing? It is missing help for health care and help for seniors.

I scratched my head. I even thought that in terms of electoral opportunism, a skill this government has mastered, I would have done something. However, there is nothing and it is a slap in the face to Quebec and all of Canada's premiers who are being told that they will not be getting their health transfers. Quebecers and people elsewhere in Canada might take note and get fed up with this lack of respect. As for the rest of the budget, anyone could have come up with it. The right decisions were easy to make. However, the bad decisions are shocking.

I was talking about CHSLDs, or their equivalent across Canada. The federal government said it would invest \$3 billion over five years, which should mean roughly \$120 million a year for Quebec. In the context of long-term care, that is not a lot of money. On top of that, the federal government said the money would have conditions attached, because it is Canada, which is intrinsically superior to Quebec's jurisdictions.

However, this fails to acknowledge that the underfunding of the health care system is largely to blame for what happened. In fact, Ottawa has not been paying its fair share for quite some time now. The average age is higher in Quebec than elsewhere.

The federal government likes to take a moral stance and tell others how things work, even when it has no experience in the matter. The federal government has never run a health care facility, but it knows everything because it is the federal government, and they are the Liberals so they are, by definition, superior. This constant tendency to meddle in Quebec's affairs makes no sense, especially considering that Ottawa can barely manage its own jurisdictions, such as border control.

Word choice is a problem here. The federal government uses words like "aeronautics", "forests", "health" and "electric transportation", but the measures themselves are quite vague. In reality, we will debate the budget for a number of days, after which we will vote on this budget, with all of the consequences that entails. We will then move on to the budget implementation bill and other things.

I want to get back to the very important topic of seniors. The Liberal government, that eternal warrior against all forms of discrimination, be they imaginary or real, decided to invent a new form of discrimination, distinguishing between real seniors, aged 75 and older, and phony seniors. If I were a senior 75 and over, I would not be having a big celebration, thinking that I was going to get something. In reality, I would get a \$500 cheque in July, which is less than \$50 a month over the year. That is insulting enough as it is, but seniors aged 65 to 75 do not even get a little something. They get nothing at all.

● (1105)

I do not know what planet the Prime Minister is living on, but since yesterday, we have all been getting messages at our riding offices and on social media from people aged 65 to 75, who are furious, or even pissed off, if I may say so. They are feeling disrespected.

Because we are good people, as everyone knows, we will urge the government to make things right.

*The Budget*

The government's economic statement last November predicted a deficit of \$380 billion, a figure that ended up being \$350 billion. The \$30 billion difference is the same amount that it would cost to implement the provinces' demand to increase health transfers from approximately 22% to 35% in one year. It absolutely would not get the government in trouble. This is something it could do.

If the government accepts our amendment, the Bloc Québécois proposal would increase old age security for those 65 and over by \$110 a month. That is a significant sum that would total approximately \$4 billion a year. That is just a little more than 1% of last year's deficit for the group of people who were most affected by the pandemic.

We should be able to talk to one another. If our amendment were adopted, we could be in a situation where this summer's disappointing \$500 would be accessible to everyone 65 and over pending the adoption of implementing legislation for next year. In this context, there would be legislation next year because we would work together to bring in this law.

We will not be headed to the polls as early as the government would have liked, but we will presumably still be on the campaign trail come fall. Therefore, there will be no legislation to increase old age security before next summer. It will not happen. We could accelerate things if our amendment were accepted because it would create fairness compared to the profound unfairness of the current version.

We are therefore tabling an amendment to the Conservatives' amendment. I have the pleasure of reading it.

That the amendment be amended by deleting paragraphs (a) and (b) and substituting the following:

“(a) does not include any increase to the Canada health transfers;

(b) abandons seniors between the ages of 65 and 75; and”,

and by adding after the words “economic growth” the following:

“, support health care systems by increasing the Canada health transfers to 35% of health care costs and contribute to the quality of life of seniors aged 65 and over by increasing Old Age Security as of age 65 and dropping the age for the one-time payment of \$500 for the summer of 2021 to age 65.”.

The door is wide open for the government securing the Bloc Québécois vote for this budget and significant appreciation by the simple application of Quebec's basic rules of fairness.

• (1110)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The amendment to the amendment is in order.

Questions and comments.

[English]

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister and government members have recognized the true value of having a national child care system that supports parents being in the workforce. We look at the Province of Quebec and its

success. It is something that should be applauded. We can look at a system and ways to incorporate that nationally.

The member makes reference to long-term care. The constituents of Winnipeg North and I, and I believe Canadians in general, see the need for national standards. We have seen this throughout the pandemic.

Can my friend across the way indicate if he thinks we should support what the government is being called upon to do and look at national standards for long-term care? It such an important issue, and it seems to me to that people in all regions of the country want to see that happen.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, I have a suggestion for my esteemed colleague. Rather than apply Canadian standards to Quebec, which has been doing this for 20 years while Canada has not done it at all, the government could apply Quebec's standards to Canada, and everything will be fine. I do not see why it should be done otherwise. Then Quebec can thank the feds when it gets its cheque and say how pleased it is to have helped women in Canada.

Quebec did not wait for the federal government's go-ahead to become a more feminist state. We have had plenty of budgets tabled by female finance ministers, such as Ms. Marois and Ms. Jérôme-Forget.

I am very happy to see this change. I really feel for people in Toronto who pay \$1,300 per month per child for care. That is absolutely crazy. Kudos to Canada for following Quebec's lead. I just want to make it clear that the federal government will not be forcing its policies on us just because it was inspired by us.

• (1115)

[English]

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to talk about the child care promise in the context of the history of the government not being able to keep its promises. The Liberals promised to balance the budget by 2019. They promised electoral reform, elimination of boil water advisories, reduction of cellular fees by 25% and many, many other things.

How much faith does the member have that the Liberal government will be able to keep this promise?

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, that is a big question. I do not even know where to start.

If we had to list all of the government's broken promises, we would be here all night, so instead I will name just a few. There is often a direct correlation between the probability that a promise is kept and the proximity of an election, so there is reason to be skeptical.

Quebeckers have an advantage when it comes to child care because we already have a system in place. At best, the Quebec government will receive additional funding and will do what it likes with it.

*The Budget*

However, with all of the hype on this issue, I hope that the federal government will follow through on this commitment, that the entire House will agree on the principle of an early child care program and that such a program will be implemented, no matter what the future may bring. Quebec will always be willing to co-operate.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I commend the leader of the Bloc Québécois on his speech.

He quite rightly spoke about the failures of this budget, which include insufficient funding for health care and a lack of support for seniors. It is clear that the budget fails to properly address these two issues.

Another failure is the Liberal Party's refusal to make the wealthy pay. During this pandemic, billionaires grew \$78 billion richer. We know that we are losing \$25 billion per year to tax havens. We also know that 20% of Quebecers want a tax on wealth.

How does the leader of the Bloc Québécois explain the Liberal government's refusal to make the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes?

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, I am tempted to use chemistry terms like centralization versus decentralization.

The Liberals have a compulsive habit of trying to centralize everything. The government is trying to set conditions on programs that should exist regardless. This creates delays, adds complexity and does not provide people with the help they need.

Now, making the rich and the ultra-rich pay is something we can get behind. I will use the example often highlighted by my esteemed colleague from Joliette, namely, tax evasion and tax havens. The federal government is losing out on \$900 million a year that it could be going after.

I am being about as subtle as a freight train—and who knows whether trains between Montreal and Quebec City will even survive—but a single tax return would allow us to decentralize power to Quebec, which tends to honour its commitments, something the federal government does not do. Right now the federal government is leaving \$900 million lying around in champagne-soaked, sunny tax havens, while Quebecers are in lockdown in a post-pandemic economic crisis.

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the main things missing from the budget are of course health transfers and support for seniors.

In my view, another important omission is the print media. For over a year now, we have been calling on the government to support the print media industry, especially regional media venues, which are going through an unprecedented crisis. The budget would have been a great opportunity to do something for that industry, but there was nothing.

I want to ask my colleague, who is also my party leader, to comment on the fact that this was missing from the federal budget.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, the federal government announced that it planned to impose a suitable tax on web giants, which are creating a lot of unfair competition in the communications, arts and media sector.

Imagine being on a flight to Europe with enough fuel to get to Greenland. It stops halfway there. The government taxes 3% of its revenue. However, that is only a temporary measure while waiting for something else for which there is no deadline, and also, the money is going into the consolidated revenue fund. The government criticizes Quebec for taking the money from child care services and putting it into the consolidated revenue fund, but it is taking money from arts, culture and the media and putting it in the consolidated revenue fund, which is unacceptable. That money needs to go to the media and the arts, which desperately need it.

• (1120)

[English]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the response that the leader of the Bloc Québécois gave to our colleague, the parliamentary secretary, about imposing Quebec's great success on long-term care facilities onto the rest of Canada.

Indeed, that is the whole point of national standards, to look to the provinces for the great successes that they have had so that we can use them throughout the rest of the country. Indeed, if there are great successes in Quebec I would love to be able to give those as an opportunity to Ontario. Likewise, I can only imagine that the leader of the Bloc Québécois would want the same.

If another jurisdiction in Canada were so successful in long-term care, would he not like to see those as being options and being made national standards? Does he not see the value of coming together from various provinces and jurisdictions throughout the country to develop standards that can be to the benefit of everyone?

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, I am overcome by emotion.

Now that I have gotten ahold of myself, I would say yes, but on one condition: free consent between equals. If Quebec is recognized for its extraordinary success in child care, then it should not have standards imposed on it or be told how to spend its money. It should be asked what it thinks about that. If Quebec thinks it is a good idea, it will say yes. If it does not, it will say no. That is what I meant by free consent between equal partners. In fact, this concept of free consent between equal partners should be extended to all relations between Quebec and Canada. That would be very beneficial, at least for Quebec.

[English]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to begin by putting in context what this budget means. We are over a year into a global pandemic and it has hit hard. It has hit the world hard, and it has hit people here in Canada very hard.

*The Budget*

Specifically, we know the impacts have been devastating; people have lost their jobs; people have lost their businesses; and people have lost their lives. We also know the pandemic has disproportionately impacted some people. We know indigenous people, who have lived with historic and ongoing injustice when it comes to access to health care and overcrowded housing, have felt the impact of this pandemic even more.

We know women have been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. Women have lost their jobs in service sector and care economy positions. We also know that on top of having to care for children and aging loved ones, women are stretched to the brink and they cannot find affordable child care, so they have been disproportionately impacted to the point that women are now at the lowest job participation rate in decades.

We know that racialized people have been disproportionately impacted. Some of the hardest-hit communities in our country are where there are more newcomers, new Canadians and racialized people. We know of frontline workers who have to go into factories and warehouses, whether it is in logistics or transportation, and are working in grocery stores, on the front lines. These are workers who are often among the most vulnerable and often racialized. They have been disproportionately impacted.

We know young people have felt the burden of this pandemic significantly. Young people who are just starting off their careers saw their jobs cut. Young people who hoped to work in the summer saw many of the jobs they usually worked no longer there. Young people who are looking to build their lives, find partners and grow their careers are unable to do so. Young people have been disproportionately impacted.

One of the greatest shames, something I have referred to as a national shame, is that this pandemic has disproportionately impacted seniors, particularly seniors in long-term care. They have borne the brunt of this pandemic with their lives, and it is something we cannot allow to continue. It should have never happened in the first place, but we cannot allow this to continue.

Now we are dealing with the third wave. The third wave is hitting harder than all the previous waves. We are seeing numbers rising across the country. We are seeing a particularly dire situation in Ontario, where field hospitals are being set up and ICUs are being overwhelmed. Health care workers are telling us they are also at the breaking point. They cannot bear to see more travesty. They are seeing entire families being admitted to the ICU. With this variant, we are seeing younger people who have to be on ventilators. No longer is it just an illness that impacts more so elderly or more immunocompromised people, the variant is impacting younger and younger people. In Ontario, it is clear we are losing the race to the variant.

We have also seen across this country that the poorest communities, where we have the highest number of essential and frontline workers, are the communities with the highest rates of COVID-19 infection, but the lowest rates of vaccination. This is a serious problem.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

These are tough times. We are hurting. COVID-19 has hit all communities, and the third wave is hitting hard. Times are hard everywhere. Case numbers are rising, and front-line health workers are struggling. We must act now to protect workers and ensure better care for our seniors. We must take definitive action right now.

[*English*]

What did the Liberals choose to do in this budget? Budgets are always a matter of choices. They are always a matter of priorities. What does this government choose to do, and what does it choose not to do? Both of those questions are fundamental in any budget.

We have seen the pandemic hit people and impact communities differently, but the one thing that is absolutely clear is this. While working people and small businesses have suffered, the ultra rich have not only been spared suffering, they have seen their wealth increase in the midst of this pandemic. The richest Canadians, the 44 wealthiest billionaires, have increased their wealth by over \$62 billion. We have seen web giants like Amazon, Netflix and Google increase their profits. We have seen large corporate grocery stores increase their profits. The ultra rich have done very well in this pandemic.

We have seen inequality grow. We have seen the inequalities that were already in society get worse, so one would think that, given the growing inequality, and the fact the ultra rich saw their wealth increase disproportionately while workers and small businesses saw their livelihoods diminish and their lives become worse, this budget would do something about it. One would think the budget would answer the question of who will pay for the pandemic and recovery, which should be the ultra rich. That is what one would have thought, but the reality is the budget makes a clear decision and a clear choice. The Liberal government and the Prime Minister have chosen that the ultra rich will not pay their fair share; instead, the burden will fall on families and workers.

This budget does not include a wealth tax. It does not include an excess profits during the pandemic tax. It does not close offshore tax havens or loopholes. It does not tackle the inequalities at all. It does not mean the wealthiest billionaires in this country will be contributing more of their fair share in any significant way. It does not do that. In doing so, the Liberal government is saying that it will continue to allow profits to be made off the backs of seniors in long-term care and that families and workers will have to continue to bear the burden.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Over the course of the pandemic, inequalities have increased, with the ultra-rich becoming richer than ever while people needing help are still struggling to get by. The crisis has highlighted the many holes in our social safety net. This budget should have helped Canadians, but the Liberals continue to favour the ultra-rich while leaving families and workers behind.

*The Budget*

Budgets are a matter of choices. Who did the Prime Minister choose? He did not choose families, workers, or seniors living in long-term care homes. He chose the ultra-rich. The budget has no wealth tax, no excess profits tax and no action to combat tax havens.

The Prime Minister and the government have once again chosen to do nothing, allowing the ultra-rich to keep using tax havens and loopholes. The government chose not to make the ultra-rich pay their fair share. That was a choice, and in making that choice, the Liberal government chose not to help families. It did not address these issues with our tax system.

[English]

We have also noticed some good things in the budget. Without a doubt there are some positive things in this budget. The problem with the positive things in this budget is the Liberal government's track record. On the one hand, there certainly seems to be a strong emphasis on child care. In fact, it looks like it borrowed the plan we have been running on for the past number of elections. In 2015 and 2019, we ran on a commitment to bring in universal, accessible, affordable child care. The Liberals have taken from that, which is great. I would love for them to take from that and get it done. The problem is this. We have a really clear example in front of us that I think the Liberals might have forgotten about.

The fact is that the Liberals and the Prime Minister ran on universal pharmacare in 2019. They included it specifically in the throne speech, but had no qualms of completely abandoning it in the budget. They have yet to endorse their own commissioned report, which states very clearly that it should be a universal, entirely public pharmacare for all, and that is not surprising, because all the experts agree. However, the Liberal government has failed to even accept that report. The Liberals have not come out and said that they agree with the clear recommendation. Instead, they have completely abandoned it. The problem with doing that is this. When they run on something, when they campaign on something, when they put it in the throne speech and make it a priority but then completely abandon it, it makes it pretty hard to believe that they will follow through on another promise in the budget.

The sad reality is that so many people, so many women in our country are just fed up with phony promises. The Liberal government has promised universal child care for 28 years. That is three decades that Liberal governments have been in power, in majority governments, and they have not done it. Many members of the Liberal government were asked, why now? Why have they not done it before? Why are they suddenly realizing this epiphany? It makes no sense that the Liberal Party has been in power so many times over three decades and have nothing to advance this. How can Canadians believe them now?

As I just mentioned, the Liberals have been promising pharmacare for 24 years; that is 24 years of broken promises.

The budget includes a federal minimum wage increase, which is great. We ran on that. The funny thing is that when we first proposed it, the Liberal government was opposed to it and ran against it, but I will put that aside. Now the Liberals agree that it is the right thing to do. However, they promised to do it in 2019, they promised to get it done by 2020 and we are halfway through 2021.

This is an easy fix. People can see things, hear the promises made and not see the action. The problem is that this one is an entirely easy thing to get done. Cabinet could get it done immediately. We are going to follow this and see if this is another example of a Liberal promise just to sound good but not do anything about it.

Herein lies the problem with the Liberal budget: The Liberals are saying a lot of nice things, but they do not actually do them. They do not actually follow through on them. The problem is that when they do not follow through on them, it is not just a void, but people who need this help get hurt.

This really aligns with what we have experienced throughout this pandemic. The Liberals often started off with something that was just the bare minimum and we had to fight tooth and nail to get more help for Canadians. Let us look at some of the examples of things that the Liberal government promised recently or delivered, and we had to fight to make it better.

When we realized that people were going to lose their jobs because of this pandemic and that it was going to be very difficult for businesses, we said that we needed support to keep people hired. The Liberals started off with a 10% wage subsidy. Put simply, that meant they were willing to cover 10% of a person's salary. To cover 10% of a person's salary really will not keep that person hired. It is no significant way to keep people in their jobs. We had to fight tooth and nail and push hard. We said that it had to be more. We wrote a letter, which brought together pretty interesting allies such as the president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the president of Unifor. We said that it had to be at least 75% or higher. We fought hard and we won, so Canadians could see themselves in their jobs. We covered 75% of people's salaries to keep people employed, saving millions of jobs. This is an example of where the Liberals just wanted to do the minimum and we had to fight to get the maximum.

With CERB, the Liberals started off at \$1,000, knowing that it was not enough to even cover rent for a lot of people. We had to fight hard, tooth and nail, to ensure we doubled that to \$2,000, so people would be able to put food on the table. People in lockdowns who could not work would be able to pay their rent and stay in their homes.

The Liberal government completely ignored students and had no support directly for them. There were no financial supports. We listened to students when they said that they needed help because they would not be able to work this summer. We fought hard to bring in direct financial support for them.

*The Budget*

• (1135)

One of the biggest tools to fight this pandemic is paid sick leave, and we fought hard to bring that in at the federal level, the first of its kind, the first new social safety net increase, but we said that there were some problems with what the Liberals have done. They did not bring in enough supports, and they have failed to fix that to date. When the Liberals do not do what they say and when they do not fix the problems we have raised, people end up paying the price and suffering.

Let us look at the choices made in the Liberal budget, who the Liberals have chosen to support and who they have chosen to ignore.

We said that we needed an answer to the question of who would pay for this pandemic, and that had to be with a wealth tax on the ultra-rich, a tax on excess profits, on the pandemic profiteering. We said that there had to be a closing of the tax loopholes.

Did the Liberal government choose to do any of those things in the budget? No. By not choosing to tax the ultra-rich, to close tax loopholes and to end offshore tax havens, the Liberal government has chosen to protect the ultra-rich, which hurts everyone else.

What did Liberals choose to do in the budget? They chose something very interesting. The Liberal government chose to extend the supports that people needed, which is great. However, we are in one of the worst parts of this pandemic, the third wave, and the Liberal government specifically has chosen to cut the amount of help people receive by \$200 a month. These are people who have been laid off or cannot go back to work because of the pandemic.

Let us look at this choice. While the Liberals chose not to make the ultra-rich pay their fair share, choosing to help the ultra-rich, they chose to hurt workers who may have lost their jobs because of lockdowns this summer. Hopefully that will not happen again, although we are currently in a lockdown in Ontario. They chose to cut the amount workers, who were laid off in the summer, received, which is a choice against workers.

What about families that are struggling to pay for medications? Who did the Liberal government choose? It effectively chose big pharma over families struggling to pay for their medications. Who else benefits without a universal national pharmacare program? Big pharma.

Everyone agrees that if we pooled our resources as a country, if every province and territory that already buys medications pooled that buying power, we could negotiate better deals and get better prices. It just makes sense. When the government chooses not to do it, it chooses specifically to help big pharma. No one else benefits from that, and it hurts families that are struggling.

What about refusing to take the profit out of long-term care? The Liberals refused to that in this budget. They voted against our motion that called for this. In that choice, all they are choosing to help profitable for-profit long-term care centres, and that hurts seniors who are suffering.

When the Liberals choose not to improve paid sick leave, they hurt workers who are struggling because they cannot make the

choice to go into work sick or stay home and not pay the bills. They are choosing not to help workers.

When they choose not to help students by forgiving their student debt, they are continuing to make it harder for them.

I want to wrap up with the immediate concern of the pandemic in Ontario. Right now, the Premier and the Prime Minister have both refused to show leadership to deal with this crisis, which is urgent and serious.

We need two things specifically. We need immediately, and we wanted to see this in the budget, an all-hands-on-deck approach to get the vaccines to the communities that need it most. That is a serious problem. Second, we need to immediately improve paid sick leave. All experts agree that paid sick leave will save lives.

The Premier of Ontario has failed to do anything about this. The Prime Minister has failed to act on what we said, which was to improve the paid sick leave program to get help to people. We suggested the use of the Emergencies Act, specifically a public welfare emergency, which would allow us to have more tools to get help to people. We need to do something now. The situation is a crisis. Ontario is on fire. We need to immediately improve paid sick leave and get the vaccines to the people who need it most. We need to tackle this. The consequences are dire, and we are hearing warning after warning.

We will not give up the fight for people. We will continue to apply pressure on the government to ensure it does what is necessary and right for the people of this land.

• (1140)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in this budget is a serious commitment to delivering on child care across the country, something we have not seen in decades. It is a real commitment to putting the infrastructure in place and getting child care down to \$10 a day for parents throughout Canada. We were in a very similar situation just over 15 years ago when Paul Martin introduced a similar budget that would have gotten us there. The NDP teamed up with the Conservatives at the time, brought the government down, Stephen Harper was elected and Canadians did not see that child care.

My question for the member is very simple. Will history repeat itself with this budget or will the NDP support it so parents throughout Canada can get the child care promise in the budget, which was promised last time when the NDP took down the government?



*The Budget*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Madam Speaker, the member brings up history repeating itself. Twenty-seven years ago, the Liberal government promised pharmacare and has had majority governments since. For 27 years, history has repeated itself. Sadly, history has repeated itself with the Liberal government saying one thing and doing another, breaking promise after promise, and that hurts people. The New Democrats absolutely believe in child care. The reality is that the Liberal government likes to talk about child care, but never actually does it.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the leader of the NDP really hit the nail on the head. We have a situation of a government that has a damning track record of making big promises and not keeping them, such as to balance the budget by 2019; electoral reform, which was a centrepiece of the 2015 campaign; boil water advisories; reduced cellular fees; and the other things he has mentioned.

What reason would Canadians have to believe this promise on child care? Why should they believe it?

• (1145)

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Sadly, Madam Speaker, I agree with the member. The problem is that the Liberal government often does say one thing and does exactly the opposite. The most recent example I keep bringing up is the 27 years of broken promises on child care as well as the 24 years of broken promises on pharmacare. It is hard to keep the broken promises straight as there are so many of them.

There is a recent example with pharmacare. The Liberals campaigned on it in 2019, they included it in the throne speech and they have now walked away from it, as if Canadians would not notice. Canadians have noticed. It is hard to believe the Liberal government is serious about something when it just broke a very similar bold promise that it made very recently. The sad reality is that the government will say one thing and then do another. The Liberals say one thing to get elected and once elected, they do not do it.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Liberal budget is the best budget we could have had in 2015. In 2015, the New Democrats ran on child care and the Liberals ridiculed us. They thought \$10-a-day child care was ridiculous and made so much fun of it. Now they understand the wisdom of it. On the \$15 minimum wage, the Prime Minister, a millionaire's son, thought that was ridiculous. Now the Liberals understand, stealing New Democratic ideas.

However, we are not in 2015; we are in 2021. We are in the midst of the worst medical crisis that our nation has ever seen. ICU beds are being overrun and people are dying. The people dying are young, racialized workers who have to go to work day in, day out. I do not see anything in the budget that recognizes the need to support them, to get the resources or use the powers in the Emergency Act to work with the provinces.

Why is the government also cutting the funding for workers in the gig economy? They are the ones who are suffering.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right. This is a matter of choices and the Liberal government has made some really clear choices. It has chosen not to improve paid sick leave, which would directly save lives, and not to support workers, when they might lose their jobs, by cutting the amount of

money they receive. These workers are the most vulnerable and they might lose their jobs. The government has chosen to cut the amount of support they get at the end of the summer.

The government has clearly chosen to ignore the crisis going on in Ontario. That is why we have to again redouble our efforts to say that we need to use the Emergency Act, we need to ensure vaccines get to the communities that need it most and we need to ensure paid sick leave is in place to keep workers safe.

It is a matter of choices and the government has shown again and again that it did not and has not chosen to work for people; it has chosen to protect the ultra-rich.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there is a street in my riding called Manning Avenue, named after Archbishop Manning from England. Years ago he said, "What we will, we are, and what we are, we do." I know I cannot cure the leader of the NDP of his cynicism, and all politicians should take responsibility for the cynicism that grows in politics when we do not deliver as accurately and as strongly as we want to.

He has said he is going to vote for this budget. I appreciate the support and the stability that is implied in that commitment. How can we move toward establishing child care? His party in British Columbia talks about giving all the powers to the provinces, and letting the provinces do what the provinces are going to do. He says that in British Columbia, but in Ontario the results would be devastating. We already saw the Ford government's response to our budget yesterday. Its members sound much like their Conservative counterparts in the House. They do not like public child care.

Will the NDP support us in making sure that the federal government negotiates a strong deal with the provinces and that we do not succumb to provincial desires alone in creating this new, national program? Will he back off saying one thing in B.C. and a different thing in Ontario when it comes to establishing child care?

• (1150)

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Madam Speaker, the whole premise of the question comes back to whether the Liberals are actually going to do what they say. The reality is that sometimes cynicism is not borne out in the evidence. Sometimes it is just pure and raw, and it is unfair; however, in the case of child care, and in the case of the Liberal government, we have 27 years of evidence that despite majority governments, the Liberal government does not do what it promises to do. We have the evidence with pharmacare: The Liberals campaigned on it, made it a priority, said it was important, put it in the throne speech and then did not do it.

*The Budget*

We believe in universal, affordable child care. We believe in working with provinces and territories to make it happen and we will continue to fight for it. Our concern is that the Liberal government just likes to say certain things and not ever end up doing them. We are going to fight to make sure it actually happens. We are going to fight to make sure people have the support they need, and people can count on us to do that.

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there is a lot to unpack in this 754-page document, which is basically an election platform. It is not really a budget. I would offer that a lot of what is said in those documents is in year two and year three. If we read the fine print, the spending is over five years.

We are in the middle of a mental health crisis, and not only a mental health crisis, an opioid crisis as well. While a billion dollars for mental health is not a small figure, it is merely a drop in the bucket, and \$116 million spread out over five years to fight the opioid crisis is truly a drop in the bucket.

Does my hon. colleague feel that more should have been spent on fighting some of the worst health crises, mental health and opioids, that our country has ever seen?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Madam Speaker, while we are in the midst of a global pandemic, and that is a major crisis, it does not mean that other crises have gone away. We still have an opioid crisis, which has taken so many lives in our country. We still have a mental health crisis. In fact, it is going to increase given the additional pain of this pandemic: The isolation, the lack of activities and the lack of interaction will only make problems with mental health worse.

We absolutely need to make sure we are prioritizing mental health. We believe, in fact, that mental health should be included in our health care system so that we truly have a head-to-toe health care system. It is going to be vital coming out of this pandemic. The second piece is the opioid crisis. We believe we need to immediately—

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

The hon. Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the 2021 budget, which was presented yesterday by my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

I will begin by informing you, Madam Speaker, that I have been having technical difficulties since this morning. If I lose the connection, I will rejoin quickly.

[*English*]

Budget 2021 is an ambitious and bold budget that focuses on finishing the fight against COVID and laying the groundwork for a strong economic recovery. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the deepest and fastest recession globally since the Great Depression, and Canada has been no exception. Our government has laid

out a plan that is committed to creating more jobs and a better quality of life for Canadians in the days and decades to come.

As we continue to push through this third wave, we know that brighter days are ahead and budget 2021 will get us there. From the beginning, we have made it clear that our first priority is to fight the pandemic and save lives. The largest immunization campaign in Canada's history is now well under way and by the end of September, Canada will have received more than enough doses for every adult to be fully vaccinated. The budget includes an additional \$1 billion to help speed up immunizations and another \$4 billion for our health care systems.

Our second priority is supporting people and businesses through this crisis and building back better. Budget 2021 not only supports Canadians and businesses as they work their way out of the COVID pandemic, it also invests in the future of our country. Budget 2021 proposes to extend the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the Canada emergency rent subsidy and lockdown support to save jobs and ensure businesses are ready when the economy fully reopens.

The third priority is to build back better. On this front, budget 2021 sets us firmly on a path to a brighter tomorrow. The COVID-19 recession has affected everyone, but the impacts have not been equal. In the labour market, women were hit earlier and harder and their jobs continue to recover more slowly. Long-standing gender inequities have only been amplified over the course of the pandemic, which has put decades of hard-fought gains for women in the workplace at risk.

To date, more than 16,000 women have dropped out of the labour force completely while the male labour force has grown by 91,000. This is a “she-cession”. Budget 2021 lays out an expansive jobs and growth plan that seeks to build a recovery that gives all women in Canada the ability to fully participate in our economy. It proposes providing up to \$146.9 million over four years to strengthen the women entrepreneurship strategy, which allows women entrepreneurs greater access to financing, mentorship and training. We must build back a better and fairer Canada.

*The Budget*

Budget 2021's historic investments in early learning and child care, in youth and innovation and in housing will all contribute to a more inclusive country and a more solid recovery. In particular, we are proposing a truly generational investment in a Canada-wide system of quality, affordable child care. This budget commits up to \$30 billion over five years to work with provincial, territorial and indigenous partners to build this system. By 2025-26, these investments will reach a minimum of \$8.3 billion per year ongoing, including indigenous early learning and child care. Our vision is to reduce costs for parents to an average of \$10 a day by 2026 everywhere outside of Quebec, which already has its own affordable public system. This would start with a 50% reduction in average fees by 2022. This will make a huge difference for Canadian families.

• (1155)

[Translation]

Quebec began putting in place a universal system of child care centres more than 20 years ago, and we must learn from its experience.

Today, the participation rate in the economy for women with young children is higher in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. In fact, Quebec's rate is among the highest in the world.

The Canada-wide early learning and child care system will help more women participate in the workforce. It will also help more children get a good start in life, and it will support Canadians who need it the most. It will stimulate our economy.

We know that our economy needs a boost. Today, approximately 296,000 people are still out of work because of the pandemic, and another 247,000 are facing sharply reduced work hours, which could mean sharply reduced wages as well.

Job creation is a very important aspect of the budget. I would even say that it is a priority. The measures we are proposing will create half a million job and training opportunities for workers over coming years. There will be 500,000 jobs, including 215,000 for youth.

Young Canadians have been hit hard by the pandemic and job losses. However, the impact goes even deeper. The pandemic has had the greatest impact on youth mental health.

We cannot sacrifice Canadian youth because of the pandemic. The budget therefore includes assistance for young Canadians, including those from low-income households, who wish to pursue and complete their education, and provides additional relief from student loan debt.

In the 2021 budget, we are also continuing to help Canadian businesses, particularly small and medium-size businesses, adopt new technologies. The pandemic has hastened the economy's digital transformation. Businesses, workers and consumers are doing more and more business online. By helping businesses shift to digital, we are helping them become more productive and create good jobs, including for young people.

• (1200)

The budget measures also consolidate Canada's position as a world leader in research, innovation and the economy of tomorrow. That is what building back better means.

[English]

We know that the COVID-19 recession has also widened the gaps in access to housing for Canadians. These gaps must be closed if we want to build back better. The investments included in budget 2021 would provide thousands of families with safe and affordable places to call home. In real numbers, \$1.5 billion in additional funding for the rapid housing initiative will add 4,500 new affordable housing units, on top of the 4,700 units that were already funded through the program in the fall 2020 economic statement.

The budget provides an additional \$567 million over two years for the reaching home program: Canada's strategy to end chronic homelessness. Let me tell colleagues that this investment in affordable housing will make a real difference in Ottawa—Vanier, the riding I have the honour to represent. Just yesterday evening, I had the opportunity to speak with local stakeholders at the Shepherds of Good Hope, who told me how critical it is that we do whatever it takes to end chronic homelessness.

We are also proposing to enhance the affordable housing innovation fund. This would create up to 12,700 units in addition to the 17,600 units supported by the program to date.

These investments would not only make sure that tens of thousands of families have safe places to call home, they would create good, middle-class jobs and prosperity.

Increasing the amount of affordable housing is one of the many things this budget does to support and strengthen the middle class. This is a priority, and it should come as a surprise to no one. Since day one, this government has made consistent efforts to support the middle class.

Early in both of our mandates, we cut taxes for middle-class Canadians. Millions of Canadians are benefiting from these measures and the reason for them is quite simple. We cannot have a strong economy without a strong middle class. It is a matter of fairness. Fairness is also why we have raised the taxes on the wealthiest 1% while lowering taxes for the middle class.

*The Budget*

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

We also know that we have to work hard for all Canadians who want to join the middle class. The 2021 budget enhances the Canada workers benefit, which, over six years, will put almost \$9 billion into the pockets of Canadian workers in low-paying jobs. This is an important investment because, in all of our ridings, low-paid workers are often the front-line workers in our local grocery and hardware stores.

These workers need more help to pay their bills. The proposed changes mean that, for the first time, single parents working full-time will be eligible for up to \$2,403 in non-taxable financial assistance. To allow more Canadians to join the middle class, our government intends to introduce a \$15 minimum wage, keeping its promise to Canadians.

Building back better means helping those most in need and supporting businesses wisely. The 2021 budget will allow businesses to immediately expense a large portion of their investments. This will be particularly useful for small and medium-size businesses, because it will make growth-stimulating investments more attractive. It will also free up capital that can be used to create more good jobs.

To create more jobs and support green growth, the budget will also reduce the tax rates of businesses that manufacture zero-emission technologies. All of these measures will improve Canada's competitiveness, attract investment to the country and create good, well-paid jobs.

[*English*]

Strong small businesses and resilient communities are the backbone of a strong economy and a growing middle class.

We have seen some encouraging signs of recovery. Canada's real gross domestic product rose by almost 10% in the fourth quarter of 2020, building on a record gain of over 40% in the third quarter. This is obviously good news, but we know those numbers do not tell the whole story. A recovery plan that would focus on GDP alone would risk leaving people behind, and we do not do that.

[*Translation*]

Even before the pandemic, the government was clear: We need to look beyond the gross domestic product, or GDP, if we really want to grow the economy for the welfare of all Canadians. Statistics like the GDP tell us about the growth of economic activity overall, but do not say much about the quality of life of a family with two children that cannot find affordable housing.

An effective recovery plan is one that helps these families find a place to live, helps their children on the path from day care to university, gives parents the training they need to find and keep good jobs, and protects grandparents as well. In short, we need a recovery plan that allows these families and all Canadians to enjoy a good quality of life, as well as growing the GDP.

COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on the quality of life of many Canadians. I am obviously thinking about the impact on

health, but many of our fellow Canadians are also at grips with job loss, mental health issues and social isolation.

[*English*]

The pandemic has highlighted inequities in many societies, and Canada is no exception. We can do better, and we must do better. Budget 2021 proposes measures to improve the quality of life of many Canadians. As I have said earlier, it would give every child the best start in life by establishing a Canada-wide early learning child care system. This would also support parents who want to work because, without child care, parents, often mothers, cannot work.

Budget 2021 would also help ensure that seniors and those in care live in safe and dignified conditions by helping provinces and territories strengthen long-term care. It would increase old age security for seniors aged 75 and more. It would help young Canadians complete their education and get a job by making education more accessible and by creating job skills development and work opportunities.

It would help more families find a safe place to call home thanks to new investments in affordable housing. It would lift nearly 100,000 people out of poverty with the proposed changes to the Canada workers benefit by expanding eligibility and, for the first time, providing substantial support for full-time minimum wage workers. As well, this budget proposes to create the new Canada recovery hiring program, which would allow businesses hard hit by the pandemic to hire the workers they need during the economic recovery. It would also accelerate access to high-speed Internet in rural and remote communities, but it would not stop there.

Advancing a national action plan to end gender-based violence would give survivors reliable and timely access to protection and services. Addressing the gap in health outcomes faced by first nations, Inuit and Métis people through a broader approach to health and well-being would lead to healthier, safer and more prosperous indigenous communities.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

We have also committed to promoting both our official languages thanks to historic investments aimed at supporting the vitality of official language minority communities and fostering bilingualism in Canada.

*The Budget*

Budget 2021 earmarks more than \$390 million for this initiative, including \$8.7 million for the modernization of the Official Languages Act. Moreover, our enhancement of the women entrepreneurship strategy will give businesswomen greater access to financing, mentoring and training activities.

The budget will also enhance diversity in business governance. In short, economic growth is important, but we also need to measure our qualitative progress to be able to develop the appropriate policies. In this regard, I would like to point out that quality of life is already a criterion for government decision-making, and it will continue to guide our efforts to improve Canadians' quality of life.

[English]

Budget 2021 is truly a recovery plan for jobs, growth and resilience. For jobs, this budget would create half a million new training and work experience opportunities for Canadians. For growth, the investments in early learning and child care, small businesses, students, innovation, housing and the green economy would lead to a growth that benefits everyone. As for resilience, after more than a year of battling COVID-19 day in and day out, I think we can all say that Canadians are resilient.

Budget 2021 would strengthen that resilience by supporting those who are under-represented in the economy, fighting climate change, building on innovation and moving forward with reconciliation with indigenous peoples. It is time to finish the fight against COVID and to invest in a better, fairer, greener, more prosperous and more innovative Canada.

[Translation]

Canadians have been battered by COVID-19, but we will overcome the pandemic. In fact, not only will we overcome the pandemic, we will rebuild a more prosperous country and economy for all Canadians.

The 2021 budget contains measures to heal the wounds left by the pandemic and to help Canada bounce back and become even more prosperous, both for us and for the generations to come.

[English]

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I greeted the presentation yesterday with both skepticism and concern. My question will focus around the skepticism and hopefully later I can talk about the concerns.

The Liberal government has promised democratic reform. For over 29 years it promised child care. For over 24 years it promised a pharmacy plan. It made fiscal commitments prior to the pandemic. It promised to end boil water advisories on reserves and introduce an action plan for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

In his mandate letter to the finance minister, the Prime Minister stated that there will be no new fiscal programs, and he asked the minister to create a new fiscal anchor. If the mandate letter from the Prime Minister to the finance minister means nothing, and the government has such a history of breaking almost every important promise it has made to Canadians, why should we greet this particular document with anything other than skepticism?

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** Mr. Speaker, we have realized many things in the five years since we have formed government. We have ended many boil advisories. Yes, we still have some to get to, but we have dedicated this budget to continuing the work we have been doing to help with that initiative and the many more we have been working on.

We will continue to fight the pandemic, as well as support Canadian families, businesses and workers to ensure a bridge toward recovery. This is what we are presenting, a budget that has Canadians' backs. We have a plan for that.

• (1215)

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, you would really have to live on Mars not to notice that there is currently a housing crisis in Quebec and Canada.

The government is relaunching the rapid housing initiative, which is not a bad program. Last fall, they announced \$1 billion in funding. Unfortunately, Quebecers who submitted projects under the first billion-dollar program have not even heard back from the government.

The budget proposes investing \$1.5 billion, which is not bad in itself. However, under the first program, the government received applications for more than \$4 billion. Clearly, there is a demand for this type of program but, once again, the government is merely tossing a few coins around.

I think it is time to have a real national housing strategy in Quebec and Canada to deal with the problem. We should keep in mind that housing is one of the main indicators of extreme poverty.

When will the government implement a real national housing strategy to deal with poverty in Quebec and Canada?

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** Mr. Speaker, we implemented the national housing strategy in 2017, and it changed things for many communities across Canada.

A few months ago, we implemented the rapid housing initiative, and many regions of Quebec will be able to benefit from it. The program changes things in communities, and it has even exceeded expectations. Our target was approximately 3,500 units. As I said in my statement, we were able to rapidly create 4,700 units across the country. There are four projects under way in my community, two of them in my riding.

We found that the program was effective. In the pre-budget consultations, the communities asked that we continue the program, because many of the initiatives had still not been financed.

The government intends to invest \$1.5 billion in rapid housing, since demand for units is high. We will therefore be able to help people find housing more quickly.

*The Budget**[English]*

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know the minister devoted a bit of her speech to talking about the middle class, but I would like to centre my comments on the working class, specifically with regard to the precarious and part-time workers, those who are in retail, tourism, and arts and entertainment.

The government has acknowledged that this pandemic has disproportionately affected women, young people and racialized Canadians, and many of those groups work in these industries. The government also recognizes that it may need to expand measures like the Canada recovery benefit beyond September, into November, recognizing that we are not out of the woods yet.

Why did the government pick an arbitrary date in July to reduce the Canada recovery benefit by \$200 a week? That is going to be an \$800-a-month hit to precisely the same people the government has identified as having been disproportionately affected by this pandemic. Why is it kicking these people when they are already down and have suffered so much? Why is it making these people pay for the pandemic, rather than the wealthy and well-connected?

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. We know that many groups were affected deeply with this crisis, and at the beginning we brought forward the CERB to help them get through the first wave. Then we adapted our programs to make sure the Canada recovery benefit can continue to support those low-wage workers, women, racialized and indigenous communities that need support. We will continue to support them as we go through this third wave.

We are also including a lot of investments to support the sectors that have been really affected, such as tourism and hospitality. For example, over \$500 million will be invested in the tourism sector. We have clearly listened to Canadians during the pre-budget consultations. We have looked at how people are affected, and we have been adapting our programs to make sure we continue to have Canadians' backs. That is what we will continue to do—

• (1220)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister, whom I have the pleasure of serving in the capacity of her parliamentary secretary as well, for her leadership in particular on the consultation process in advance of this budget.

One of the things I heard while taking part in that process of consultation was the importance of recognizing the disproportionate negative impact that COVID-19 has had on the economic well-being of women in the Canadian economy. Obviously, a marquee initiative outlined in the budget is a \$30-billion investment to establish Canada's first nationwide early learning and child care system.

I am curious if the minister can shed light not only on the value to supporting women and the cost savings this would have for families, but on the economic return we expect to see as a result of this

investment, because it would allow more women to take part in the economy. I would be grateful if the minister could shed light on the economic value of this investment.

**Hon. Mona Fortier:** Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my hon. colleague for his hard work in getting this budget done and also for listening to Canadians, not only in the past months but in the last years, and making sure we focus on what we really need to do on the ground to bring forward those measures.

The Canada early learning and child care initiative is a transformative one. We know this will be a transformative investment. We know it will bring women back to work. We know it will also give our children a better-quality education and get them started early.

As a mother of three, I went through the challenges of not being able to have access to day care. I had to set up my own day care in my basement. We are going to be bringing forward, and working with provinces and territories to set up, an early learning and child care system that will help parents have better affordability. For 2026, we are looking at having a \$10-a-day day care. That is going to make a big difference in putting money into families' pockets, so they are able to better sustain their homes and put food on the table, while making sure we can also grow the economy.

It would create very good jobs. The care economy is something we really need to focus on. Experts have shared it, and many parliamentarians have had debates in the House about this, and we should all be working together to make sure the care economy is—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We will have to leave it there. The time has expired for this segment.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Yesterday, the federal Liberal government tabled its first budget in over two years, which happens to be the longest period of time our country has been without a budget in Canadian history. It was the first budget in a crisis so vast in scale that the last time we faced a crisis of this magnitude was the Second World War. That was the last time Canada was at this level of financial burden. This was also my first budget as a member of Parliament.

All things considered, the pressure was on for the Liberal government to get this right and deliver a real plan to secure Canada, to get us out of this crisis and to recover our economy. I listened very intently to the budget speech yesterday, hoping to hear something that would give me and the people of my generation the confidence that the Canada of tomorrow will be better than the Canada of today. However, I regret to say that, following the Deputy Prime Minister's speech, I did not feel that confidence.

*The Budget*

As Canada braces for the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have spent a significant amount of time, as we all have, reflecting on what is at stake. The crisis we face in this country and around the world—the uncertainty of the future, the uncharted waters and the millions of deaths and economic casualties—feels at times unsurmountable. Every week, I spend a morning calling my constituents, and I can confidently and sadly say that the anxiety, the fear and the worry are palpable.

Confidence in the future is not a common commodity among the people right now, and it is really no wonder. Tens of thousands of small businesses have closed, as we know, each one representing a Canadian family that put its heart and soul, years of sacrifice and work into its business, which contributed to the cultural landscapes of our communities. Millions more Canadians depended on these businesses for employment to put food on their tables and to live their lives, and now these opportunities are gone. It is predicted that 220,000 businesses may close before this is all over, which may impact another three million jobs.

What is frustrating is that not all countries in the world are facing a third wave as we are here in Canada. The United States seems to be well on the road to recovery. It is the same thing with the United Kingdom, which is holding fast to its plan to fully reopen in two months. So, why is this not the case in Canada? This is really what I do not quite understand. Why is it that the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is now raging in Canada's four largest provinces, with Ontario entering a six-week stay-at-home order and closing schools indefinitely to try to stem the exponential growth of this virus? Manitoba just announced further restrictions as well.

If we listen to the Liberal government, it is trying to pin the blame for this third wave on the provinces. Yet, if nearly every province is facing this third wave and if other countries are managing to do better, perhaps the fault lies with the lack of national leadership, with our Prime Minister and his Liberal government.

Canada has more deaths of people over 85 years of age than do our American counterparts, and we now exceed the U.S. in new per capita cases. The U.S. has provided its citizens with over 250 million vaccines, and in Canada we have had less than 10 million. It is really shocking how far apart we are from our neighbours to the south and across the pond. Just last week, the Prime Minister stood in this House and repeated this bizarre misinformation that the U.K. was in the midst of a third wave, when in fact the U.K.'s daily COVID infection rates are a quarter of Canada's daily total, despite having double our population.

It seems that countries that more successfully procured vaccines have been able to prevent the level of death, hospitalizations and economic closures that Canada is now experiencing. Canadians are paying the price for Liberal mismanagement of the pandemic. This third wave is the Prime Minister's third wave, and he has left Canadians unprotected and not secure.

If the third wave was not enough for Canadians to deal with, now we have a budget from the Liberal government that does little to get us out of this pandemic. In fact, there seems to be very little in the budget overall that can make Canadians feel secure in the future and feel that it is going to get better. There did not seem to be a coherent, thoughtful, strategic or innovative plan for recovery in this

budget, and I do believe Canadians were really hoping to see something like this. I think they were hoping to wake up in the morning and see headlines like “Finally a Plan”, yet that was not the case.

We now know that the deficit for this past difficult year is \$354 billion, and next year it is projected to be \$154 billion. Further, the budget predicts that our federal debt will grow to \$1.4 trillion by 2026, which is double what it was before the pandemic, which means that the debt that was created in 150 years was doubled in a few short years.

• (1225)

The Minister of Finance continues to tell us that it is all good and we can afford this because interest rates are low. However, Jack Mintz, professor at the University of Calgary's school of public policy, has said:

It's kind of like rolling the dice.... We are hoping that this huge amount of stimulus won't impact inflation and interest rates even within the next five years or beyond.

Therefore, we are hoping, but there really is no guarantee. The Liberals are just guessing and hoping that this tremendous gamble, gambling the future of Canada, will all work out and everything will be just fine. However, we know from six years of Liberal government that the Liberals do not keep their promises to Canadians. Despite promising in 2015 that they would run only three modest deficits of \$10 billion, which we all remember, the Liberals spent over \$100 billion in deficits in their first four years. They justified this by promising it would create amazing economic growth, yet Canadians experienced sluggish economic growth during the Liberals' first term. As the Conservatives warned before the pandemic crisis, spending \$100 billion of debt with little economic growth was foolish and selfish and left us more financially vulnerable when and if a crisis hit Canada; and then it did hit Canada.

The truth is that the overwhelming majority of members who rise to speak to this budget will not have to deal with the long-term or even medium-term consequences of this type of spending and this mismanagement. It is my generation that will be on the hook for this bill. As it now stands, we are the first generation since World War II to inherit a worse economy from our parents. Millennials are dealing with a decimated job market, soaring housing costs, increased debt and a dim economic future with what seems to be no end in sight, and the situation has only intensified after six years of the Liberal government. The last time, the Liberal deficits did not work to create economic growth, so why should the Canadian people trust that this time it will be different, that all the spending announced yesterday will deliver better results? I am not buying it.

*The Budget*

Despite all of this, all these deaths and all these closures, the loss of freedoms for well over a year, the fear, the anxiety, the worry and the incomprehensible spending and debt burden for future generations, what has been the tone from the Liberal government? How has it really been viewing this crisis? From last week's Liberal Party convention, we know how the Deputy Prime Minister sees this crisis: "COVID has created a window of political opportunity". She said that.

Then, when the Prime Minister was asked last week if he would do anything differently to avoid the devastation of the third wave, he simply replied that he had no regrets and would not change a thing. This is not leadership. This is political opportunism and a Liberal Prime Minister who fails to grasp the severity of his failures.

People wonder if perhaps the Liberal government does not take the time to speak to isolated seniors or out-of-work newcomers or devastated small business owners to truly try to understand what the past 13 months have done to people in Canada. I feel that if it had, it would never have made these offensive and insensitive comments. These comments do not make Canadians feel secure that the Liberal government knows what it is doing.

To conclude, I will share, yet again, what I am hearing on the ground in my own riding, where I have spoken to many parents who tell me their little children are depressed and do not want to eat. I have had elderly women being very emotional with me on the phone, saying they do not want to spend the last few months or years that they have on this earth locked in their apartments away from their grandkids. I have had grown men cry to me on the phone as they have watched their life's work, their small business, go up in flames.

The most frustrating part for everyone is that there is nothing they can do about it. They cannot force the Liberal government to care or to show competency or to prevent the third wave. They cannot go back in time and stop the Liberals from wasting a hundred days betting on a Chinese company to produce vaccines for Canada, only to be embarrassed and dismissed by the Communist Party of China, putting Canadians three months behind other countries for viable vaccines. They cannot go back and force the Liberals to heed the Conservatives' advice to close the borders when we first learned of this mysterious virus wreaking havoc on China, and later Italy.

That is our job as parliamentarians, to hold the Liberal Prime Minister to account. I, along with my Conservative colleagues, have been standing virtually in this House for months, over a year, pleading, asking, demanding that the Liberals show leadership, put forward an innovative, strategic plan and take care of our country's finances so they do not bankrupt Canadians and bring on a second Great Depression. I wish Canada's Prime Minister would acknowledge the impact of his decisions and lead with humility, given the enormous toll his mistakes have had on Canadians, and bring forward a real plan to get us out of this.

I will close by saying that I am proud of the resilience and the strength of the people of Kildonan—St. Paul. I am thankful for their prayers, their kindness and their support. That support gives me strength to keep going in the tough days. It is my duty to repre-

sent them, and I will continue to faithfully fight these battles on their behalf and fulfill my duty as their member of Parliament.

• (1230)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing to listen to Conservatives spin or provide misinformation. The government from day one, whether with the Canada emergency wage subsidy, emergency rent subsidy, emergency business account, credit availability program, CERB program, or direct support for seniors and people with disabilities and so much more, has been there for Canadians in a very real and tangible way over the last 12 months plus. We will have over 40 million doses of vaccines before the end of June.

Can the member tell the House if she believes that it was the federal government's fault that Manitoba was leading during the second wave back in November? We need to recognize that we have a federation and provinces do have a role to play. The federal government has been there in a tangible way. Has it been perfect? No, but we have made the changes and the modifications. This budget embodies a way in which we can build back better. That is what Canadians want: strong leadership. They are at least getting it from one political entity inside this chamber, the best I can tell, based on the speeches I have been hearing.

I wonder if the member might want to reflect on some of her comments and recognize the many good visionary things—

• (1235)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing that the member, again, like many of his colleagues, has yet to show humility for the shortcomings of his Liberal government. In the speech I gave I was trying to be very honest and earnest about what I have heard.

I do stand firm on the position that if the Prime Minister had provided real leadership we would not be in a third wave of the pandemic, experiencing hundreds more deaths and thousands more business closures. That is on the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member on her speech. She noted that this is her first budget, which is a big thing, and there are lots of big numbers showing up in it.

Throughout the pandemic—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am just going to interrupt the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Drummond on a point of order.



*The Budget*

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the member has the equipment needed to speak because he does not have his headset on.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I can see that the hon. member for St. John's East has switched his audio device. We will just ask him to start again with his question to make sure that we have the audio functioning properly.

[*Translation*]

I thank the hon. member for Drummond for his comments.

[*English*]

The hon. member.

**Mr. Jack Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for reminding me of that. It is important for the interpreters.

I want to congratulate the hon. member on her speech. She mentioned at the beginning that this is her first budget. The numbers are huge, as we all know, and the Conservatives, throughout the pandemic, have been expressing concerns about the enormous amount of money being spent.

I just want to ask the member whether she thinks there ought to be a little bit more fairness as to who will actually pay for the cost of this pandemic. We have been talking about the necessity for a wealth tax and the fact that during this pandemic billionaires have earned billions more money. Would she and her colleagues support a fair share of the cost of this being paid for by the ultra wealthy?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Mr. Speaker, the people who we should ask whether it is fair for them to pay for this are the members of my generation. The millennial generation and their children are going to be the ones burdening the tax increases that will surely come to pay for this. We know that inflation is coming. We know that higher interest rates are coming and, yet, the Liberal government before the pandemic was setting us up for failure, should a crisis hit.

As I mentioned in my speech, we were left with low defences because of the amount of money that was spent before. Now with this unbelievable amount of spending, we have doubled Canadian debt. It took 150 years to acquire that debt and we have doubled that in now, what, two years? It is unbelievable, so I think the unfairness lies with future generations who are going to have to pay for this.

There has been zero acknowledgement from the Liberal government of the debt burden it is putting on future generations and the severe consequences that may have on the public services provided by the Canadian taxpayer from the federal government.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear what my colleague from Kildonan—St. Paul thinks about the things that were not in the budget and about the fact that the provincial governments and the Quebec government are once again being left with an underfunded health care system, because the federal share is dwindling year after year and the Liberal government refuses to increase health care transfers.

There is also the matter of regional media. I am sure that there are regional media outlets in her riding that are having a hard time

because of the crisis. I would like her to share her comments on these things that the budget failed to include.

• (1240)

[*English*]

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things not in this budget, like a plan for how we are going to get out of this and a real, strategic, innovative, thoughtful plan of how we are going to get our economy back to normal to make sure the days of tomorrow are better than the days of today.

On the health care transfers, the Conservatives have been very clear. We know that the health care burden on the provinces is incredible and we believe that provinces should have more autonomy to spend health care dollars how they see fit in their regions. We know no two regions are the same.

What is interesting is that the Liberal government will say that vaccine distribution is a provincial jurisdiction, this is provincial jurisdiction, that is the province's jurisdiction, so it is not the government's fault, it is the provinces' fault, and yet when it comes to something like the child care announcement, which is clearly in provincial jurisdiction, that is not a problem to the Liberals. They are happy to spend billions of dollars in the provincial jurisdiction when it suits their electoral fortunes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by commending my colleague from Kildonan—St. Paul for her excellent speech. She did a great job of identifying the positive and negative aspects of the budget speech that was given yesterday by the Minister of Finance.

I also want to commend the Minister of Finance on her first budget. Yesterday was a historic moment in the House of Commons. The minister was the first woman to ever present a budget speech. I think that is worth pointing out and celebrating.

Obviously, I am not going to spend 10 minutes singing the praises of the finance minister, but I do want to quote her. She said before that the budget she was going to present would be the most significant of our lifetime. She was not wrong. This budget will go down in Canadian history as the highest-spending budget ever.

The Minister of Finance made sure of it by presenting a budget containing spending measures beyond belief. Everyone in the Liberal Party of Canada's voting base who had a request got a little something in the budget. Of course, there was \$100 billion to spread around. The Liberal government was handing out money like drinks at an open bar. Some people must be sorry they did not ask for anything, because they probably would have gotten it.

*The Budget*

That being said, the Canadian provinces made requests, but they were ignored. We would have expected a budget announcing the end of the pandemic to focus on bolstering the fight against the pandemic and making sure we never find ourselves in this situation again.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government did not say a word about health transfers. There are not even any plans for that. The budget makes mention of many plans, but none of them have anything to do with health transfers to the provinces. What the Liberal government presented yesterday was an election budget.

It is clearly a red-ink budget. It was probably drafted at a time when the Prime Minister was thinking about triggering an early election because he has a minority government. Unfortunately, since he was unable to procure enough vaccines for Canadians, a third wave hit. We will have a lot of vaccines by the fall, but when we needed them, when it was important for all Canadians to be vaccinated, there were none. That is why there was a third wave of COVID-19, because the Prime Minister and his government were unable to anticipate our vaccine needs and failed to negotiate at the right time.

We have been given something halfway between a pre-election budget and a pandemic budget, and we clearly saw that choices had been made. We approve of some of the measures. In fact, some of the measures announced yesterday are worth mentioning. They are actually measures that we asked for. They are measures that were needed, like extending the emergency programs to help Canadians and businesses. In my opinion, given the situation Canada is currently in, it was obvious that the government needed to maintain them.

One would have expected the budget to provide a little hope and give some indication of what will happen after all Canadians have been vaccinated later this year. Unfortunately, this budget has just a smattering of the measures that Canadians have been calling for over the past few weeks and months. More than anything, it is a Liberal pre-election platform.

Were it not for the pandemic, not even this Liberal government would have dared to present this kind of agenda. The pandemic was the perfect excuse to come up with a pre-election budget. The ultimate proof is the \$500 that will be sent to seniors aged 75 and over in August, which is most likely the best window for calling the election.

• (1245)

I am not the only one saying so. All political commentators are confirming what I am saying here this morning.

My office received many telephone calls this morning. Everyone is asking why that money is going only to people aged 75 and over, and why the Liberal government is ignoring those aged 65 to 75 in this budget. People are wondering what they did to be left out of that measure, because they have the same needs. Sometimes their needs are even greater, since they tend to be active and want to participate in the economy. Unfortunately, we have not gotten an answer.

We asked for clear and specific action to be taken to help Canadians and stimulate the economy. Our leader, Erin O'Toole, has presented an economic recovery plan.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for naming one of my colleagues in the House.

The opposition leader called for clear, targeted, temporary measures to stimulate our economy. Unfortunately, what the budget actually contains is an assortment of superficial measures lacking a clear, precise, concrete objective. We asked the government for measures to stimulate our economy. We agreed on the principle. Unfortunately, that is not what we got.

Economic stimulus means having job creation targets and a plan to end public spending and get out of the recession. What the government presented yesterday contains none of that.

Commenting on this government and the idea of balancing the budget, pundit Bernard Drainville said this morning that it is as though this government takes special pride in not balancing the budget. That concept scares Liberals.

We all remember the Liberals' 2015 promise about running small deficits and balancing the budget by the end of their term. Not only did that not happen, but we also ended up with a \$100-billion deficit before the pandemic even hit.

Today the government is announcing a \$354-billion deficit for last year and more than \$150 billion for this year. Deficits will continue to pile up like that to the point that we will have to start using a new word when talking about public finances. That word is "trillion", and that is how big Canada's deficit will soon be. Canadians will be \$1 trillion in debt. This budget adds half a trillion dollars to the debt. We have to take these things very seriously and think of future generations.

I would like to talk about the national child care service. My wife is an early childhood educator. Yesterday, the government made a big deal about this announcement to impose a single Canada-wide child care system on the provinces. In its budget, it has allocated \$30 billion to create this system. It did not mention that part of that amount will be paid directly to Quebec, which established this system many years ago.

Had this been an economic recovery measure, we might have understood. However, I know and respect the work of Quebec's early childhood educators, and I know that they must have a minimum of three years of training, and it also takes time to build and upgrade these buildings. Do the Liberals honestly believe they can deliver what they have put in the budget and that it will contribute to our post-pandemic economic recovery?

*The Budget*

It is quite simply impossible. It is not an economic recovery measure. The Liberals are making a promise that they may not be able to keep, because there will be an election in the meantime. Once again, we have become accustomed to the Liberals making announcements and not keeping their promises.

In closing, I want to mention something else that is conspicuously absent from the budget: compensation for supply-managed dairy farmers under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement. Despite all the billions of dollars it dished out yesterday, the government was unable to keep its promise to fully compensate supply-managed farmers for their losses. We certainly must take note. The government probably thought that group had already received enough in the past and did not need any goodies before the next election.

That is what I dislike about this budget. The government is trying to please so many people without thinking about the future. The 724 pages that were presented to us yesterday tell us that the future is not important to the Liberals.

• (1250)

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague's thoughts on two things in particular.

First, how does he square the federal government's penchant for centralization with its refusal to increase health transfers? Every year, Quebec sends half of its taxes to the federal government. Cuts were made—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I must interrupt the hon. member to ask him to wear his headset and repeat his question for the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Mr. Speaker, first, how does the member square the Liberal government's penchant for centralizing decision-making, even on matters of provincial jurisdiction, with its refusal to increase health transfers? In the 1960s and 1970s, the federal government funded 50% of health care expenditures. Today, it funds just 22%, and health care systems like Quebec's are always at breaking point as a result of this chronic underfunding. Why does the Liberal government keep refusing to restore health transfers while trying to impose standards on the Government of Quebec and the provinces?

Second, we know that seniors have suffered the most during this pandemic. It is bordering on insulting to offer a paltry \$500 to seniors over the age of 75. Why not increase pensions? The Bloc Québécois is calling for old age security to be increased by \$110 a month. Seniors built Quebec and Canada. They should be able to live decently and maintain their purchasing power.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île for his questions. It is not very often that we agree on all of the points he mentioned.

To answer his question, it is in the Liberals' DNA to want to centralize and to preach to the provinces. It is therefore clear that they were not going to use an election budget to meet the legitimate demands of the provinces.

With regard to health care for seniors, what stood out to me is the fact that the Liberal government allocated \$3 billion in the budget

for measures affecting Quebec's long-term care facilities. However, this morning, the Quebec finance minister described that amount as a pittance, since it will have no impact over the next five years. What is more, the federal government wants to impose national standards in Quebec's long-term care facilities.

It is in the Liberals' DNA to want to impose their solutions and their views on the provinces. There is a well-known expression that says, "Ottawa knows best", which, in this case, can be interpreted as, "the Liberals think they know best".

• (1255)

[English]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one thing that is really important for people to understand is how fundamentally different the economy of northern Ontario is from the rest of Ontario. We are resource-based and we are isolated. The resources that are created in the north go to Queen's Park or they go to Ottawa, and we have to go cap-in-hand and beg for programs to maintain some kind of balance.

I noticed one thing in the budget that is really important for people to recognize. The New Democrats have been pushing for FedNor to be a stand-alone agency for years, something the Conservatives refused to do. The Liberals have ridiculed it up until now and we have seen nothing from its northern members to defend northern Ontario. The Liberal government has finally realized that the New Democrats are right and has established FedNor as a stand-alone agency. It will be in the same category as all the other economic development agencies in the country.

Up until now, northern Ontario has been the poor, underfunded cousin. It is really important for the House to recognize that northern Ontario has a right to proper economic development and FedNor, as a stand-alone agency, will make a huge difference for our region.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Conservative Party wanted the government to include specific measures in the budget in order to help every region of the country to grow.

As long as FedNor has the tools it needs to restart the economy and make sure that those who lost their jobs are rehired, then I think that time will tell whether creating FedNor was the right decision.

Is that the ultimate solution to all of northern Ontario's problems? I do not think so, but if it is a possible solution, then I do not see why we should not examine it.

Still, I hope that this was not just more lip service from the Liberals to try to win over people from northern Ontario, because it is going to take a long time before the budget is passed, not to mention that there is also the risk of an election.

*The Budget*

[English]

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in her speech, the Minister of Finance basically said it would be irresponsible not to borrow hundreds of millions of dollars because interest rates were so low, completely ignoring the fact that interest rates will inevitably rise.

Does the member think the budget should have had a plan to account for future interest rate increases in its expenditures for it to be a responsible fiscal plan?

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, of course there should have been a plan. There is no plan for economic recovery, and there is no plan to control spending. This is a budget without a plan.

Just beneath the surface though is the Liberal Party's re-election plan, and that is a shame. The Liberal Party and the government put their own interests before the interests of our generation and future generations.

Half a trillion dollars in debt is being added to Canada's total deficit, and that will take years or decades to pay back. Canadians will have to pay that back for generations.

[English]

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are at a pivotal moment in the history of our nation. How we respond as we continue to fight COVID-19, and as we plan to emerge from the crisis that it has created from both a public health and economic point of view, will dictate what Canada looks like not just next month or next year, but 10 years and 20 years from now, when my five-year-old daughter is ready to join the workforce.

As we embark upon this debate, I would impress upon my colleagues the importance of focusing on the tasks at hand, which are defeating COVID-19, creating jobs and growth opportunities as we emerge from this pandemic, and setting the stage for a recovery that is both inclusive and sustainable.

Before I go further, I would like to inform the Speaker that I intend to split my time with the hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora at the 10-minute mark.

Those three categories that I have outlined, the continued public health response, the need to create jobs and growth and the need to set the stage for a sustainable and inclusive recovery, are precisely what this budget endeavours to do. Over the course of my remarks I will spend a moment on each of those particular items.

When it comes to the public health response, though the conditions here in my home province of Nova Scotia are quite good compared with just about anywhere in the world, I recognize the same is not true for many different parts of Canada. In order to continue the public health response that we have started over the course of this pandemic, our government proposes putting forward several very serious measures backed by spending commitments. In partic-

ular, in the budget I note our commitment to invest \$4 billion to strengthen public health care systems in provinces across Canada.

I have spoken to community members who have had appointments delayed and who have been dealing with certain services simply not being available as the public health care system has pivoted to deal with the influx of COVID-19 cases. In the early days of this pandemic I remember wondering whether someone in a car accident would have a place to go, if the case loads got too high in our local hospitals. This injection of billions of dollars into provincial health care systems would help alleviate those strains and let our front-line health care workers have the tools they needed to do their jobs and keep us safe.

When it comes to vaccination, Canada is currently third in the G7 in terms of the number of residents who have had access to a first dose, but we know that we need to continue to do more. Budget 2021 proposes to inject an additional billion dollars to help provincial governments administer vaccines as they arrive.

One of the national tragedies we have witnessed over the course of this pandemic is what has taken place in our long-term care facilities. Here in Nova Scotia the vast majority of deaths we have seen as a result of COVID-19 have come from a single long-term care facility: Northwood in Halifax. We need to make the kinds of investments today that will ensure this tragedy does not repeat itself and that will provide an enhanced quality of life, so that our elderly, when they move to long-term care facilities, can count on living a dignified experience. While there are good facilities all across Canada, we have seen some horror stories emerge from this pandemic. That is why this budget's investment of \$3 billion to strengthen long-term care facilities across Canada and our work to establish national standards are so important.

One of the chief concerns I have heard from residents of my own community, both over the course of this pandemic and before COVID-19, is the importance of mental health. Through the pandemic we have advanced measures that would see increased investments in telehealth opportunities and would ensure folks could tune into the Wellness Together portal online. However, we know that is insufficient, particularly for people who need the support of a medical practitioner face to face.

Members will note that budget 2021 includes a commitment to work with provinces and territories to establish national standards on mental health as well. This is backed by funding that would allow the process to actually take place and achieve meaningful progress in the mental health portfolio. However, this pandemic was not just a crisis of public health: It was also an economic crisis that we continue to experience, and we have advanced record measures to support Canadian households and businesses so that families could keep food on the table and businesses could keep workers on the payroll. I am so pleased to share with businesses in my own community that we are going to be extending the emergency benefits, which they have come to rely on to get them through this very difficult time, until it is safe for their customers to return at full scale.

*The Budget*

• (1300)

The Canada emergency wage subsidy has now kept more than five million Canadian workers on the payroll. The Canada emergency rent subsidy has let hundreds of thousands of businesses keep their doors open at a time when it would have been very difficult to do so otherwise. However, it is not enough to support businesses through this pandemic. We have to set the stage for jobs and growth so we can accelerate out of this pandemic and get back to where we would have been had the pandemic not shocked our economy so badly.

That is why I am thrilled to see the kinds of investments that are included in this budget, including hiring incentives for businesses and supports that will help small businesses and medium-sized enterprises in particular adopt an online strategy so they can participate in the digital economy. We see record investments in skills development, particularly for young people, new investments that will spur entrepreneurship, investments to remove internal trade barriers and investments in the kind of infrastructure that will create growth for the long term. It is that growth that will allow us to escape this pandemic and ensure that we can afford the measures we are putting in place today.

Colleagues in the House who have known me for some time will know that I have been a passionate advocate for our environment from the time I was young. In fact, the very first time I was involved in politics was when I was seven years old and signed up to be the vice-president of the environment club at my elementary school. I have literally been an advocate for a clean environment since then. Of course, I had the chance to serve as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of the environment and climate change in the previous Parliament and I am proud of many of the measures that we introduced.

When I look at the measures that are backed by serious funding commitments in this budget, I see the opportunity to take advantage of clean growth opportunities in the global economy, and to promote opportunities in my own community in the green economy. I see that we are not only going to invest over \$8 billion to reduce industrial emissions, but we are also going to let homeowners take advantage of hundreds of thousands of opportunities for home energy retrofits. There are massive investments to develop clean technology and expand zero-emissions vehicle infrastructure and manufacturing opportunities right here in Canada. I see opportunities for us to make investments that will mitigate the consequences of severe weather events, whether forest fires in the west, floods throughout the country or hurricanes on the east coast. I see the single-largest investment to protect nature in the history of Canada included in this budget, and I am very proud to support it.

It is not enough that our budget is sustainable from an environmental point of view: It also needs to be inclusive to ensure that everyone is able to take part in the economic recovery. I note in particular the support for women in the economy in this budget, including the marquee policy of Canada's first early learning and national child care strategy. This is a policy that will be a legacy piece for this government, and 30 years from now I am confident that families will look back and say that this was the right thing. We know that although it may be expensive to advance this particular policy, the impact it is going to have of allowing more women to

take part in the economy will more than pay for itself. It will save phenomenal amounts of money for families of young children and will allow families not only to have that extra cash on hand but, as I have mentioned, allow the secondary earner, who is more often than not a woman in the household, to take part in economic opportunities that she may not have had access to in the absence of an investment of this nature.

I see the significant investment of billions of dollars to support young people and make education more affordable. I see opportunities for job placements and hiring incentives specific to young people in this budget. I look at supports for low-income workers and precarious workers, such as the \$8.9 billion investment in the Canada workers benefit. It will ensure that someone who works full-time in a minimum wage job will not live in poverty in Canada. I see new protections for workers in the gig economy and I see an expansion of the EI sickness benefit to 26 weeks, which is very important to me at home. I want to thank in particular Kathy MacNaughton, who raised this with me in 2016 and has been working alongside me to see this done. People should not be better off to get fired than to get cancer in the 21st century in Canada.

There are additional supports for Black Canadians. There are additional supports for indigenous Canadians. There are additional supports for the LGBTQ2 community. We will do whatever it takes, for as long as it takes, to see Canadians through this pandemic, but this budget also sets the course for jobs and growth that will allow us to rebound out of this recession more strongly. It will ensure that everyone, no matter their background, no matter their age and no matter their level of income, is able to have a fair shot at taking part in the economic recovery. This is the Canada that I want to build, and this budget lays the framework to achieve these outcomes.

• (1305)

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I noticed when the budget was presented that revenue was not indicated in this budget as coming from tax increases. I believe the expectation of the government is that the programs it is implementing are going to stimulate the economy, and that growth is where the funding is going to come from to pay for what it is doing. However, as the member mentioned, child care is its big budget item, with the biggest payoff, but that child care program will take years to implement and, in the meantime, interest rates can go up and all kinds of other things can happen.

I want to quote Amanda Lang, whose views on the budget I really appreciate. She said on *Power Play*, "I will say this, Evan, and this is kind of like one of those more boring line items, but it is important especially for resource industry companies, and that is there is a form of a corporate tax increase in this budget that the Liberals have talked about for a while. It is a reduction on dividend interest deductions allowable. It is super boring sounding, but I will tell you this: It could hurt oil and gas companies disproportionately and at a time when they can least afford it."

*The Budget*

Our oil and gas industry is part of the future. It is part of the sector that will bring about the environmental changes that we want, yet this government continues to cause it the greatest duress. Why is that?

• (1310)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to unpack in that question. First and foremost, when it comes to the cost of our measures and the risk of interest rates going up, I would point out that there is a severe cost of not taking action and making the kinds of investments that we have made. In particular I would point to a recent IMF report, which indicated that in the absence of the government's pandemic response our deficit would have been roughly the same, but the economic scarring would have been enormous, limiting our opportunity to grow out of this recession.

Regarding the energy sector, I will let the hon. member know that I spent about five years working in Calgary, Alberta, much of which was spent working in the energy sector. The reality is that we need to be implementing measures that transition to a clean economy, but we also know that we need to support workers, regardless of the industry in which they work. That is why we have extended record supports to the energy sector through things such as the Canada emergency wage subsidy and support for abandoned wells.

I would be happy to carry on this important conversation with the member at her leisure.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do want to applaud the fact that this is the first time a female minister has tabled a budget in Parliament, but I have to say that, in many ways, it is a very paternalistic budget. What I mean is that the federal government is taking a top-down approach, telling us what is good for us, and imposing national standards for long-term care homes and mental health. In addition, it plans to develop a national child care strategy. Given Quebec's experience in that area, I could go on and on.

To truly meet the provinces' needs while respecting their jurisdiction over health care, can the government distinguish between temporary allocations and what provinces really need, which is recurring funding through Canadian health transfers?

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question. I hope she does not mind if I reply in English.

[*English*]

I disagree that this budget is paternalistic toward our provincial partners. In fact, when it comes to child care, full credit goes to the Province of Quebec for leading the way on this, years prior, to show that we could make these kinds of investments that would pay for themselves.

On the establishment of national standards, the reality is that I am not okay with the quality of life that seniors who live in these facilities enjoy. With all of the investments that we are putting forward that impact areas of provincial jurisdiction, we are saying we will work with the provinces and territories to establish these standards. I am not okay with simply transferring money with absolutely no oversight of the outcome of how that money is spent.

I am looking forward to continuing the conversations with our provincial counterparts so we can work on shared objectives and enhance the quality of life for our constituents.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I work with my colleague on the finance committee.

In my riding, people are very concerned about the absence of universal pharmacare. I am thinking of Cole and his family. They pay \$1,000 a month for heart medication and they struggle, like 10 million other Canadians, because they have no coverage for pharmacare.

As we know, in 2019, the Liberals promised to bring in public, universal pharmacare, yet the budget has abandoned that promise. It is quite simple. I know the member's constituents are in the same situation as mine. Why did the government abandon its commitments around public, universal pharmacare in budget 2021?

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, there is no such abandonment of the commitment to national pharmacare in budget 2021. Although it may not be fully implemented in the document, the commitment made in the previous throne speech remains. The reality is that the budget actually flags specifically our intent to work with provinces and territories to advance national pharmacare.

However, the allegation that there has been no action on this file rings hollow in the face of \$500 million toward a rare disease strategy; in the face of changes to the regulations for patent medicines, which has reduced the cost of medications across Canada; and in the face of the commitment made in a previous budget, with funding allocated for the establishment of a Canada drug agency that would oversee a national formulary.

I remain personally committed to a national pharmacare system that will take advantage of the systemic savings, of ensuring the federal government has a role in the procurement of these expensive medications, so families do not have to choose between paying their rent and paying for their medicine. It is time that we move forward with it, and I will continue to advocate for national pharmacare as long as I have the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

• (1315)

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today from the traditional territories of the Wyandot, Haudenosaunee and the Anishinabe peoples and treaty land of the Williams Treaties First Nations.

*The Budget*

When I first entered the House of Commons to take my seat in the 43rd Parliament, I did so with enthusiasm, optimism and a strong desire to make a positive difference for the constituents of Newmarket—Aurora and for all the citizens of our great country.

Today, after this historic and ambitious budget and despite the challenges we have faced during this pandemic, I am even more optimistic. I am energized by the opportunities ahead and mindful of the trust Canadians have given us.

I want to congratulate the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance on this significant moment in Canadian history.

COVID-19 has been one the great crises of our times; no nation has been immune. In my constituency of Newmarket—Aurora, we have shared in the suffering, the loss of life, the business closures, the uncertain future for our restaurants and the fears of going back to school.

I want to acknowledge the remarkable courage, innovation and compassion of the people of Newmarket—Aurora and their willingness to unite for the common good. This is the foundation that we can build back on, and it is what the citizens of Canada expect.

We all want an end to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the journey is not yet over. If we want to weather this storm and defeat this pandemic, our first priority must be to continue supporting Canadians and Canadian businesses in the short term while providing programs to aid our recovery.

I am encouraged budget 2021, “A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience”, deals first with our current situation by extending the COVID-19 support programs that have provided a lifeline to Canadians during this difficult time. This provides flexible access to EI benefits until the fall of 2022, by allowing the Canada recovery benefit, a program for Canadians not covered by EI, to remain in place through to September 25. At the same time, the rent subsidy and the wage subsidy have been extended, with plans to wind them down as the recovery takes place.

As I speak here today, over 12.7 million vaccine doses have been delivered to the provinces and territories and over 10.25 million Canadians have been vaccinated at least with one dose. We need to continue to vaccinate as quickly as possible, keeping Canadians safe while providing the financial and the human resources needed in areas highly impacted by COVID-19.

Recover we will, and throughout this pandemic, Canadians have indicated a strong desire for the kind of change that will ensure a more prosperous future for all. We cannot betray ourselves and achieve anything less than a more inclusive future and a quality of life for all that is the envy of the world. Even more, we need to be a country of equality and equity built on respect and compassion, not only for our people but also for our environment.

In the lead up to this budget, I have been connecting with residents and business owners on their ideas and suggestions for budget 2021. We have engaged through tele town halls and through Zoom calls with the Aurora and Newmarket chambers of commerce. Although there have been as many questions as there have been suggestions, I really appreciate the input and time from my con-

stituents, ensuring their voices are heard, and they were heard, with remarkable clarity and inspiration.

Let there be no question, jobs, good jobs for Canadians, have been at the forefront of this economic recovery. The news from Statistics Canada that 303,000 jobs were added in March is encouraging. What is more encouraging is the commitment in this budget to a promise made to create more than a million jobs by the end of this year, jobs that keep the hopes alive of a bright future, a sense of pride in contributing to the community, a feeling of independence and a belief that my country provides opportunity for all.

Constituents of Newmarket—Aurora were clear in stating that job recovery was the most important indication of a recovery from this pandemic, along with the reopening of businesses, and the budget makes it clear our government agrees.

● (1320)

As we invest in our youngest citizens, we recognize that our future starts with ensuring a quality of life, care and an opportunity for everyone. Our government's commitment to child care and its promise to provide \$10-per-day universal child care, complete with national standards within five years, will be the defining moment in Canadian history. This is an investment in our future, an investment in gender equality and an opportunity to unleash the potential of so many.

Compassion is also key to our recovery, compassion for our elders in long-term care that ensures they can feel safe and cared for, and we owe them nothing less. Certainly, I have heard many times of the need for long-term care health standards, and I am heartened by the provision of \$3 billion over five years to ensure that standards are applied.

The commitment of old age security increases for those 75 years of age and older, the funding proposal for seniors who do not live in long-term care facilities and pledging \$90 million over three years, starting in the next year, to Employment and Social Development Canada through the age well at home initiative will certainly provide assurances that elders in our society are both valued and cared for.

Speaking of value and caring for our society, there is no doubt that climate change is the most pressing challenge for this generation and an opportunity to renew, invest and create a more promising future. Certainly, the provision of \$17.6 billion to a green recovery and ensuring that our agreed upon 2030 climate targets are exceeded will accelerate innovation, opportunity and prospects for a brighter future.

Our country, with its vast array of natural resources, has a remarkable opportunity for green leadership on this front, and I encourage us to seek a leadership position in this regard.

*The Budget*

I am proud to say that within my riding, I am fortunate to have a highly engaged and active youth council. At the beginning of the budget consultation process, these young leaders provided us with their thoughts on how this budget might reflect the goals of youth across Canada.

In reviewing their pre-budget submission, I am struck by how this budget reflects so many of their recommendations, including investments in mental health; reducing student debt, both through grants and lowering interest rates on student loans; investments in renewable resources; and support for those most impacted by this pandemic. A highly engaged youth is paramount for building a prosperous Canada in the future, and I continue to be inspired by the young leaders of Newmarket—Aurora.

I wish I could speak to all the investments in the budget, because there is so much to be proud of and so much work ahead of us to be done. This is a budget that would require federal and provincial governments to work together to build a Canada better prepared for any future pandemics, to seize opportunities for prosperity and to create a country capable of harnessing the strengths of its people and the resources for today and for the future. I promised my children and my grandchildren I would work for that, and I hope we all seize that opportunity.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a budget must do two things. It must be a short-term response as well as position a nation for the long term.

The constituents from Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill have consistently told me over the last six years that they are concerned about our taxes being universally unfair, our declining competitiveness, the drastic flight of foreign capital and regulatory frameworks that are affecting our ability to position ourselves at home and abroad. We are losing jobs to the U.S. and we cannot seem to get anything built. My constituents are worried that tomorrow will not be better than today.

Could the hon. member comment on the key foundational changes in the budget to address those elements?

• (1325)

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen:** Mr. Speaker, while I indicated that there was a need for all levels of government to work together, to collaborate, that includes members opposite and all members of Parliament to focus on working together, as opposed to seeding doubt and unhappiness and challenging the opportunities that are presented in the budget. I look forward to having further conversations and being engaged in the discussions of the budget, which offers a ton of opportunities and good reasons to be optimistic, as opposed to always finding fault in what is not possible. What is possible is more important.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has given rise to an initiative to help homeless people, including in my riding. This initiative has a high degree of acceptability, since it accepts everyone, without discrimination.

Unfortunately, those responsible for the initiative have been really worried about the budget, because they were wondering whether their initiative would survive the pandemic. They received some

money to get it off the ground, but they are wondering whether they will be able to continue.

The budget included roughly \$560 million for the reaching home program. Quebec is asking for \$100 million a year to continue its efforts related to COVID-19.

What do I tell the folks at La Halte du coin in Longueuil? Can they expect to get enough funding for their initiative to survive the pandemic?

[*English*]

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen:** Mr. Speaker, much of the speed in which the revenues will flow to the provinces will depend on how expeditious we are with the budget.

If the member is asking what he should tell his constituents, I would tell him what our Prime Minister has been saying, which is that we have their backs for as long as it takes and for as much as it takes.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I just got a phone call from the 1997 Liberal election platform, and it is still wondering when its pharmacare promise will come to be. I had to go all the way to page 238 to see only a half-page reference to a universal national pharmacare system.

How much longer will Canadians have to wait? The Liberals had an opportunity with their vote on Bill C-213 to set up a framework modelled on the Canada Health Act, but cynically voted against that opportunity. I am wondering how many more years Canadians will have to vote for this critical part of our health care system for it to be finally established.

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen:** Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to vote on the bill that was referenced. While the principle is still there and held by this government, and there are activities under way to support pharmacare, there were provisions within the bill that were untenable, as they did not allow for collaboration with the provinces. The need to work with the provinces is a fundamental caveat. Had the opposition modified that bill, it might have been supported.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very tempted to pick up on the points made by the hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora on climate and point out how disappointed I am.

However, I had a desperate email earlier today from one of the leading tourism attractions in this region, and indeed all of Canada, The Butchart Gardens. The owner is worried it is going to go under and is so disappointed. Where is the help for the tourism sector?

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen:** Mr. Speaker, there has been some provision for the tourism sector, and there is a further provision as well. I really do not want to quote numbers because I do not have them directly in front of me, but there are some sections that are dedicated to the tourism sector.



*The Budget*

If I can help the member direct her constituents, I would be more than happy to do so.

• (1330)

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to virtually rise on behalf of the great people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, who I am very proud to represent in this chamber. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Edmonton Centre, who will, without a doubt, have an even better intervention than my own.

When I first heard the finance minister's speech yesterday and had a chance to go through this budget, I thought I was having a déjà vu moment. The finance minister told us we must build, "a more resilient Canada: better, more fair, more prosperous and more innovative". I thought to myself, well, wait a minute. Who has been governing this country for the past five years to have made Canada so unresilient, so unfair, so unprosperous and so lacking in innovation? That would be the Liberal government.

After all, this is the Liberal government that announced nearly \$1 billion in budget 2017 for superclusters. Do members remember when that was the in buzzword of the 2017 budget? It mentioned jobs, jobs and jobs, and innovation of course, which is what the Liberals promised us all at the time.

The Liberals told us that spending, or pardon me, I meant investing, was supposed to create 50,000 jobs and boost the country's gross domestic product by \$50 billion over a decade. In the end, we now know that the PBO found that the Liberal government could only account for roughly 14 jobs for every \$1 million of combined federal and private funding. The minister responsible is now gone, and superclusters is a buzzword that is no longer in the current budget. In other words, it was a failure.

Do members remember the promises for the Infrastructure Bank? The Liberal government told us that if we just kick in \$35 billion, by the way drawn from money supposed to go to municipalities, we will attract private sector dollars at a ratio of \$4 to \$5 in private funding for every \$1 in federal money. How did that go? It was a massive failure, like so many other Liberal-created budget buzzword programs.

In 2016, the former finance minister Bill Morneau stood before this place and delivered a budget where he promised, "Our plan is reasonable and affordable. By the end of our first mandate, Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio will be lower than it is today." That term ended long before this pandemic came along, and the Liberal government was not even close to honouring that commitment that it made to Canadians.

Flash forward to the budget today and there is no longer any real fiscal anchor. Instead, we were told that because of today's environment of low interest rates, we can afford this spending. I am going to pause here for a moment to reflect a bit.

Canada has long struggled in dealing with our housing markets. Jim Flaherty as finance minister wrestled with it. We had tightening mortgage rules, which is something the current government specifically did in its first mandate, and increasing the stress test on mortgages. Of course, we all witnessed what occurred in the United States. When people lost their jobs, when their local housing mar-

ket crashed or when interest rates rose, many homeowners could no longer afford their mortgage payments and went into default, deepening the challenges.

Here, in Canada, we say that someone needs to qualify for their mortgage at a higher rate of interest to ensure they can still make their mortgage payments when interest rates inevitably rise. The current and previous governments said at the time it was because of a larger, bigger interest. Many opposed it. Most said they would agree that it is prudent for a government to hedge against large or systemic risks. However, in the Liberal budget, we see no evidence of a prudent fiscal approach, hedge or otherwise.

The Parliamentary Budget Office has warned us repeatedly that this ongoing level of spending is just not sustainable. The PBO has warned us that we are eliminating our capacity to respond to a future crisis. Does any member of this place doubt what the PBO is saying? Sure, interest rates are low right now, but where is the plan to deal with the rise in interest rates? There is not one. Is it a realistic expectation to build an economy on borrowed government spending? The PBO has warned us, yet the Liberal government ignores that advice.

The reason I have raised programs from the previous iterations of the government, such as superclusters and the Infrastructure Bank, is not just to point out its record of failure, very expensive failures I might add, but to point out that when these programs fail, government does not take the time to audit these programs and determine why they failed. Instead of learning from failure, the government would rather quietly move onto the next buzzwords and announce a program.

• (1335)

The latest is \$10-a-day day care, which is a program, I will point out, that the Liberals criticized heavily during the 2015 election campaign of Mr. Mulcair. The problem I see is that to make this happen, we need a serious and credible plan. One of the biggest challenges in child care right now, aside from the cost, is a critical shortage of early childhood educators, or ECEs. Without a serious plan to increase the number of ECEs, it is hard to see this day care announcement achieving what it is purportedly set out to achieve.

Likewise, there is the challenge we face in seniors' care homes. Once again, we have a critical shortage of care aids. It is easy to throw money at the problem, as this budget proposes to do, but we need a serious plan for more long-term care aids. In my home community of Summerland, we have many issues with our local seniors' care home. Fortunately none are related to COVID, but many of the challenges come back to the inability to hire staff. This, of course, brings up another critically important subject, and that is health care.

*The Budget*

Health care is the most cherished, but also currently the most stressed, Canadian program. We only need to look at the challenges created by the new burdens because of the pandemic. I do not believe that anyone doubts the cost pressures on health care before COVID or especially now.

Strangely, the Liberal government is ignoring the serious need to increase health care transfer payments. Why? While I believe we all understand the need for affordable child care, how can this budget be totally silent on health care? It is completely irresponsible.

When I first got into political life, a person wiser than me told me that politicians should always remember this in this order: needs first, wants second. She would say, “Whatever you do, Dan, do not put all your eggs in one basket.” This relates to my next point.

When we consider the very first thing this Prime Minister did in response to COVID, for reasons none of us will likely ever understand, was to start making a deal with China-based CanSino for vaccines. When that deal failed, the PM hid the fact from Canadians for two months. Guess what? We are now two months behind many other countries. We have spent the most money, and this budget confirms that.

Obviously, because of the vaccine delays, we have been forced into this situation in many areas, but make no mistake, those delays are costing Canadians dearly. What happened to better being always possible? How did that become waiting for one shot, hopefully by September? We need better, and it is possible.

On a different note, I could not help but notice in this budget that the Liberal government announced billions for a home retrofit program with many more details to come. That sounds familiar. They did the same with a similar program last fall, and told people that it would be available for homeowners by December 2020. Well, last night I checked the website, and that program is still not available. Canadians are being told to check back in the coming weeks. That message has been up there for months.

It is a bit rich to announce a new home retrofit program when we have not been able to successfully launch the last one. Maybe this will become an annual tradition, and every year the minister will announce a new home retrofit program, but never actually implement one. I would suggest that the minister make sure that the program that was supposed to open last year is available before launching a new one. This is not unlike the Liberals promise to plant two billion trees. How did that go? We all know where that one went.

Before I close, I would like to leave members in the House with a thought, courtesy of the former finance minister in his first-ever budget speech in 2016. In that speech, former finance minister Bill Morneau stated, “It is no surprise that many Canadians feel they are worse off than their parents were at the same age, and that they feel the next generation will do even worse than their own.”

I will ask members this simple question: When the next generation is left to pay for the bills that this Liberal government has left behind for them, how do members think they are going to feel? For their sake, let us all hope that interest rates stay low. This budget is not a plan for their future, it is a budget to help the political future of this Prime Minister.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the remarks from my colleague, particularly toward the end when he quoted the previous finance minister. I am not sure if he has been living in the same reality the rest of us have been for the last year, but we have been facing a global pandemic, and we are still in the middle of it right now. This has cost billions of dollars, which I might add, he supported through unanimous consent motions when those measures were introduced.

We are in this difficult time now because of something we were not able to foresee when Bill Morneau made those comments. My question is this: Would the member not at least acknowledge that some things may have changed since then that have contributed to the situation we are in?

• (1340)

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for his ongoing questioning of opposition members who have questions about whether or not his government is actually getting the big picture. Just by his very statement, we are in a situation we did not anticipate. However, recessions happen and pandemics happen. In fact, there was a 2006 report, authored in part by Dr. Tam, that actually laid out blow by blow exactly what kind of situation could happen in the future, which looked very similar to COVID-19. Yet, this member seems to give his own government a complete get-out-of-jail-free card when it comes to thinking of the systemic or large-scale risks we have of higher interest rates.

I would like that member to actually start telling Canadians what the backup plan is, besides their back pockets.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the economy, to me the economy is always the family economy, and we have seen year in, year out where over 60% of the workforce is unable to access EI, even though they may need it. One of the things the New Democrats pushed for was the recognition of the gig economy. They are self-employed and could not access EI. We are now going back to the idea that we will just have EI, and the government is going to cut the supports from \$500 a week to \$300 a week for contract workers and self-employed gig workers.

The reality is that this third wave is still hitting us and, in many of the regions we represent, the economy has not bounced back. We need a plan to get people through until we have a more solid footing so people can go back to work. Just \$300 a week is not going to keep temporary workers, contract workers and gig workers able to pay their rent or pay their bills. They are not going to get through this.

*The Budget*

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, the country may be governed by the government itself, but the government is for the people. Certainly this member raises a lot of criticisms. We have raised concerns about the impacts on labour throughout this process, and we actually pushed the government to make changes to what eventually became the Canada recovery benefit, which offered more flexibility, so someone could count on those supports, and if they made more income, they would not fall off a cliff.

Certainly, we are there to make sure people are supported. I do share the concerns of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I am from Victoria originally; I was born in Victoria. I heard that Butchart Gardens, one of the treasures of the island, is facing financial ruin, and for the people who work for it, that is a big problem.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in listening to the member's speech, and not just his, but the discourse coming from the Conservative Party, I find that things zigzag a bit. We hear, for example, that we should not be running deficits, then they will say it is okay to run a deficit for a while, but they do not tell us for how long and what the ideal deficit should be. Then, when we talk about the benefits that have saved families, individuals and businesses, the Conservatives support them. It gets a bit confusing. We have heard about the fact that we are not manufacturing vaccines at home, yet this budget includes some funding to build up the biopharmaceuticals sector. Of course, that is going to cost money. It is not going to reduce the deficit, so what I am wondering is whether the member is in favour of that kind of spending.

Does he think the budget is good from that perspective, or does he think that we need to cut back somewhere else in order to make these expenditures on biomanufacturing capacity possible?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his work on the environment committee as chair. Like the carbon tax cover-up, the government has no penchant to share information that may end up exposing the fact that there are risks to its plans. We have not seen a budget in two years. Every other province and territory and every municipality I know of has been able to bring forward a budget through COVID, so that the opposition could ask questions on a fiscal framework. I have asked multiple times of the Minister of Employment to tell us what the status of the EI fund is. Is there a modest deficit? We know that there probably is not now. How can we, as parliamentarians, do our job, if the government will not give us basic figures?

It is Conservatives who have been criticizing the government for not looking here first. His government went right to CanSino to sign a deal and put all our eggs in that basket, and that left us behind, rather than working with industry, much as the British did, to do that, or to even focus on a more diversified portfolio earlier. Instead, we see the United States and other countries, such as Israel, are all clearly ahead of us.

I appreciate this member's work, but I have to tell him that he has to tell his government to start giving us the tools, so that we can make good suggestions for the good of this country.

• (1345)

**Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance introduced her first budget to

Canadians in over two years, two years of uncertainty for small businesses trying to plan for an ever more uncertain future, two years of careful spending by new Canadians not aware of the promises they were made entering this country for the first time and two years of economic room for our country's once strong industries that millions of Canadians have relied upon.

Yesterday, instead of delivering a clear, measured and outcome-driven budget, the Minister of Finance gave Canadians a glimpse of the political opportunity this pandemic has provided for her government. The idea of this budget is not to build back better, but to build back bigger, with a large reach of control of government into the individual lives of Canadians. It is full of big promises and expensive programs and, based upon past performance, it will likely lead to disappointing results.

There will be \$101.4 billion in new spending, including \$30 billion toward a national child care plan. That is an important initiative that Conservatives support, but it should not be one size that fills all and the devil is in the details. The Liberals' big headline, which they are good at, is that \$10 a day will be the average cost for child care. This does not mean all Canadians will have access to \$10-a-day child care. The government has had five years to develop this plan with the co-operation of provinces and it still has to be negotiated.

Extending pandemic business and health supports until this economy gets back on its feet will of course be required and there is an increase in the federal minimum wage. There are promises for \$17.6 billion in green investments. While all of these promises sound wonderful, I am afraid we will again be reminded of the government's failure to deliver on fiscal promises. Six years ago, the Prime Minister's election platform vowed to run modest budget deficits prior to balancing the budget at the end of his first term. The government has since abandoned this goal. It set four annual deficit targets and each of them was missed. The Liberals are masters at the big gesture and bold headlines, but they consistently do not deliver, so why should we believe them about this budget?

In late 2020, the Prime Minister announced that his temporary spending measures would not become a fixture for the federal government. He committed to balancing the budget in the future without any indication of a timeline and while Liberals assert that their accumulated debt is manageable, long-term projections indicate that massive federal stimulus spending during the pandemic will result in deficits for multiple decades.

### *The Budget*

Remember when Liberals told us they had the best vaccine portfolio in the G7. That was in December and look at where we are now. Canada is getting slammed by the third wave of variants. Canadians are seeing an extension of time between the first and second doses and less than 3% of the population is fully vaccinated. It says it is an open and transparent government. It prorogued Parliament and shut down the ethics, defence and finance committees while shining the light on important scandals, particularly around sexual harassment. In 2015, the federal government vowed to reduce its debt-to-GDP ratio to 27% and that was not done. It failed to deliver on a pledge to end boil water advisories by March 2021 in indigenous communities and that was not done. The Prime Minister told Liberal Party members at a closed event for the Minister of Public Services and Procurement that all Canadians are likely to be vaccinated by June. That is not going to happen.

These failed promises are just the tip of the iceberg. We cannot depend on the government to execute any of its promises and programs. The government must recognize that there can be no implementation of programs, supports or initiatives aimed toward economic recovery without a solution to this health crisis. As the rest of the world continues to receive vaccines and return to a sense of normalcy, Canada has fallen behind, not only in the past few weeks but since the inception of COVID-19.

In the midst of the third wave, Canadians are struggling to cope with the rise of COVID-19 cases with increased lockdowns and the effects of the struggling economy. We are in the middle of the biggest health crisis in Canadian history. The provincial premiers have called for a long-term funding plan that ensures they will have the resources to make sure we are prepared for when, not if, this happens again. There is nothing in this budget that addresses the long-term resiliency of our health care system, which is what the premiers have been asking for.

Canadians are having a hard time coping with the current spike, hospitalizations are up, ICU admissions are soaring, businesses are closed and workers are losing their jobs or having their hours cut. This demonstrates what poor planning and the failure to procure health provisions looks like. It has consequences for Canadians.

- (1350)

The mental health crisis that our communities have been struggling with across Canada deepens. Canadians are worried about their future. In the United States, cases and hospitalizations are dropping. Businesses are opening. They are going out to sports games. That is because the U.S. population is getting vaccinated. Our current situation in Canada was avoidable.

Monday's federal budget outlines how the federal Liberals propose to rebuild the Canadian economy in a way that brings all Canadians along. Apparently the minister does not consider those Canadians who rely on this country's agricultural, energy, forestry, fisheries or other natural resources to be Canadian. Just as the government has continued to do since 2015, Canada's natural resources were ignored in the equation for economic recovery. There is no mention of the energy sector, which is Canada's number one export.

Snubbing the strength of Canada's resource forestry sectors among others, the government has failed to recognize the impact these sectors would have on our battered economy. The world

wants and needs more of our natural resources and we should be thinking about expanding market share rather than hastening its decline. The least we could do is lessen our dependency on foreign supply because we have it all here.

The budget continues to go down a path we have seen before with Liberal governments, funding programs that they believe will increase productivity and innovation, but past results tell a different story. Canada fell out of the top 10 ranking of the world's most competitive economies and we have fallen near the bottom of our peer group on innovation, ranking 17th, with those existing programs that the Liberals are adding money to. How is this federal spending going to position our country for post-pandemic success? In never-before-seen stimulus spending, where is our strategic economic vision for the future? How will this affect generations for years to come? On the debt the government is holding now, we are paying about \$20 billion in interest, soon to be \$40 billion. How are we going to pay for our debt burden if interest rates continue to rise?

Debt-to-GDP ratio is going to rise and it is getting close to that near default number in 1996. Titled "A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience", the federal Liberal government's budget contains \$497.6 billion in total spending. However, from what I was able to distinguish from the speech, there is no actual plan for job growth that they are referring to. Instead there are vague references to growing green jobs and retraining the workforce toward new jobs. We have heard lots of noise about retraining for jobs that do not exist yet. The need for tradespeople only happens if we can approve something and get it built in this country. Growth has to be led by the private sector. The high cost of doing business in Canada, with red tape and over-regulation, creates an impossible environment for small business. There is nothing here that reduces import costs and increases competitiveness.

There is nothing in the budget that deals with the attraction of investment into Canada, nothing that demonstrates Canada is open for business and if we want something or need something built, Canada is the place to do it. There is nothing here that would encourage Canadians themselves to invest in Canadian businesses and little mention of advancing projects that are under review and accelerating that review.

*The Budget*

My fear for the future is that this budget will do more than invest massive sums of money into under-tested, under-productive schemes that serve the government's political agenda. Canadians need more than a plan to keep them home and promises to retrain them for jobs that do not exist. They need a plan that will get them outside and back to work. At the end of the day, Canadians will be left with more joblessness, higher taxes and an unimaginable tax burden for Canada's youth.

The most important investment our country can make is getting Canadians employed in our country. The Conservative Party of Canada would implement the Canada recovery plan, a plan that would recover the hundreds of thousands of jobs lost in the hardest-hit sectors. It is time we start building, producing and growing in Canada again. Clearly the rest of the world is interested in buying value-added products, commodities and Canadian expertise, but there is little in the budget that demonstrates our future will include an economic recovery that plays to our strengths.

All in all, there appear to be a few positive measures in this budget put forward, specifically those that will continue to support Canadians in their time of need as they struggle to get through this pandemic. Nonetheless, our party will be sure to scrutinize and re-view the budget in great detail. Canadians deserve a robust plan for recovery and one that will instill confidence in our ability to grow and build back stronger than ever before.

● (1355)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard a parade of Conservative MPs today talk about the need to create choice in the child care system, and “choice” is an interesting word to use.

Farmers in the Prairies can choose to take a bushel of wheat and walk it down to a road, then walk that road to Vancouver and then swim across the ocean to China to sell it or they can choose to use the system of roads the public has built, the rail system the public has built and the port system the public has built and utilize that system, choose that system, to get better results for the bushel of wheat they want to sell.

Child care is no different. We all support parents having the right to choose where to place their kids while they work or go to school, but if we do not have a system to choose between and we limit our choices to individual options, we get the same result as trying to swim wheat to China. We do not get any results.

Will the member opposite agree that if those members are going to support choice and support the market of opportunities for parents, they have to build the child care system for choices to be present for parents to make those choices they seem to think they support?

**Mr. James Cumming:** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of preamble in that question. Fundamentally, this has to be a negotiated agreement between the provinces. It strikes me that there have been five years to get that done, five years to create something, and we still have nothing.

We have a promise for \$10-child care, but a promise to negotiate with the provinces has not happened yet. Yes, I agree there is an op-

portunity to use choice and there is an opportunity to design a program that works for all provinces, but it has to be with their input.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member's speech and I know in St. John's, as I am sure in Edmonton, there are many seniors. We heard from a lot today. They have heard about the \$500 being given sometime in August to seniors who are 75. They are concerned and not very happy. They are over 65, not yet 75, and are getting no help from the government in this budget.

Would the hon. member agree it would be much fairer for the government to ensure all seniors get some additional assistance? They all need it. They are hurting and they feel they deserve it.

**Mr. James Cumming:** Mr. Speaker, there are two ways to approach this. One is to provide additional funds to seniors and the other way is to stop burdening them with additional costs.

The government has been on the path of continuing to increase the cost of everything. That is as important to seniors as is trying to give them more capital. They are being given more capital to pay for the additional costs they are incurring, because the government is hell-bent on increasing costs for everything. It is time to stop. It is time to make life more affordable for Canadians.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned that there was nothing in the budget in regard to oil and gas. However, I have a comment from Amanda Lang on *Power Play* last night, on which I would like his response. She said, “I will say this Evan, and this is kind of like one of those more boring line items, but it's important especially for resource industry companies, and that is there is a form of a corporate tax increase in this budget that the Liberals have talked about for a while. It's a reduction on dividend interest deductions allowable. Super boring sounding, but I'll tell you this. It could hurt oil and gas companies disproportionately and at a time when they can least afford it.”

● (1400)

**Mr. James Cumming:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, there is nothing in the budget that recognizes the importance of this industry that has helped Canada for years and has allowed us to grow our social programs and infrastructure in the country. I am incredibly disappointed there is no recognition of the energy sector in the budget.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***VOLUNTEERISM**

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, the Ismaili Volunteer Corps, through the civic program, have been in the forefront of providing services to those facing isolation during the pandemic. It launched access that provides virtual programming, tech support and non-emergency medical help to all in need.

Many constituents in my riding and across Canada have benefited from these services. The team recently joined hands with the Michael Garron Hospital to conduct a mass vaccination clinic in my riding, where thousands accessed the service. As well, the Ismaili Civic, in collaboration with the Humber River Hospital, has worked to recruit volunteers for a mass vaccination initiative at the Downsview Park arena.

I thank the team of dedicated volunteers for the service they provide, and follow the motto of “Work No words”. They are truly an inspiration to all.

\* \* \*

**VOLUNTEERISM**

**Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has taken an enormous toll on the most vulnerable, but we have also seen so many volunteers step up and show us the very best of our community.

I want to highlight the efforts of York Centre constituent, Emily Gampel. Since the pandemic began, she has reached out and kept in touch with Holocaust survivors, arranged support for first responders and front-line health care workers, and organized donations of winter clothing to vulnerable Canadians in Nunavut with the support of the Uqutaq Society in Iqaluit. Like so many volunteers, it is not just about helping others but also a key to supporting her own mental health.

I want to close with Emily's own words about her motivation, “In Canada, we may have different religious, ethnic, and cultural roots, or we may look different from one another. But despite it all we have one powerful commonality. We are all Canadians, and we live in this beautiful country that we are lucky to call home.”

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**TEAM RUBICON**

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight an international disaster response organization, made up of 70,000 incredible volunteers: veterans, first responders, medical professionals and kick-ass civilians who continue to make an impact at home and across the globe. With the driving force of service above self, Team Rubicon was founded by two U.S. brains in 2010.

Six years later, Team Rubicon Canada got its start during the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfires.

In 10 years, Team Rubicon has deployed to six earthquakes, 132 floods, 56 hurricanes, 47 severe weather events, 96 tornadoes, 79

wildfires and, on the COVID front line, has over 325 vaccination sites, helping deliver over 1.3 million vaccinations. Team Rubicon members from Prince George have deployed all across Canada, the United States, the Bahamas and, most recently, in Honduras.

I am exceptionally proud to be a “greyshirt”. I encourage everyone to reach out to their local organizers and see how they can support Team Rubicon, its mission and maybe even become a greyshirt themselves.

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**ANTI-ASIAN RACISM**

**Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Canadians of Asian descent have fallen victim to incessant hate and xenophobia.

A recent Chinese Canadian National Council report says that from March 10, 2020 to February 28, 2021, there were 1,150 reported attacks, with both adolescents and seniors more likely to be targeted. Eleven per cent of incidents involved violent physical assault or some form of unwanted contact, while 10% included being coughed or spat on. This is repugnant and reprehensible.

Last month, at Toronto City Hall, I joined thousands of Canadians standing in solidarity against anti-Asian racism. Together, we condemned hate and made a concerted call for action. Whether it is against Asian, Black or indigenous communities, racism has no home in Canada.

• (1405)

*[Translation]*

As Canadian citizens, we must continue to create an inclusive space for racialized groups, cultural and religious minorities and newcomers. Canada has come too far to go backward now.

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**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the budget does not jibe with the government's commitments to the agricultural community or its needs.

When someone goes on and on about food sovereignty at some point they have to stop talking and start doing something about it. Succession planning is crucial to the health of the agricultural sector.

In 2019, the Liberal Party promised to modernize the tax system to facilitate the transfer of family businesses and family farms between generations. There is nothing to that effect in the budget. What is more, we need to get these businesses geared up. They need foreign workers.

In the middle of a crisis involving quarantine problems with Switch Health, the only thing Ottawa has to offer in the budget is more inspections. How will that help?

The government also needs to compensate the entire supply-managed sector for CUSMA. This was included in the fall economic statement, but it is not in the budget.

The Bloc Québécois will ensure that the government honours its commitments and keeps its promises to the agricultural community.

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[English]

#### CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to share with members the success that Kanata—Carleton has achieved with the Canada summer jobs program.

I am pleased to announce that \$2.1 million in funding was approved, creating 618 jobs at 123 organizations, charities and businesses. From technology to organic farming to summer camps, it is this diversity that makes Kanata—Carleton such an amazing place to live and do business.

I thank everyone from all the businesses and organizations who showed incredible determination, commitment and creativity when presented with the challenges of COVID-19. They have supported and served their community, and the people of Kanata—Carleton have been there to support them in return. Shopping local is a win-win.

Together we can all succeed in spite of these challenging times. Their leadership and teamwork matters greatly, and I thank them all.

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#### COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

**Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for over a year now Canadians have been doing everything they can to stay safe and keep Canada moving and working.

My riding of Tobique—Mactaquac takes in a majority of the New Brunswick-U.S. border. COVID restrictions have been particularly hard on our border communities across the country. Many Canadians are required to cross regularly for essential work and services. Some work in health care on the other side of the border, others truck and haul our goods and others work in our agriculture and food supply chains, while others must cross for medical and other essential appointments.

For some this means crossing the international border multiple times a day. Everyone wants to be safe and take the necessary precautions, but when our essential workers are crossing multiple times a day, the process for crossing should be as simple and straightforward as possible.

Instead of insisting that these essential workers fill out arrival submissions multiple times a day in places that often have poor to no cell coverage, the government should be doing everything it can to streamline the process and ensure our essential workers are sup-

#### Statements by Members

ported with a process that makes sense and eliminates redundancies.

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#### VETERANS' HOUSE

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on April 16, the federal government announced a \$1.5 million investment to Veterans' House as part of its efforts to tackle houselessness and provide crucial supports for our veterans in need.

Operated by the Multifaith Housing Initiative, Veterans' House opened this past February and offers veterans affordable housing as well as access to mental health and addiction services. This new investment will help construct 40 homes for veterans who are houseless or at risk of houselessness and builds on the federal government's \$6.5 million investment made in 2019.

The Multifaith Housing Initiative has been working since 2001 to supply safe, continuous and inclusive affordable housing in Ottawa. I would like to thank executive director Suzanne Le and her team at MHI for their outstanding contribution to our community. I also thank the member for Ottawa—Vanier for making the announcement.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

#### LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of the situation unfolding at Laurentian University in Sudbury. What I want to focus on today are the students affected by this tragedy.

Like most universities, exams at Laurentian started on April 12, the same day as the job losses and program cuts were announced.

[Translation]

Hundreds of students have to do their exams knowing that their program will no longer exist next year.

[English]

The hockey and swim teams were cut, casting student athletes adrift, with nowhere to play, train or study.

As the father of a university student athlete, I cannot imagine the pain of losing one's team, teammates, academic program and dream all at the same time.

[Translation]

I talked to the students about the devastating effects the cuts have had on them. No one has been spared.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

As concerned and frustrated as I am about the enormous impact currently felt by Laurentian University students, I remain resolved to see the university emerge as strong as possible from this terrible situation. We owe it to our students, who have sacrificed so much to get this far in their studies, to search for a way forward so they can complete their studies and launch their careers.

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**MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING**

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, conscience rights are a fundamental freedom protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Sadly, this right is being severely undermined for medical professionals in relation to medical aid in dying. When euthanasia and MAID were first legalized in 2015, the government promised that people would not be coerced to take part in euthanasia against their will. Without the force of law behind it, this promise has proven to be completely empty.

Physicians as well as other medical professionals are now constrained by law to offer MAID as a primary treatment option even in cases where they do not believe it is in the best interest of their patient. Without conscience rights, patients will no longer have access to a second opinion for their end-of-life care. As a result, patient rights and well-being are being undermined. My private member's bill, the protection of freedom of conscience act, seeks to address this deterioration of rights.

\* \* \*

**ANTI-ASIAN RACISM**

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this past March, Statistics Canada found that Canadians with Asian backgrounds have reported increased racial harassment during the pandemic. While systemic racism against Asian Canadians is certainly not new, it has increased exponentially during the pandemic.

Earlier this month, I hosted Halton MPs and stakeholders for an anti-Asian racism round table with the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth to discuss the disturbing acts of discrimination and racism facing people of Asian descent in our communities and steps we can take to fight it.

The members of Halton's Asian Canadian community have been leaders during the pandemic, distributing PPE and sanitizer and adopting public health measures early on. We have a diverse and active Asian Canadian community in Halton, and we all have a responsibility to support those facing racism and stand united to ensure that everyone in Canada is treated equitably.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***BUDGET 2021**

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** With their pre-election goodies, the Liberals are taking seniors for fools. They are dangling \$500 in front of them just before the election. However, if seniors are 65, 70 or even 74 years of age, they can forget about it because it is not for them.

With record deficits, no fiscal anchor and a debt ratio that has ballooned to more than 50%, it is obvious that the Liberal credit card is going to blow up at our expense.

After a two-year wait, we were expecting far better from the Liberals, especially with the pandemic, namely real measures to stimulate our economy in a responsible manner and to get people back to work. Instead, the Liberals are creating new programs with a staggering price tag and are putting future generations further into debt. These same Liberals then talk to us about sustainable development.

Seniors deserve better, as do future generations. I can hardly wait for a Conservative government to set things right before it is too late.

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*[English]***MENTAL HEALTH**

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the impact this pandemic has had on our mental health will far outlast this crisis. This is something we cannot ignore. I have held numerous virtual town halls in my riding with community leaders and business owners, talking about mental health and the impact on our constituents. I want to thank Dr. Jody Carrington for her powerful and inspirational message, and Pamela Morgan with Headstrong for her focus on rural businesses and farm families. Hundreds of people attended these sessions and shared their heartfelt stories of stress, anxiety, depression and, in many cases, suicide.

This cannot be the new normal. Canadians need hope that this will end.

However, instead of a recovery plan, the Liberals' budget had no strategy for how to permanently and safely end these lockdowns. The Liberals have failed miserably in accessing vaccines, meaning that these quarantines will extend. As Conservatives, we have focused on securing jobs and our economy and the recovery of the financial and mental health of Canadians.

As Dr. Carrington said, "We are all just here walking each other home".



• (1415)

#### MARK SHAWANDA

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, often we hear about the challenges indigenous communities can face securing a safe and reliable source of drinking water. However, for Whitefish River First Nation, water quality has been a source of pride in recent years. Now that has been tempered with the passing of water treatment plant operator Mark Shawanda.

Trained in the shadow of the Walkerton crisis, Mark took great pride in running the water plant by the book for over two decades. Proof of excellence came by way of multiple water quality awards that brought recognition to the community and to Mark as well. He shared his experience by mentoring others, ensuring Whitefish River First Nation's water will remain of the highest quality for years to come.

Known for his can-do attitude and one-liners like “I'm no doctor, but I'll take a look”, Mark was active in the local sport community, served on council and was fully devoted to his family, especially his grandchildren.

I extend heartfelt condolences to Mark's wife Debbie, his family and the community of Whitefish River First Nation. Our thoughts are with them.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CULTURE AND NEWS MEDIA

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear that money was allocated in the budget to small festivals and local cultural celebrations.

The problem is that there will soon be no one left to promote if the government continues to let our news media and regional media die a slow death. We have been saying that the media is in crisis for years, but the Liberals completely ignored the issue and missed the perfect opportunity to address it in their record-spending budget.

That is why the Bloc Québécois is pushing to put the revenue collected from taxing web giants in a fund for culture and news media. The content creators who work in these sectors are the ones bringing in the big bucks for online platforms. People in these industries face an uncertain future, because their work goes towards lining the pockets of foreign multinationals instead of benefiting their own families.

The Liberals deliberately left our media and content creators out of the budget, but it is not too late to do something. Rest assured that the Bloc Québécois will not abandon these sectors.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as Canadians look ahead to rounding the corner on COVID-19, our country is at a crossroads. The future of Canada is at stake, and Canadians must choose which path to recovery they trust.

#### Oral Questions

The path of the Prime Minister's reimagined economy veers off into the unknown and saddles our children with debt levels and repayment obligations that will challenge their future success.

Canada's Conservatives are offering another path, one of security and certainty, through our five-point Canada recovery plan. Our plan will secure our future and deliver us to a Canada where those who have struggled the most through this pandemic can get back to work. Canada's Conservatives got through the last recession, and with Canada's recovery plan, Canada's Conservatives will get Canadians through these challenging times as well.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### BUDGET 2021

**Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, budget 2021 offers a historic plan to fight the pandemic while creating jobs and building a stronger, greener, healthier and more inclusive Canada.

We worked hard to ensure that local voices were reflected in this budget, including those in my riding, Vimy, and all across Canada. We are extending the critical support programs we introduced during the pandemic. We are making sure that seniors can live with additional financial security.

After 50 years of talking about it, we are finally creating a national early learning and child care system to support working mothers. We are going to get it done this time. This budget sets out a plan to support all Canadians and help our economy grow.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

#### HEALTH

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the third wave of COVID-19 is ravaging Canada. We are in this situation because the federal government did not secure enough supply of vaccines fast enough to prevent it. Today, the Government of Manitoba had to secure help from North Dakota to vaccinate essential workers.

How many Canadians will have to be vaccinated in the United States because of the Prime Minister's failure to secure vaccines?

*Oral Questions*

• (1420)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important in this House that we be grounded in facts. Our plan is working, and we are getting more vaccines than anticipated. We have now delivered over 13.3 million doses to provinces and territories, with more than 10 million doses of vaccine already administered. Thanks to the tireless work of officials to accelerate vaccine deliveries, we are now in the top three of G7 and G20 countries.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, his plan is working. Moderna was delayed and doses were reduced. AstraZeneca was delayed and doses were reduced. This morning, production of the J&J vaccine has been suspended at the main facility. Supply shortages will only get worse as more Canadians become eligible for shots.

Why did the Prime Minister fail to secure the required vaccines months ago?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, the Conservatives attempt to play politics with this, but the fact is that we actually passed our target of six million doses by the end of March by over 50%. We are now receiving over a million doses every single week, and we will continue to. We will receive two million doses in the month of May every week, and more than 48 million doses by the end of June. Every Canadian who wants to be vaccinated will be fully vaccinated by September. We are on track.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are in the third wave of this pandemic, so severe because of the Prime Minister's failure to secure vaccines at a rate the United States was at months ago. Exceeding targets by stealing vaccines from the developing world is shameful leadership by the Prime Minister. He announces future shots months from now, and in those same press conferences he announces delays for the next few weeks.

The provinces are desperate for more vaccine supply. Where is it?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will be receiving more than a million vaccines every single week for the foreseeable future, with two million in the month of May, with tens of millions in the month of June. We will continue to deliver vaccines, but we know that as we continue to work, we need to make sure we are following public health guidelines and basing our decisions on science, which is something this government has always done. We will continue to work with provinces and territories.

Canadians will notice, even if Conservatives do not want to talk about it, that we put forward a budget that gives so much help to Canadians that Conservative do not even have any questions on it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question.

The Quebec finance minister was very disappointed by the lack of stable, predictable and unconditional health care funding. The budget had no support for health care, even though we are in the middle of a third wave.

Why is the government spending on an election rather than on the health of Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false. I noticed that, in English, the opposition leader is saying that we are spending too much for Canadians, but in French, he is saying we need to spend more.

The fact is, we have transferred billions of dollars to the provinces and territories to support their health care systems and help them get through this pandemic, and we continue to do so. Even this budget transfers an additional \$4 billion to the provinces.

We will continue to be there to support the provinces and their health care systems, and yes, we will increase health transfers in the long term.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will not provide an answer in either official language.

This budget is a disappointment to many Canadians. The provinces' demands for health transfers were ignored. There are lots of little election-friendly programs here, but there are no real measures for vaccines.

Does the Prime Minister think he knows what provinces need better than the provinces themselves?

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party leader mentioned "little programs" that will help lots of people, and he said that was shameful.

For the past year, we have been listening to Canadians, working with Canadians and addressing the needs of organizations, small businesses, workers, families, seniors and youth. We have been there for them. We have supported them. That is exactly what we are doing with this budget, yet the Conservative Party says we should not help people so much but should reduce the deficit. Well, Canadians will have a choice at some point between the Conservatives' vision and our Liberal plan, but right now, we are getting through the pandemic.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, you know how sensitive I am. I am afraid that the Prime Minister has gotten himself in trouble.

We knew that Quebecers were not happy with the government before, but never to this extent. We have been flooded with calls from people who happen to be between 65 and 75 and who are unhappy with the budget and its age-based discrimination. We have gotten so many calls that it would be easy to forget that there might be anything good in the budget.

Will the Prime Minister accept our suggestion and change his budget to benefit seniors?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the 2019 election, we recognized and understood that seniors needed help, that seniors aged 75 and older have more costs and that expenses were going up while Canadians were living longer. They are concerned about their old age pension, their retirement savings, their life savings.

We promised to increase old age security by 10% for seniors aged 75 and older, and that is exactly what we are delivering in this budget. That is good news for seniors. It is good news for Canada.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that is okay news for seniors aged 75 and older, who will get only about \$500 this year, which is less than \$50 a month. It is terrible news for those aged 65 to 75. This is a clear case of unjustifiable discrimination.

Where did the government get the idea that the cost of living is lower for those under the age of 75? Who came up with that? Will the Prime Minister spare himself the trouble and consider our amendment for the good of seniors aged 65 to 75?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have always been there for seniors. One of the first things we did following the 2015 election was to increase the guaranteed income supplement by 10%.

We have continued to be there for seniors, whether it was by investing in the new horizons for seniors program, providing them with more assistance during this pandemic or increasing the old age security pension by 10% for all seniors aged 75 and older.

We will continue to be there with \$3 billion to help the provinces protect seniors in long-term care facilities.

We will always be there for seniors.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has been hard. People have lost their jobs and are struggling to make ends meet.

Budgets are a matter of choices. The Prime Minister chose not to make the ultra-rich pay their fair share and chose to cut help for Canadians during the third wave.

Why is the Prime Minister choosing to defend the interests of the ultra-rich instead of helping Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true.

One of the first things our government did in 2015 was raise taxes on the rich and lower taxes on the middle class. Unfortunately, the NDP voted against that.

We will always keep trying to help those in need. In this budget, we are ensuring that digital service providers pay their fair share of taxes, introducing a tax on yachts and luxury vehicles, addressing aggressive tax planning schemes, and strengthening the government's ability to crack down on tax fraud and tax evasion.

We will always be there for people in need in this country.

• (1430)

[English]

**COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the third wave of COVID-19 is hitting Ontario hard. It is a disaster. ICU units are overrun. We are seeing health care workers on the brink, the people who need the vaccine the most are the least likely to get vaccinated, and we have a Prime Minister who continues to refuse to improve access to paid sick leave.

Will the Prime Minister declare a public welfare emergency and use the Emergencies Act to make sure people who need the vaccine actually get it, and make sure that we have paid sick leave that actually works?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, throughout this pandemic we have continually been there to support provinces and territories and to support Canadians right across the country. We made a straightforward promise that we would have people's backs, and that is exactly what we have done and what we will continue to do by working with partners right across the country and responding to the difficult situation that so many Canadians are facing with this third wave, particularly in the GTA.

Regarding the sickness benefit, we brought it in so no worker, regardless of where they live or who they work for, has to choose between going to work sick and putting food on the table, and we made two additional weeks available through this benefit as well.

We will continue to support Canadians. We have their backs.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday's budget was an open bar.

It would have been nice if the Liberals had shown as much enthusiasm for other major issues, such as health care, as they did for camping. The provinces are asking for stable, predictable and unconditional increases to health transfers. The Conservatives support the provinces' demand. We are in the middle of a pandemic, so it just makes sense.

Why did the Prime Minister not agree to Quebec's main demand?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party needs to be straight with Canadians and choose a fiscal policy.

First the Conservatives tell us that we are spending too much, and then they tell us that we need to spend more on health care.

What do the Conservatives really think?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec's response was quite clear about the \$3 billion over five years specifically for long-term health care.

First, it is not an unconditional transfer. As usual, the Liberals are interfering in provincial jurisdictions. Second, as Quebec's finance minister pointed out, the federal government missed a unique opportunity to partner with Quebec on long-term health care.

How do the Liberals plan to repair their relationship with the Government of Quebec?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec's position is quite clear, and we had a good conversation with them. It is the Conservatives' position that is unclear. First they tell us that we are spending too much, and then they suggest a lot more spending.

Canadians need to know what the Conservative Party's position is.

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, stable, predictable and unconditional increases to health transfers was Quebec's biggest ask in this federal budget.

We are in the midst of a global pandemic. The health care system is being tested. Quebec is not the only province calling for this; all provinces and territories are. The commitment to increase health transfers must be honoured now.

How could the Prime Minister fail to seize an opportunity like this?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I keep hearing the same question, so I will give the same answer.

It is the Conservatives who need to be clear with Canadians. Do they think we are spending too much or that we should be spending more? Canadians deserve a clear, straight answer.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I offer congratulations to India for announcing that all its adults will be eligible for a vaccine as of May 1.

While Canada's government has not domestically produced a single dose of COVID vaccine, India has been vaccinating its population with its own vaccines, produced within its borders, while also manufacturing vaccines for Canada.

Why did the Minister of Public Services and Procurement not secure a partnership with India, a large democracy and one of the largest vaccine-producing nations in the world, to develop and manufacture vaccines in Canada in early 2020?

• (1435)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we made historic investments in biomanufacturing in Canada. I am sure the member will remember Medicago. She will remember VIDO in Saskatchewan, and she will remember AbCellera and Precision

Nanosystems in Vancouver. In fact, 12 days after the World Health Organization declared a pandemic, we were already investing \$200 million. Within 30 days we added another \$600 million, so we have invested about \$1 billion since the World Health Organization declared a pandemic.

We made historic investments, and we will continue to invest to ensure the safety of all Canadians.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the minister will remember that the federal Liberals did not attempt to partner with India but they did partner with the Government of China.

Last year, the federal Liberals negotiated vaccine development with a company owned by the Chinese government, with whom Canada has many high-profile, ongoing concerns, which then unsurprisingly cancelled the deal after stringing the federal Liberals along for months.

Why did the federal Liberals engage in a doomed vaccine production deal with the Government of China as opposed to securing one with our allies in India, the largest democracy in the world?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the argument from the opposition in that question is patently false. We have seven APAs with leading vaccine manufacturers, positioning Canada to be one of the leading procurement bodies and countries in the world.

Let us just remember the facts. Across the country, 13.4 million doses have been distributed already, 10.2 million Canadians or 24% of Canadians have had at least one dose of vaccine, and we are resting at number two in the G20 for doses administered per 100 people.

We will continue delivering for Canadians now and until all Canadians—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Canada has not produced a single dose of vaccine domestically. By now, we should be producing enough vaccine to supply our own population, as the Americans and Brits are. Instead, the federal Liberals have failed and put countries, such as India, that are facing a third wave in the impossible situation of sending a G7 country vaccines despite needing to vaccinate their own countrymen. The federal Liberals are also raiding the vaccine supply meant for the developing world through COVAX.

Imagine if we had a manufacturing partnership with India. How many lives could have been saved if the Prime Minister had secured a domestic manufacturing partnership with India last—

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member.

I would say to just imagine this: We have a partner to manufacture a vaccine in Canada. It is called Novavax. It has chosen Canada out of all the jurisdictions in which it operates.

More interestingly, we also have a domestic company called Medicago in which we have invested \$173 million to make sure that we will have a made-in-Canada vaccine. In addition to that, yesterday the Minister of Finance added another \$2 billion to make sure that we could continue to invest in manufacturing, and to invest in the health and safety of all Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### THE BUDGET

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there are good measures in the budget, but we are in the midst of a health crisis, and the Liberals must be out of touch with reality to run a \$354-billion deficit without permanently increasing health transfers.

Quebeckers' priority is health. That is also the Government of Quebec's priority. The only thing it asked the government to do was boost health transfers to cover 35% of health care costs.

That is why the Bloc Québécois amended the budget to add health transfers. That is what Quebec wants. Will the Liberals support our amendment?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to hear that the Bloc thinks there are good measures in the budget.

With respect to health, I agree that the priority for all Canadians is the fight against COVID-19. The federal government is here to support the territories and provinces. Last month, we injected an additional \$5 billion in support for health care systems and vaccination rollout.

• (1440)

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that is a far cry from the 35% proposed in our amendment.

It is not a question of money, because Ottawa has staked everything on its borrowing capacity. Despite the historic deficit, it is creating \$100 billion in new spending. It has money for health care.

It is clearly a political choice not to invest in addressing the problems that the pandemic has exposed. It is a choice not to invest in improving seniors' care. It is a choice not to invest in improving working conditions for caregivers. These are bad choices.

What will it take for the government to realize that?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are investing much more in

### Oral Questions

health and in Canada's biomanufacturing capacity. We invested \$5 billion in March. Last summer, we gave \$19 billion to the provinces and territories to help them fight COVID-19.

In addition, as my colleague just said, we have allocated \$2.2 billion in the budget to our domestic vaccine production capacity.

[English]

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, three months ago the Prime Minister gave the finance minister a mandate letter, instructing her to do three things: first, avoid creating new permanent spending; second, review Canada's debt management strategy; and, third, present a new fiscal anchor.

That is the standard the Prime Minister set himself, and yet the minister followed none of them. Her budget contains massive permanent spending, the debt is out of control, and our only fiscal anchor is a floating one.

Why did the minister ignore these directives, and is she going to ignore future ones as well?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our budget sets out a prudent and sustainable fiscal path. We set out a clear fiscal anchor.

We commit to a declining debt-to-GDP ratio, and to unwinding the COVID deficits. By 2025-26, the debt-to-GDP ratio will be 49.2%, and the deficit will be 1.1%.

Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio continues to be the lowest in the G7.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their government to help them in their time of need, and we support those efforts.

However, the budget is also, by far, the biggest, most expensive in Canadian history. Our deficit has ballooned to a staggering \$354 billion, and our national debt will soon reach an unimaginable \$1.4 trillion. The budget fails to present a debt management plan that the Prime Minister had told his finance minister to deliver.

Why did the minister disregard the Prime Minister's directive? When will she deliver his debt management plan?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in annex 2 of the budget, we present a very clear debt management strategy, and we point out that we have been carefully and thoughtfully pushing out the maturities of Canada's debt. Fifteen per cent of our bonds were long bonds before the pandemic. Last year, we pushed that out to 29%, and in the budget we commit to moving that to 42%.

*Oral Questions*

This is a prudent fiscal approach and will lock in today's low interest rates.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, just three months ago, the Prime Minister gave his ministers new mandate letters.

The Minister of Finance's mandate letter asked her to do three things: avoid creating new permanent spending, review the debt management strategy, and present a new fiscal anchor.

Over the past three months, the Minister of Finance has rejected each of these mandates. This budget will go down in history as the highest-spending budget in Canada's history, with a slew of new permanent spending measures.

Political commentator Bernard Drainville was not fooled. He said this morning that the Liberal government seemed to be making a point of not talking about balancing the budget.

Why?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have to point out for Canadians that our fiscal approach is prudent and reasonable.

In the budget, we presented a plan to reduce the federal debt-to-GDP ratio in the medium term and unwind COVID-19-related deficits.

I also want to point out that Canada has the best fiscal position in the G7.

• (1445)

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is not complicated. The fiscal anchor they set is the amount they will spend. That is the fiscal anchor in the budget.

We are going to have to get used to hearing the word “trillion” here in the House. It is not a word that comes up often. It means \$1,000 billion. Our national debt will soon hit \$1.4 trillion.

I want to share a quote. A certain person wrote that, with time, living beyond our means is unsustainable, even if the exact moment when higher interest rates crystallize is uncertain.

Does the Minister of Finance agree with the person who wrote that statement, the keynote speaker at the last Liberal convention, one Mark Carney?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to once again call on the Conservative Party to be straight with Canadians and say whether the Conservative Party is the party of austerity or whether it wants us to spend more, on health care, for example, as Conservative members said at the beginning of question period.

It is important to be consistent. Canadians want consistency, and that is what our government offers.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, here are some numbers from the past year: \$78 billion in increased wealth for Canada's billionaires; \$42 billion in bank prof-

its during a pandemic; \$25 billion in tax dollars going to overseas tax havens. Here are some numbers from budget 2021: zero dollars raised from a wealth tax; zero dollars raised from a pandemic profits tax; zero dollars recouped now from overseas tax havens. If we are all in this together, why do Liberals always give a free ride to the ultra rich?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government absolutely believes that everyone in Canada needs to pay their fair share and that is why we have proposed a number of concrete measures in this budget. We are putting forward a luxury tax. We are putting forward a digital services tax. We are putting down unprecedented measures to crack down on tax evasion and aggressive tax planning schemes and finally, we are putting forward a tax on vacant and non-resident properties because homes are for Canadian families to live in.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, young people have been some of the hardest hit by this pandemic. The third wave will only make things worse. The budget is an utter disappointment to students and young people who have had to make fundamental shifts in their education, employment and financial situations. The NDP is calling for a moratorium on student loan payments and putting an end to student loan interest permanently so young people do not have to spend years under crushing debt.

Will the Prime Minister and the government commit to taking real action to help young people instead of these platitudes which do not go far enough?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have committed nearly \$6 billion to support young Canadians in this budget. Those are not mere platitudes. We are going to support Canadian students. We are going to make an education more affordable. We are going to create 500,000 work experience and job training opportunities. Early learning and child care, which we will build, will help young Canadians first and foremost.

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the past year saw low-wage workers, youths, racialized Canadians and women leave the workforce in disproportionate numbers. Businesses in my riding have been clear: a robust economy depends on increasing labour force participation and budget 2021 addresses this.

Could the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance update us on how this budget will make generational investments building a Canada-wide early learning and child care system to get more people to work?

• (1450)

**Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Mississauga—Erin Mills for her hard work and leadership.

*Oral Questions*

Budget 2021 will ensure that families in Canada are no longer burdened by high child care costs aiming for a 50% average fee reduction by the end of 2022, and reaching \$10 per day on average by 2026. This budget will invest almost \$30 billion working with provincial, territorial and indigenous partners to support quality, not-for-profit child care, and ensuring the needs of early childhood educators are at the heart of the system.

We told Canadians we would do whatever it takes for as long as it takes and that is what—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

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**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the proceedings at defence committee are both reprehensible and unparliamentary. The defence committee chair has unlawfully used her authority to subvert the will of the committee and frustrate its ability to conduct the critical study into the allegations of sexual misconduct in the military.

As a former officer, she swore to put service to country ahead of her own personal gain, yet she has turned her back on women in uniform by preventing the committee's work.

Will the member for Kanata—Carleton inform this House when she will urgently resume the defence committee?

**The Speaker:** The hon. chair of the committee, if she is online.

We will go to the vice-chair.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on National Defence, I want to thank the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill for her strong and sincere leadership on this file.

I share her disgust with the contemptuous Liberal actions at and the disgraceful obstruction of the defence committee. The member for Kanata—Carleton in particular is preventing us from investigating sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

As committee chair, she is allowing Liberal members to block key witnesses from appearing and suspended the committee with no date or time for resuming debate. The member for Kanata—Carleton must immediately end the cover-up for the Prime Minister, which she is doing at the expense of our women and men in uniform.

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**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a constituent shared this with me the other day, "Just one thing: get the vaccine rolling please. I have a medical condition and 811 said it would be 16 weeks. Really?"

Constituents like this, and millions of other Canadians, are suffering from Liberal vaccine fumbles while they watch other jurisdictions safely and permanently reopen.

Will the Prime Minister stop the spin and blame and just admit he has failed Canadians?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to tell Canadians that when they needed PPE, we procured 7.2 billion items of PPE. When they needed rapid tests, we procured 40 million rapid tests.

The same is true with vaccines. We have procured vaccines by the millions: 48 to 50 million will be arriving by the end of June and 110 million by the end of September. We are sitting at number two in the G20 for doses administered, and we will continue to bring in vaccines for all Canadians.

**Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 drive-through vaccine clinic in my home city of Regina had to shut down last weekend after it ran out vaccine.

The Government of Saskatchewan announced that unless it receives an unscheduled delivery of vaccines soon, Regina's innovative and efficient drive-through clinic will remain closed until May 2.

Why does the government continue to put thousands of lives at risk across Canada by not securing a reliable and steady supply of vaccines?

• (1455)

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we are operating in a very competitive global environment, and not withstanding that environment, we are continuing to bring vaccines into this country by the millions: a million vaccines of Pfizer per week in April, two million vaccines of Pfizer per week in May and 2.5 million vaccines over five weeks in June. That is just from one supplier.

We also have AstraZeneca, we have J&J and we have Moderna coming in to supplement our diversified portfolio of vaccines. We will continue bringing vaccines in for all Canadians so that all Canadians have access to a vaccine—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Prince Albert.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, vaccine centres across Saskatchewan are closing due to lack of supply. Regina is closed until May, Saskatoon is closed right now and pharmacies that are supposed to start delivering vaccines this week are now unable to do so. Saskatchewanians are holding up their end of the bargain by lining up to get vaccinated because their lives and livelihoods are at stake.

*Oral Questions*

When will the Liberal government finally keep up its end by ensuring a reliable supply?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a reason why we are in within the top three countries for vaccine administration in the G20. It is because our vaccines are continuing to come into the country by the millions. It is because of our diversified portfolio. It is because we will be continuing to bring vaccines into the country for all Canadians.

We have accelerated 22 million doses of vaccine from later quarters to earlier quarters and that will allow all Canadians to have access to a vaccine prior to the end of September. That is our commitment and we will stick to it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, seniors can see right through the government's budget tactics.

They want a permanent old age pension increase starting at 65. Ottawa is offering a single vote-seeking \$500 payment, and that is only for those 75 and over. It is clear to seniors that the federal government is dividing them into two age-based classes and that it is once again postponing pension increases indefinitely.

That is why the Bloc is amending the budget to include an immediate pension increase at 65. Will the government support our amendment out of respect for all seniors?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing we have in common with members on the other side of the House is respect for seniors. I am very proud of the fact that 25% fewer seniors live in poverty now than when we came to power. We chose to target seniors 75 and over because their needs are greatest.

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, seniors will not be fooled. They realize that, by sending a one-time cheque this summer for \$500, the government is trying to buy votes rather than increase pensions for all seniors.

After everything they have been through during the pandemic, they thought the federal government got it. They expected Ottawa to finally do something about their lost purchasing power. They expected Ottawa to understand that they are the ones most affected by COVID-19. What they did not expect was to be used as pawns in a potential election.

Why is the government so stubbornly refusing to increase pensions for those 65 and over?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we fully understand the needs of seniors, and we understand the tragedy that was COVID-19. That is why the Canadian Armed Forces went into long-term care homes to save the lives of Canadian seniors.

As for old age security, this is a permanent increase for all seniors in Canada who are 75 and older.

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, documents show that the federal government is paying over \$8 per dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine. South Africa is paying \$5.25, the U.S. \$4 and the European Union only \$2.15. Given our high price, one would think Canada would have a vaccine delivery guarantee.

Instead, pharmacies in my riding are struggling to confirm appointments for seniors because of inadequate supply from the federal government, but in neighbouring Maine, anyone 18 years and up can get vaccinated in a pharmacy today.

Could the Prime Minister tell us when New Brunswick pharmacies will have enough vaccines to help as many families as in the state of Maine?

• (1500)

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite well knows, our vaccine contracts are confidential, but not breaching them is a priority, especially when every country is in a race for vaccines. Each country negotiates its own contract and different aspects come into it. AstraZeneca has said that its vaccines are sold at not-for-profit prices, and we negotiated in good faith with it.

We are continuing to work to accelerate doses to Canada. We will not rest until this job is done.

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, COVID hot spots, designated high-priority vaccination areas, of Thornhill, Vaughan and Markham in York Region have for weeks now experienced a serious reduction in vaccine supplies. Clinics large and small have closed due to a lack of supply, new eligible groups cannot be accommodated and the region is unable to expand protection of residents and essential workers in manufacturing.

In desperation, Ontario's Premier Ford is now reaching out to the European Union, India and the U.S. What is the Liberal government doing now to backfill its blundering unsecured vaccine procurement?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the opposition refuses to acknowledge that vaccines are coming into our country by the millions, that we have 13.4 million doses distributed, that almost a quarter of all Canadians have received at least one dose and that we sit in the top three of G20 countries. Why? Because we continue to bring vaccines into the country by the millions for the provinces, for the territories and for all Canadians. This is a competitive environment and we will continue operating in it for all Canadians.



### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, recently I spoke with the CBSA union president and he advised me that 540 border agents and staff at the Windsor-Detroit border did not have access to vaccines. This jeopardizes the health of those front-line workers. Further, an outbreak could shut down the busiest border crossing in North America and threaten our already fragile supply chain, another glaring example of the Liberals' failed vaccine program.

When will the minister take action to provide vaccines to these essential workers?

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the concern that our border service officers, who have done an extraordinary job throughout this pandemic and are doing important work to keep Canadians safe, should be prioritized for vaccinations. That is why we have reached out to the provincial health authorities in the provinces right across the country, and all those provinces have responded. We have just heard quite recently that Ontario is beginning to prioritize those workers as well, and we are glad to see that step is now taking place.

Those people should be vaccinated. They do important work for Canadians and we are glad that the provinces are doing the job of providing the vaccines to them on the basis of priority.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mrs. Lyne Bessette (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 2020, the rate of livestock slaughter slowed considerably.

This has forced producers to keep their animals longer and has resulted in significant additional costs for them. Our government is committed to supporting the agricultural industry by helping to maintain and adapt financial tools for agricultural risk management to cope with climate change and market conditions.

Can the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell us about the measures that have been implemented in Quebec in that regard?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, I announced, jointly with the Quebec minister of agriculture, fisheries and food, the creation of the Canada-Quebec livestock assistance initiative under the AgriRecovery program to provide financial support to the cattle, pig and large game industries.

A total of \$21.8 million will help to mitigate the costs associated with keeping animals on the farm because of processing slow-downs, as well as the costs associated with ensuring animal welfare and our food security.

\* \* \*

[English]

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has suggested that his ill-conceived firearms buyback program will cost

### Oral Questions

between \$300 million and \$400 million. He has suggested that they are expecting to buy back roughly 150,000 to 200,000 firearms. Many of the firearms that the Liberals arbitrarily selected for their ban were non-restricted, such as firearms typically used for hunting or around the farm.

What data was used by the minister to determine the cost and scope of his buyback?

• (1505)

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we promised Canadians that we would strengthen gun control to keep Canadians safe, while the Conservatives obviously promised the gun lobby that they would weaken gun control. That is why we brought forward measures last May to prohibit weapons that had no place in society.

We are working now with legislation introduced through Bill C-21 to make sure that none of those weapons can ever be traded, sold or used in Canada again. Those measures are necessary and strongly supported right across the country. That is the right thing to do to keep Canadians safe.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is an answer to a question, but it was not an answer to my question.

Many experts anticipate that this buyback is going to be a multi-billion dollar boondoggle that does not have any meaningful impact on public safety. We have seen this before from the Liberals. Unfortunately, for law-abiding firearms owners, the government cares about pushing its ideology and not about taking concrete steps to actually address public safety.

What data did the Liberal government rely on when determining how many individuals would likely participate in their buyback program?

**Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member's question gives me an opportunity to remind him that the majority of these weapons were, in fact, registered because they were restricted, but we know that many of them were not. There is no gun registry in the country. It is one of the reasons in the legislation we have brought forward that we will require people who are in possession of these now prohibited weapons to register them properly, so we can have a precise calculation of where these guns are.

It is also equally important to acknowledge that these are weapons that are not used for hunting or sport purposes. They are used as tactical weapons to kill people. That is why they have no place in our country, and we are removing them.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during our international trade committee meeting, I was appalled to hear from our life sciences industry about the lack of consultation and coordination by the Liberal government.

As the pandemic began and worsened, contracts worth millions of dollars were signed outside Canada, while turning a blind eye to our local vaccine manufacturers.

Will the government admit that it ignored our local vaccine manufacturers, that we have a shortage of vaccine supply and that, as a result, we are now in this third wave?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is a member for whom I have enormous respect, but what he said could not be further from the truth. We, indeed, have invested more than \$1 billion. What we should celebrate today is that in the budget that was presented yesterday by the Minister of Finance, and as she just said, we are investing an additional \$2.2 billion in biomanufacturing. We know there is a lot of talent in Canada. We know there is a lot of expertise in Canada. We are going to continue to invest in made-in-Canada solutions to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we enter the third wave of the pandemic, tremendous advances have been made in the past 12 months with the creation and distribution of vaccines. Our government has worked tirelessly to procure and distribute millions of doses of vaccines.

In my home province of British Columbia, residents as young as 40 years old are eligible to book their appointments. Provinces across the country are also ramping up their vaccine rollout as we speak. We are well on our way to getting vaccines into the arms of all Canadians who wish to receive one.

Could the minister please update the House on the percentage of Canadians who have received vaccines to date and the progress of procurement for future shipments to ensure health care systems across the—

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to say that just over 24% of Canadians have received at least one dose of vaccine.

In a very competitive global environment, where every country is struggling to receive the same product, we have accelerated the delivery of approximately 22 million vaccines to arrive in an earlier quarter. In the first quarter, we received 3.5 million more doses of vaccine than originally targeted. We are on track to receive nearly 50 million doses by the end of Q2. We will not stop until all Canadians have access to vaccines.

\* \* \*

● (1510)

**PHARMACARE**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday's budget was an opportunity to strengthen our health care system for people across the country. However, the Liberals, once

again, failed to deliver pharmacare for Canadians and ignored their own advisory committee's recommendations and timelines. Their choice will continue to leave millions of Canadians without access to the life-saving medications they need.

The Liberals have been promising pharmacare for decades, and breaking their promises for just as long. If a pandemic has not shown them the importance of national, universal, public drug coverage, what will?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to continuing working with provinces and territories toward the goal of a universal national pharmacare program. To maintain momentum, we will proceed with our plan to provide ongoing funding of \$500 million for a program for high-cost drugs for rare diseases.

\* \* \*

**CANADA POST**

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers discussed the lack of adherence to public health guidelines at their facility in my riding and warned of an impending outbreak. Last Friday, I was notified that nine workers tested positive, with one worker on a ventilator. This is a grave concern for workers across Canada.

Could the Minister of Public Services and Procurement advise what actions are being taken to protect the front-line workers at the Canada Post facility in my riding and across Canada?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada Post's top priority is keeping its employees and Canadian communities safe, while continuing to deliver the services on which Canadians rely. Canada Post is taking essential safety measures, such as providing hand sanitizer for all customers and requiring the use of face coverings by employees, contractors, customers and visitors into Canada Post facilities.

Canada Post is following the advice of the Public Health Agency of Canada and is providing rapid voluntary on-site testing to all employees and contractors in facilities of concern. We will continue to support the essential workers of Canada Post as they navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

## PRIVILEGE

## ALLEGED PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege concerning the premature disclosure of the contents of Bill C-288, an act to amend the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act. This bill is sponsored by the member for Sudbury.

On Sunday, April 18, 2021, the Toronto Star posted an article entitled "Liberal MP's bill aims to keep turmoil at Laurentian University from happening at other schools". The member is quoted in the article disclosing the contents of his bill. The problem is that the bill, which was on notice at the time the article was published, was not introduced until Monday, April 19, 2021. The article attributes several statements to the member for Sudbury. The article says:

"I'm going to add post-secondary institutions to the exemptions for institutions that cannot avail themselves of CCAA protection. It's as simple as that," [the member stated], referring to the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, which allows for court protection during financial restructuring....

The article also quotes the member as saying:

"This includes additional financial support from our CCAA lender in order to continue to operate as Laurentian implements its plans to position the university for long-term sustainability and a basis for recovery for its creditors and stakeholders."

On March 10, 2020, the Speaker, ruled a *prima facie* case of privilege following the premature disclosure of the contents of Bill C-7, an act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying). The Speaker said:

...based on a reading of the Canadian Press article on Bill C-7 on medical assistance in dying, and in the absence of any explanation to the contrary, I must conclude that the anonymous sources mentioned were well aware of our customs and practices and chose to ignore them. It seems clear to me that the content of the bill was disclosed prematurely while it was on notice and before it was introduced in the House....

The rule on the confidentiality of bills on notice exists to ensure that members, in their role as legislators, are the first to know their content when they are introduced. Although it is completely legitimate to carry out consultations when developing a bill or to announce one's intention to introduce a bill by referring to its public title available on the Notice Paper and Order Paper, it is forbidden to reveal specific measures contained in a bill at the time it is put on notice.

On April 19, 2016, the Speaker, in finding a *prima facie* case of privilege regarding the premature disclosure of contents of Bill C-14, an act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other acts (medical assistance in dying), stated:

As honourable members know, one of my most important responsibilities as Speaker is to safeguard the rights and privileges of members, individually and collectively. Central to the matter before us today is the fact that, due to its pre-eminent role in the legislative process, the House cannot allow precise legislative information to be distributed to others before it has been made accessible to all members. Previous Speakers have regularly upheld not only this fundamental right, but also expectation, of the House.

Another question of privilege was raised on March 19, 2001, regarding a similar matter. Speaker Milliken, on page 1840 of the House of Commons debates, supported this principle and said:

In preparing legislation, the government may wish to hold extensive consultations and such consultations may be held entirely at the government's discretion. However, with respect to material to be placed before parliament, the House must take precedence. Once a bill has been placed on notice, whether it has been presented in a different form to a different session of parliament has no bearing and the bill is considered a new matter. The convention of the confidentiality of bills on notice is necessary, not only so that members themselves may be well informed, but also

*Privilege*

because of the pre-eminent rule which the House plays and must play in the legislative affairs of the nation.

In addition, there was another case of contempt on October 15, 2001, where the Department of Justice briefed the media on the contents of a bill prior to the legislation being introduced in the House.

Given the contents of the article, and that it was published before Bill C-288, an act to amend the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, was introduced in the House, I ask that you find a *prima facie* case of privilege. I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

● (1515)

**The Speaker:** I would like to thank the hon. member. I will take it under consideration and return with a ruling.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Before you rule on this, I would ask that you provide a little time, so we could come back to the House and provide some feedback on it as well. We will do that as soon as possible.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. My colleague indicated that we will get back to the House.

I just want to indicate to the Speaker that I have had discussions in the past in which there was a general lack of knowledge in regard to private members' bills and the need to keep them secret until they are introduced. I would be very surprised if this situation were unique. It may be worth having the Speaker's office invest a little time in looking at how members, particularly those who are introducing a private member's bill, are informed of their responsibilities.

In other words, this may have been done accidentally, and it might have actually happened on several occasions. It would be worthwhile to look into it.

● (1520)

**The Speaker:** I want to thank the hon. member for his input.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières on a point of order.

**Mrs. Louise Charbonneau:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out there has been no French interpretation since the previous intervention.

**The Speaker:** We are having technical difficulties related to broadcasting. It is not an interpretation issue. I recommend that members restart their computers to install the updates.

I had the same problem with the sound breaking up this morning during a virtual meeting. Installing the updates fixed the problem. I am not a technician, but it worked.

*Government Orders*

[English]

I will speak in English to see if the translation is going through. Is that working?

The translation is now coming across.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

- (1525)

[English]

**THE BUDGET**

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Parkdale—High Park.

As the member of Parliament for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, it gives me great pleasure to speak on budget 2021.

This budget is focused on finishing the fight with COVID. It is also focused on creating jobs and building back better. However, we have to understand that COVID has affected people differently. It has disproportionately affected low-income workers, young people, women, racialized Canadians and certain business sectors. Those groups were kept in mind as we were framing budget 2021.

Here in Nova Scotia, with this budget, we see increases in certain key areas to support our communities. For example, we see some increases in equalization payments and in the Canada health transfer, which is so important. As members know, health care is the number one priority for Nova Scotians, as well as the social transfers.

We invested \$19 billion in the restart agreement, as well as a safe return to class fund, which I made an announcement on last week for open, outdoor space in schools for students. We also invested in the essential workers support fund and, for our communities, we have \$500 million toward community infrastructure that will see local projects stimulated and local jobs created, improving the quality of life for Nova Scotians and all Canadians. As well, there are investments in tourism and for small craft harbours in the fisheries area.

A big item that we have been pushing for a number of years now, and which my colleague, the MP for Cape Breton—Canso, brought forward as a private member's bill, is the EI sickness benefit. It was at 15 weeks, which we knew was not enough, so with this budget we moved it to 26 weeks. This will help 169,000 Canadians to have more flexibility to recover and return to work. The Canadian Cancer Society said, "The 2021 Federal budget delivers a much-needed extension of the Employment Insurance (EI) Sickness Benefit to support people facing the financial burden that comes with a cancer diagnosis".

I want to touch on the extremely important issue of the fundamental and historic investment in child care benefits. As members know, I am a former educator, and I know how important early learning is for all Canadians. This historic investment will drive growth in our economy with the increased participation of women in the workforce. It will offer, of course, good care for our young people. This plan will see a reduction in the cost of day care for parents of up to 50% by 2022, and the goal is to have it at \$10 per day on average by 2026. The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour said that this is a "big win for unions with \$10-a-day child care with the federal budget." It is an impressive investment. This is major for our country.

I also want to touch on the investments for seniors. We know that seniors have had tremendous difficulty throughout this pandemic, and they have been isolated. We have noticed a gap in long-term care, and we have lost many of our seniors who were in long-term care. We are investing \$3 billion not only to establish standards but to apply those standards and make them permanent, which is extremely important. We will move forward on that.

Prior to the budget, we committed to an increase in old age security for those aged 75 years and older. We will see an immediate benefit of \$500 take place in August. Ongoing, in the next year, they will get a 10% increase in their old age pension. These investments are so crucial for our seniors, and represent 3.3 million seniors who will each receive an additional \$766.

- (1530)

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, I can say there have been some big investments for veterans as well. We invested \$192 million to help with the backlog of disability claims. We also invested \$20 million in the COVID stream to help veterans' organizations. However, in 2021, there are more investments for veterans. There is \$50 million over three years to enhance the veteran and family well-being fund. That is over and above the \$3 million the fund is receiving per year, so it will be \$8 million per year for the next three years. Organizations and individuals that help veterans and their families will be able to apply for those funds. VETS Canada said, "As a recipient under the veteran and family well-being fund, we know first-hand the importance of this investment."

We have also invested \$140 million over five years for those who have challenges with PTSD, depression or anxiety disorders. While they are waiting for their benefits through disability applications, they will be able to access mental health supports. Finally, veteran homelessness is extremely important. There is a \$45-million investment in a pilot program to support veterans through rent supplements and wraparound services such as counselling, addiction treatment and finding jobs.

We have invested once again in young Canadians. The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations said, “The package will bring significant relief to students from coast to coast to coast who have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. From investments in Canada Student Grants, extending the waiver on accrual of student loan interest, to investments in jobs for students and more, we are glad to know that the Government of Canada is listening to the needs and concerns of students during this [pandemic].”

Talking now about our small and medium-sized businesses, we are extending successful programs such as the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the rent subsidy and the Canada emergency business account. They are major investments that we will be continuing. There will also be a reduction in credit card transaction fees. We have been talking about that for years and it is getting done. We will lower the cost of interchange fees for merchants and also ensure that small businesses benefit from pricing that is similar to large businesses.

On the green economy, continuing on the fall economic statement, we will be helping homeowners with home retrofits through interest-free loans of up to \$40,000. This could see investment in replacing low-efficiency heating systems with high-efficiency furnaces, high-efficiency heat pumps, etc. We are also looking at net-zero accelerators, a \$5-billion investment over seven years to support our climate plan, and projects that will help reduce domestic greenhouse gases. There are investments as well in 2021 that propose to reduce 50% of the general corporate and small business income tax rate for businesses and manufacturers. Those are big investments.

As the member of Parliament for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, which has the oldest intergenerational Black community in Canada, we are investing once again to support Black communities. We know they have been disadvantaged in the past and continue to be. They have low-income households and we need to continue to support them. We are investing \$200 million to establish a new Black-led philanthropic endowment fund, as well as \$100 million in supports for capacity building and Black-led non-profit organizations. These are investments that will help support our communities as we move forward.

I want to talk about our financial plan as well.

• (1535)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It will have to be during questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

### *Government Orders*

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am glad the member mentioned how low-income Canadians have been disproportionately hit by this pandemic and that this budget punishes them by bringing the CERB payments down from \$2,000 to \$1,200 a month. That is \$800 a month less. The Liberals missed this opportunity to let the super wealthy people in Canada pay their fair share by not bringing in a wealth tax: 80% of Canadians want a wealth tax here so the wealthy can pay their fair share.

Why are the Liberals so afraid to bring in a wealth tax and let the super rich pay their fair share?

• (1540)

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that the national child care framework investment, down to \$10 by 2026, will be a great help to low-income Canadians.

We have made some very important moves on the tax front. We will put forward a luxury tax. Moving forward, we will also take steps on tax evasion. Finally, we will tax non-residents' properties here in Canada. Those are big steps to move forward with on that important agenda.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about the environment.

A quick scan of the budget reveals that it could lead to increased pollution in Canada. I say that because the money being proposed could be used to support untested technologies. I am talking about hydrogen technology, carbon capture and small modular reactors.

The parliamentary secretary's speech did not get into it that much, but could he elaborate on this? I am sure he has some thoughts about our concerns that the money could be used for technologies that, in fact, would lead us to generate even more greenhouse gases.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question.

The environment is certainly extremely important to our government. We have taken very important measures since we came to power. We have made direct and targeted investments in renovation projects and green technologies.

We know that this environmental stimulus will further benefit Canada and allow it to meet its targets.

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague could provide his thoughts on how the budget is extending into September the different emergency recovery programs we put in place to protect Canadians, to be there for Canadians and protect small businesses.

Could he also provide his thoughts on the many initiatives that will assist us in ultimately being able to build back better?

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Madam Speaker, this budget comes in by directly supporting people. We have heard the challenges out there. We are still in the third wave. We need to continue to invest in Canada. We have continued investment in the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the Canada emergency business account, and the rent subsidy. Those are very important investments that are needed. I talked to my constituents and I am talking to the business community. The wage subsidy will help tremendously. These are important steps to help people survive as we are moving through hopefully the last phase of COVID-19.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to start by acknowledging that I am speaking to you virtually in the House of Commons from my home in Toronto, which is on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat, the Anishinabe and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit.

I want to acknowledge that I am speaking about budget 2021, which is a historic budget, tabled in a historic manner by Canada's first-ever female finance minister.

What a budget it is. It canvasses a wide number of areas. I propose to go through some of them, but not all of them, because there are so many supports literally contained therein.

I am going to pick up on the environment, which is the subject that my colleague from Nova Scotia just left off on. We know, as a government and as a party, that climate change is real. We have taken serious measures to act on climate change during the course of our tenure as government over these past almost six years now.

So far we have invested nearly \$60 billion, which has been added to with this current budget. What the budget allows us to do is get to a path whereby GHG emissions would be reduced by as much as 36% based on the 2005 levels. I outline this number right at the outset because we heard a lot of criticism, sometimes very constructive criticism, by opposition parliamentarians and others that we need to set targets that are more ambitious, particularly more ambitious than the Harper Conservative government we succeeded. We have done that by setting targets of around 32% this past December, and we are now setting a path to get to 36% in reductions and get to net-zero by 2050, which is really critical.

We are doing that by increasing the dollars we are putting in. There is \$15 billion of new money that was allocated at the end of December 2020. In the most recent budget, there is an additional \$17.6 billion dedicated toward the green recovery. In particular, I want to highlight one other feature, which is the net-zero accelera-

tor. What that does is allow companies to invest in how they can reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions. We put \$3 billion into that accelerator in last December's announcement made by the minister and the Prime Minister, and we are adding another \$5 billion in this announcement.

On top of all that, there is also money put in place to help us achieve our land and marine conservation targets of 25% of areas by 2025.

That is simply on the environmental piece.

The budget also outlines, again reaffirming our commitment to continue to escalate the price on carbon pollution, the climate action incentive rebate, which will continue to go to Canadians, not just on an annual basis, but on a quarterly basis, which is really important to underscore, given that the official opposition's bright idea on climate is to eliminate such rebates.

The next subject is housing. I start with these two subjects because I represent the constituents of Parkdale—High Park, and they talk to me all the time about progressive policies on issues that affect them and this part of Toronto. Climate and housing are at the top of the agenda in almost all conversations I have with my constituents. I am pleased to say that not only is this budget responding to the concerns of my constituents that I have advocated for with the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister with respect to the environment, but also housing concerns.

How is the budget doing that? We are planning to invest an additional \$2.5 billion in housing. What does that \$2.5 billion look like? It is an additional \$1.5 billion for the rapid housing initiative. This has landed with resounding success around the country, particularly in the city of Toronto, because it allows us to build housing and build it quickly so we actually meet the very short supply of affordable housing in cities like mine. Because of the resounding success of the rapid housing initiative over the last several months, we have decided we are going to commit to expanding it by \$1.5 billion, which would allow us to have 4,500 new units, 25% of which will be dedicated for women, which is an important piece. There is also \$600 million dedicated toward an affordable housing innovation fund, which will bring the total new units to over 30,000. An additional \$300 million will be dedicated to the Canada housing benefit to increase things like direct financial assistance to women and children who are fleeing violence.

These are all critical initiatives, not just for my constituents in Parkdale—High Park, but indeed for all people in Canada, and they should be priorities for all parliamentarians.

*Government Orders*

• (1545)

There is \$1.3 billion that is being reallocated to speed up the construction, support and repair of units. There is money that is being put in place to ensure that vacant properties will be taxed when they are owned by non-resident non-Canadians. I insert this here because it relates to housing, but also because in the course of following today's debate, I have heard repeatedly that there do not seem to be enough initiatives targeted at those who are living luxuriously, those who are very affluent or rich. This, in fact, is targeting exactly those individuals, and I highlight it for that reason.

There is another key component that we have seen COVID has exacerbated. Many of us are working from home right now, and that trend will continue even as we exit out of this pandemic. That has liberated office space in cities like mine, Toronto. What we propose in the budget is to support the conversion of some of that empty office space into affordable housing, and that is exactly what we will do with this budget.

The next subject I want to touch upon is really the flagship policy that is in this budget, and we heard the Minister of Finance articulate this quite clearly. She talked about the fact that child care has arisen as an issue that has climbed to the forefront. I say this painfully aware of my gender and of the fact that it is men like me who have all of a sudden been sensitized to this priority during this pandemic. I am a man who has his kids at home as we speak right now. They are about 15 feet away from me going through online schooling, etc. Men like me have been challenged over these past 15 months, and that is a good thing because it has raised awareness about the importance of giving some momentum to the call for child care.

Yes, this is a 50-year-old call. We heard the Minister of Finance articulate that, but what she also articulated very clearly is that this is not just a women's policy; this is an economic policy. It is an infrastructure policy that is indifferent to building roads or transit. By empowering child care, what we will do is unleash economic potential. That potential is something in the order of 250,000 women, most likely women because women still bear the predominant burden of child care, who will be liberated and emancipated so that they can participate more fully in the economy. That is an incredible statistic, joined by another incredible statistic, which is the \$30-billion investment we are putting on the table to ensure that this becomes a reality.

There are naysayers who say Liberals have committed to this in the past and it has not come to fruition. Never before has this kind of dollar amount been allocated. I would remind my fellow members of Parliament that Liberals came close to getting this across the finish line under Paul Martin and Ken Dryden's tenure, circa 2005. That was a minority Parliament that saw a universal child care plan actually defeated, unfortunately, which led us to nine years of Stephen Harper's Conservatives. I am very hopeful that we do not see a repeat of that kind of history, and instead, in this minority Parliament, we can see this important goal get across the finish line.

What would it mean? It would mean a 50% reduction in child care costs as early as the end of next year, and getting child care costs to literally \$10 a day by 2025.

In these last two minutes, I want to canvass some of the proposals that deal with systemic racism and systemic discrimination, a subject near and dear to my heart as a person of colour and somebody who believes in human rights and equality. The budget would be transformative for Black entrepreneurs, for Black business owners, for indigenous persons who want a firmer commitment to reconciliation and curing overrepresentation. What the budget would do is make real those commitments, which have come to the fore in what we have seen during this pandemic.

I will highlight a few additional initiatives. There is more money in the budget, around \$26 million, for immigration and refugee legal aid that affects people of colour. There is \$21 million for a specific racialized communities legal support fund that will get public legal education into the hands of racialized people. There is diversity in procurement, which we have never seen outlined in a budget before. I want to give a shout-out to the member for Whitby for all the work he has done on this file, and the Minister of Public Services and Procurement for getting behind this idea where we will actually target procurement measures that help indigenous and Black businesses, which is critical. There is money for disaggregated data, so we understand the true nature of the problem, and there is \$74 million for an indigenous justice strategy.

I cannot get to all of the measures that I wanted to highlight, but there are a lot of supports for a lot of different needy sectors of the economy: low-wage workers, small businesses, people who work in arts and culture, many of whom are my constituents. These are programs that I believe in. They will cost money, but the time is now to invest in Canadians and invest in building back better. To the question of whether we can afford this, I say very firmly that we cannot afford not to do this.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the election budget that the Minister of Finance presented yesterday is missing three things that were in the minister's mandate letter: avoid creating new permanent spending, review the debt management strategy and present a new fiscal anchor.

Could my colleague tell me what is meant by the term “fiscal guardrails” in the budget presented yesterday? Is this term meant to be the same thing as the new fiscal anchor mentioned in the Minister of Finance's mandate letter?

• (1555)

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I will do my best to answer in French.

With respect to the Minister of Finance's mandate letter, all I can do is repeat what the minister herself said today during question period.

*Government Orders*

[English]

We will reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio so that it reaches below 50%. Also, what we have targeted is a deficit that will hit just over 1% of GDP by 2025. What is important is that while some of the program spending is meant to be long-term, the large majority of it is for a three-year period, which is exactly what we committed to in the fall economic statement, and we are staying true to those words by targeting the bulk of the spending for the next three years only.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague ended his speech by saying we cannot afford to do nothing. Why did his government decide to do nothing about non-COVID-19 patients? Over the next 10 years, they will become the major victims of the pandemic.

To give just one example, does he know that in gastroenterology there are currently 110,000 patients waiting for testing and treatment of colorectal and colon cancer, and 70,000 of them are overdue for these procedures because they have been postponed in order to treat COVID-19 patients?

We know that a four-week delay increases the mortality rate from 6% to 8%, and therefore how can his government have made the political choice to not immediately increase health transfers, which would provide treatment for these people?

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Montcalm for his question.

This question has already been asked several times during today's debate. It is not true at all that we are not there to help the provincial health systems. We are there to provide support for mental health and funding for long-term care facilities.

[English]

We are also there in terms of the previous investments we have made for health care in terms of the safe restart agreement and other allocations we have made for care for elderly and for home care, which is important—

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order because there is no interpretation. I want to make sure that I hear my colleague's answer.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Okay.

The interpretation is working now.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has 15 seconds left.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** I was saying that we are there to provide support for mental health and long-term care facilities for seniors. We are working with the provinces to meet their health care needs.

[English]

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Parkdale—High Park for

his tip on pinning the Speaker. He and I have always worked for [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] in this Parliament.

Let me reassure the member that New Democrats know that a budget is a confidence question, and we have reassured Canadians that we will not force them into an election in this third wave of the pandemic. That is why I am quite disappointed that the Liberals have put some things in this budget that they know New Democrats would not normally support.

Does the member actually support cutting the emergency benefit by 40%? I have many people in my riding who work in the tourism industry. The tourism season is not coming back this year, for the second year in a row, and they are forced to depend on that emergency benefit. It is going to go from \$2,000 a month to \$1,200. How are they expected to survive on that pittance?

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, what is important is that the benefits are continuing all the way to September 25, but they are doing so on a sliding scale. The phase-out is an important aspect in terms of addressing people's needs as they decrease. I would reassure the member that we have been dynamic in our responses to the pandemic thus far, and we will continue to be dynamic as the case requires.

• (1600)

[Translation]

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Carleton.

[English]

Before I start a real speech, I want to talk about the basics, because the basics are sometimes lost. Seeing yesterday's budget, a lot of basics were lost. However, let us start with the definition of budget.

A budget is an estimation of revenue and expenses over a specified future period of time and is usually compiled and re-evaluated on a periodic basis. To manage expenses, prepare for unpredictable events and to be able to afford big ticket items without going into debt, budgeting is important. Keeping track of how much we earn and spend does not have to be drudgery, it does not require us to be good at math and it does not mean we cannot buy the things we want. It just means we will know where our money goes and we will have greater control over one's finances. Aside from earmarking resources, a budget can also aid in setting goals, measuring outcomes and planning for contingencies.

A budget deficit occurs when expenses exceed revenue and indicate the financial health of a country. Accrued deficits form national debt. In cases where a budget deficit is identified, current expenses exceed the amount of income received through standard operations. A nation wishing to correct its budget deficit may need to cut back on certain expenditures, increase revenue-generating activities or employ a combination of the two. Certain unanticipated events and policies may cause budget deficits.



One of the primary dangers of a budget deficit is inflation, which is the continuous increase of price levels. Continued budget deficits can lead to inflationary monetary policies year after year. A nation can print additional currency to cover payments on debts by issuing securities such as treasury bills and bonds. While this provides a mechanism to make payments, it does carry the risk of devaluing the nation's currency, which can lead to hyperinflation.

Why do governments run deficits? A budget deficit planned to be this large is based on two things: tolerance from taxpayers and financial institutions that bear the risk and the notion of not having to pay back temporary support mechanisms. In effect, leading up to a federal election, the government does not want to take away the sugar bowl, but there is guaranteed to be a hangover from this sugar high.

The national debt is simply the net accumulation of the federal government's annual budget deficits. It is the total amount of money the federal government owes to its creditors, and that amount has gone from \$700 billion two years ago approximately to \$1.2 trillion at this point.

Debt-to-GDP is a ratio of a country's national debt to the level of economic activity in that country. It is a meaningless ratio put in place at a time when the world's central bankers could no longer find the tools to balance national budgets. The concept of permanent national debt, permanently paying institutions with taxpayer funds, became accepted by the world's bankers both private and public. The concept upended the very notion of Keynesianism, where governments were encouraged to spend in bad times and repay that spending in good times, thus maintaining an equilibrium in labour and price levels in society.

It was also a measure of comparing bad fiscal regimes with other bad fiscal regimes, as in, we are in bad shape, but as a function of our GDP, we are not in as bad shape as those other guys, which is a ridiculous point, given every national economy and democratic and financial structure are different.

[Translation]

This strategy can be summed up by the idea that there is always someone who is worse off than we are.

[English]

Companies have debt-to-revenue multiple. It is about the equivalent. However, these entities deliver value to the shareholders by maintaining a balance of risk, as in too much debt and interest payments, and return. In addition, companies can expense debt before calculating taxes, the amount they owe the government for their profits.

Do governments pay taxes and have a favourable application of carrying debt on their balance sheets? No. It is only a burden transferred from today's taxpayers to tomorrow's taxpayers, or in the Liberal government's approach, when things really go south down the road and then in a huge problem scenario. The risk borne here is multiplying and the bearers of that risk are future taxpayers.

Moral hazard exists when a party to a contract takes risks without having to suffer the consequences.

### *Government Orders*

On "build back better", it turns out that build back better is not a political slogan; it refers to the official Sendai framework of disaster recovery that was adopted at the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan in 2015. This definition is broad enough to cover any disaster scenario; build back better from which disaster in Canada, which brings us to yesterday's budget announcement.

• (1605)

The good news is that Canada's forecast annual deficit for last year improved by \$35 billion from the fall economic statement. Those extra funds arrived in taxation revenue from businesses restarting mid-pandemic and Canadians getting back to work to pay government taxes, much that arrived from Canada's traditional strengths of mining, energy, agriculture and manufacturing, essential industries keeping the rest of the country fed, warm and solvent. I am sure the Minister of Finance should be taking credit for a million jobs coming back to Canada, given those are results that have already arrived.

Last year's deficit number is \$354 billion for one level of government, the federal government, whose annual revenue is usually about that amount. This means that \$2 were spent for every dollar brought in, that is in a normal year, but even more from a year when government revenues were down by around 8% to deal with the health and economic effects of a historic pandemic. To build back better and to reimagine Canada's economy, these empty slogans represent nothing but political jingoism.

Canada's deficit in 2019 of \$27 billion in a \$2.3 trillion economy was about 8.3% of government revenues. In an economic boom, Canada was overspending by 8.3%.

This is the rationale from the Liberal Prime Minister about running deficits in boom times. On March 21, 2016, he said in the House:

Mr. Speaker, record low levels of interest rates right now mean that this is an opportunity to invest in our future...This is what we are delivering to grow the economy and help the middle class.

By contrast, in this year's budget announcement, the Minister of Finance said:

The best way to pay our debts is to grow our economy...In fact, in today's low-interest rate environment, not only can we afford these investments, it would be shortsighted of us not to make them.

*Government Orders*

By “investments”, of course, she means government spending. Those two are clearly at odds, but it is obvious that neither the Prime Minister nor the finance minister understand the notion of financial risk. Clearly, the Liberal government will justify spending taxpayer funds in good times, and spending taxpayer funds in hard times. It begs the question, what times are not good for overspending taxpayer funds?

The forecast budget deficit for this fiscal year coming, according to yesterday's budget, is \$154.7 billion. That is almost \$50 billion higher than forecast in the fall economic statement despite last year's revenues out performing by \$35 billion since the fall. Planned spending represents an increase of \$136 billion over the next five years in addition to the \$548 billion in spending forecasts in the fall economic statement. How is this justified? These deficits accumulate to an ongoing debt-to-GDP ratio at 50% going forward, so the plan, the fiscal anchor, is to maintain Canada's debt at half the size of our economy for the foreseeable future. Is that an anchor? The better our economy performs the deeper in debt we get to go?

We say in finance that every economic forecast is wrong from the moment it is written, and rightly so. Things change and getting close based on discipline and unforeseen extraneous events coming at people spells success. There is none of that in this budget. There is no security for our children. There is multiplying risk. It is our job to leave the country in better shape than we found it. Fiscally and in so many other ways we are failing.

What is right about the budget?

The Minister of Finance spoke about taxing foreign owners of unoccupied real estate in Canada, part of our made-in-Canada housing bubble, but also a hole in our money laundering laws in Canada, which are the loosest in the G7. They need to be tighter.

I am pleased that the Minister of Finance has followed our lead in applying an investment tax credit on carbon credit utilization and storage, one of —

• (1610)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am not sure what carbon credit utilization is, but the Conservative plan to price pollution is one that will only give benefit to those who pollute. In fact, it encourages people to pollute.

I know the member for Carleton has spent a lot of time talking about the price on pollution. I admire my Conservative colleagues' willingness to come in here to try to defend such a plan after five years of talking about how a price on pollution was not the right way to go. Now they have this grand plan of putting people's money into a savings account and then letting them choose from the CPC boutique what they would like to spend.

The reality is that is not a plan to fight pollution. That is not a plan to price carbon. That is the Conservatives trying to give to people who are wealthy and have money to ensure they can keep

the money in their pockets rather than ensuring we take all the funds and distribute them equally, as we are currently doing.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for pointing out my stumble.

I am pleased that the Minister of Finance has followed our lead in applying an investment tax credit for carbon capture utilization and storage, one of Canada's most tangible opportunities to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. A 90-day consultation period has been announced. I encourage the government to consider the benefits associated with enhanced oil recovery as part of that strategy, as it is in the United States, and to move toward an environmental strategy that halts the flow of jobs and investments, including technological advances like carbon capture, to foreign jurisdictions, with no positive effect on the environment.

Canada needs regulatory certainty, particularly regarding our environmental objectives. Having a carbon capture strategy that moves jobs and investment to our largest trading partner is not a viable environmental strategy for Canada. I encourage the Minister of Finance to get this right so it actually results in effective policy.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I would like to hear what he has to say about the assistance for seniors in this budget.

The government deliberately chose to create two classes of seniors by increasing the old age security pension starting at age 75 rather than at age 65. This is unfair to thousands of seniors across the country. The government has also chosen to send a single cheque for \$500 at the end of the summer, which is a very strange time, possibly right before an election is called.

Does my colleague think that the Liberals are playing politics at the expense of seniors in Quebec and Canada with these measures?

[*English*]

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Madam Speaker, it is strange, the timing of all the expenses that seem to be flowing out of the Liberals at this point in time and attaching themselves to the budget.

There is something that we need to do for our seniors. The pandemic has exposed one thing, and that is how we have had a hole in the health treatment to our seniors to which we did not pay enough attention. Adjusting those structural problems going forward is fundamentally important. For a long time, seniors at all levels have required more support in our society. I am not sure the old age security is the best way to approach that, but it should be examined, with all the tools we have in our kit.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it may surprise the hon. member for Calgary Centre that I also share his concern about continually running large deficits. I consider myself a Tommy Douglas New Democrat. Tommy ran 17 balanced budgets in his 17 years as premier.

However, this is the situation in which we find ourselves. Canadians need help to get through the pandemic. Businesses need assistance to ensure they survive and can hire back their workers.

We have two choices. We can either deny that assistance, which the Conservatives seem to favour, or we can put in place a tax on those who have made excess profits during the pandemic, the ultra-rich. We could restore corporate income tax rates to the levels from 30 years ago, which the Conservatives and Liberals both cut.

Which is it? Do the Conservatives want to deny Canadians the aid they need to maintain a balanced budget? Are they prepared to join New Democrats in calling for a wealth and excess profits tax?

• (1615)

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Madam Speaker, we were very much engaged with the government on the changes that we brought to it on the emergency wage subsidy. We were very happy it was able to deliver those to Canadians who needed those during the pandemic. We were quite proud that as a caucus and as a party we were able to deliver aid after the Liberals had initially put forward a package that—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Carleton.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today is an occasion for us to pay a visit to the newly renewed popular idea called “modern” monetary theory. We put “modern” in quotation marks because it is a very old idea. It is thousands of years old, if the truth be told, but once again it is being presented as new.

Modern monetary theory is the idea that governments can spend as much as they want, and to pay for it they simply print the cash. They create the money because, of course, the bank, which it owns, in our case the Bank of Canada, has a monopoly on the creation of that currency. Why not just create more money in order to spend it?

The only limit on the amount that can be spent is when said money creation leads to inflation, at which point modern monetary theorists say the solution is to simply raise taxes to reduce the demand that was driving up the inflation in the first place. Once too much of that printed money starts chasing too few goods, the government taxes the money back and slows down the inflation. Effectively, it is a roundabout way to massively expand government up front while claiming there is no cost, and then, when prices spiral out of control, to try to tax them back into submission.

The government and the finance minister claim they do not believe in modern monetary theory, but we have to suspect that the minister believes in some version of it because she has imposed literally no limit whatsoever on her spending in the form of a fiscal anchor. There is only one difference between her version of modern monetary theory and its original theorists. The original proponents said that banks should simply give the money to the government to spend, whereas under the current model the government has set up, the bank sells the debt to the marketplace and then buys it right

back at a higher price only weeks later, to the great profit of the investors with whom it carried out that transaction.

All of this sounds magical, as we are creating something from nothing, but as it has been said, there is nothing new except what is forgotten. To quote Reinhart and Rogoff, two Harvard professors who have studied 800 years of debt crises, “Early on across the world, as already noted, the main device for defaulting on government obligations was that of debasing the content of the coinage. Modern currency presses are just a technologically advanced and more efficient approach to achieving the same end.”

Perhaps the most creative of all of the modern monetary theorists was an emperor named Dionysius, from 2,500 years ago. He thought it was a modern idea then too. He was the dictator of the city state of Syracuse, and of course because of all of his sumptuous living and his ridiculous war fighting, he needed cash. He took the drachmas from his people, and on every one-drachma coin he stamped the number two. Then all of a sudden he had twice as much money.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has a point of order.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I just want to know if there is going to be a test on this history lesson afterward. Should I be expecting that to come when the member is done?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is hardly a point of order.

The hon. member for Carleton.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, the test has been running for four years now, and the Liberals have been getting an F year after year after year.

Dionysius gets an A for creativity. He took one-drachma coins and stamped them with the number two, and all of a sudden he had twice as much money. However, of course, all of the workers of his city state were earning half as much in real terms because everything costs twice as much when we double the amount of currency in circulation.

Throughout the Napoleonic Wars, the exact same thing happened. The amount of silver in the average coin dropped by two-thirds during Napoleon's reign because all of the emperors and kings were trying to debase their coinage to fund their wars. Of course, their people became much poorer because their money did not go as far.

### *Government Orders*

The most recent and extreme case was that of Germany in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. After the war was done, there was 10 times as much paper currency in circulation as immediately before the war. The result was hyperinflation. People needed wheelbarrows to carry their cash off to the baker to buy just one loaf of bread. If someone went to the bar to get a beer, they ordered all of their evening's drinks at once, because if they waited even a few hours, the beer would be more expensive. It was a good investment to load up a table right when they got there, immediately after work, to save a fortune on inflation.

We are told that such inflation will never happen here and that all of these things about printing money causing inflation amount to old thinking. Members should remember that history does not repeat itself, except that it is already repeating itself.

Let us start with housing prices. From December 2019, the last month before COVID started to circulate in Canada, to March 2021, the average house went from \$518,000 to \$716,000. This is a massive 38% increase at a time when the economy dropped by \$120 billion. The economy went down, but somehow housing prices went up.

Lumber prices are up 118%. Here is a quote from a contractor: "Oh, it's ridiculous. A 2×4 stud used to be \$3.50; now they're \$9.80. A sheet of OSB plywood was \$12 two years ago; now it's \$56 per sheet".

Here is a quote from an article in the Financial Post just yesterday, entitled "Central banks and government out of touch with Main Street when it comes to rising cost of living": "the latest Canada's Food Price Report shows that food costs increased 2.7 per cent last year with an expected 4.5 to 6.5 per cent increase in meat, 3.5 to 5.5 per cent in bakery, and 4.5 to 6.5 per cent in vegetables this year." As for gas prices, they have gone from 78¢ a litre to \$1.18 a litre.

All of these things are rising vastly more than the Bank of Canada's target. There is something interesting about the Bank of Canada. I asked about the core rate of inflation when the governor of the bank appeared at the finance committee not so long ago. He told us not to worry about core inflation and that he only worries about CPI. Well, I will tell members something. I have a prediction: This month CPI will be way above the 2% target. I will make another prediction: The Bank of Canada will suddenly say not to worry about CPI and that they use core inflation. Whatever is lowest is the measurement they use.

Here is the consequence of all of these numbers. When governments print money, they drive up the price of two things. One is the things that the rich own. The second is the things that everyone else buys. If someone is a millionaire mansion owner, they are getting extremely rich. Their house is making a lot more money than they are. They are sitting in their rocking chair and cash is just falling out of their attic onto their head. However, if someone is a working-class person who rents in order to have a roof overhead, their rent is going up, their cost of food is going up and their cost of gas is going up. Everything they buy is going up, except their wages are not and that dream of owning a house is getting further and further away because of asset price inflation.

• (1620)

What we have is a government that claims it is doing all of this deficit spending to help the less fortunate, but is actually carrying out one of the largest wealth transfers from the working class to the super rich, from the have-nots to the have-yachts, in Canadian history. The solution to this is to control the spending, unleash free-market production, replace the credit card economy with a pay-cheque economy and restore the principle of sound money so that the dollars people earn are worth what they are supposed to be worth and so that people get ahead through their labour and effort, not through their privilege and aristocracy.

• (1625)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this is interesting. We have learned through the pandemic that we needed to be there in a very real and tangible way for Canadians. That is why we came up with the emergency wage subsidy, the rent subsidy, the business account, the credit availability program and the CERB for over nine million Canadians, putting money in the pockets of people during a difficult time. If we had not done that, we would have had far more issues relating to bankruptcies, personal financial problems and all sorts of issues. Government made the decision to go ahead and spend the money that was necessary.

Will the Conservatives come clean with Canadians and indicate clearly if they support those initiatives to have the backs of Canadians? If so, how can they honestly be critical of the fact that we needed to borrow money?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, I regret that the government made it necessary, through its mismanagement of the pandemic, to plunge so deeply into this deficit. It made it necessary by leaving the borders open and allowing 60,000 people to enter from China after the military had warned there was a pandemic brewing in that country. It made it necessary by failing to deliver rapid testing that could have allowed businesses to reopen months before they did. It is making it necessary now because it has failed to deliver vaccines that are widely available around the world. Just yesterday, images splashed across the Internet of pubs opening in London, England, of flights going back and forth seamlessly between New Zealand and Australia and of countries all around the world returning to normal with people returning to work, while here in Canada we are locked in our basements and terrified of a third wave that is the result of the government's failures. We wish it had not made these deficits necessary.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Carleton for that lesson in economics 101.

I would have liked to hear his thoughts on health transfers, a topic the Liberals mostly ignored in this budget.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

Once again, I can see that the Bloc Québécois wants the federal government to be more involved in the health sector. This is another example of how the Bloc Québécois often wants more federal intervention in areas under provincial jurisdiction.

I think the provinces should be able to spend their own money without federal interference, and I believe in provincial autonomy. The governments that are closest to the people are the ones that should have the most power.

[English]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate some of the points that my hon. colleague made. Certainly in my riding people have less to get by. They are terrified that they will not be able to make their mortgage or rent payments. The skyrocketing housing prices are leaving them out of any sort of dream of owning a home or keeping it.

I have heard from seniors in particular. Some do not know where to turn and are in fear of losing their homes. In this budget, the government has split those who are 65 to 75 from those 75 and above in a very unfair way, and it has only provided them with a very small amount of money that will not do anything to help them cover the additional costs.

Could the member talk about how that is impacting his residents and the unfairness of the divide among our seniors?

• (1630)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, what she is seeing is the consequence of the government's policies. The Bank of Canada has purchased \$300 billion worth of government debt. The government's deficit is \$356 billion. In other words, about 85% of all the borrowing the government has done in the last year has simply been generated by the Bank of Canada. That has increased the money supply by 20% and has driven up the costs of food, fuel and housing for the seniors who live in her riding.

While this has been very good news for the very wealthy, who have watched their financial and real estate assets explode in value because of all this printing, it has been very bad news for the poor and the working class.

[Translation]

**Mr. William Amos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (Science), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to budget 2021, which was presented to the House on Monday by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. I will be sharing my time this afternoon with my friend, the hon. member for Kings—Hants.

Budget 2021 addresses two fundamental challenges and includes measures that will benefit my constituents in Pontiac, middle-class Canadians, as well as science, research and innovation in Canada.

The first challenge is definitely to finish the fight against COVID-19. That means buying vaccines and supporting provincial health care systems, among other critical health priorities.

The second challenge will take longer. It is to emerge from the COVID-19 recession. That means healing the economic wounds left by the pandemic and ensuring that lost jobs are recovered as swiftly as possible, so that the hardest-hit businesses can rebound and flourish. It means providing support where COVID-19 has struck hardest, to women, young people and low-wage workers, and to small and medium-sized businesses, especially in sectors like hospitality and tourism.

[English]

Our federal support measures, which represent \$8 out of every \$10 spent by all governments combined on COVID, have protected jobs and helped limit the number of permanent business closures. We will continue to honour this covenant with Canadians until COVID-19 is fully behind us with new measures to support Canadian businesses, workers and families. For example, through budget 2020-21, we will extend both the wage subsidy and the rent subsidy and they will be extended until September 25, 2021, with the possibility of a further extension to November, depending on the economic and public health situation.

We are also introducing the Canada recovery hiring program. This \$595-million investment will help businesses pivot to recovery, with incentives to hire back, grow hours or increase wages. We announced a historic \$4-billion investment into a digital adoption program to help Canadian small businesses become more competitive, go digital, take advantage of e-commerce and become more competitive in Canada and around the world.

Finally, we are committed to lowering credit card fees by engaging with stakeholders to lower the average overall cost of interchange fees for our small businesses.

[Translation]

We have to revitalize tourism. The impact of COVID-19 on workers and businesses in tourism, arts and culture has been severe. That is especially true in the Outaouais region, where many rural communities depend on tourism and vacationers, especially in the summer.

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I am thinking about the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, Pontiac and Collines-de-l'Outaouais RCMs. I am thinking about businesses such as Le Rabaska in Maniwaki, L'Orée du Bois in Chelsea, the Spruceholme Inn in Fort-Coulonge and the Laspézia restaurant in the Plateau sector of Gatineau.

With the rollout of vaccines under way and going quite well in Quebec, businesses in the tourism sector are getting ready to welcome Canadians back to experience the great places and activities that we have to offer. Canadians are eager to discover or rediscover their country. This is a great opportunity for the Outaouais.

We have to ensure that regions like ours succeed in this context of local, regional and national tourism. That is why, to support this sector, the government is proposing a new package of supports totalling \$1 billion over three years thanks to budget 2021. That amount includes \$500 million in funding over two years for regional development agencies, to help our hard-hit tourism businesses adapt their products and services and invest in growth.

To attract visitors to our small festivals and local events, Canadian Heritage will also receive \$200 million. This will ensure that our events and festivals can continue to celebrate our artistic excellence and unique character. We will be ready for the tourism economy's recovery.

• (1635)

[*English*]

On the issue of science, it has been a privilege to serve Canadians as the parliamentary secretary for science throughout this pandemic. I am so pleased to point out that budget 2021 delivers massive investments in Canadian science, health innovation, research and development, and innovation. We recognize the critical role that science and research will play, both in addressing the current health crisis and in rebuilding our economy and creating good jobs for Canadians. We are investing heavily to grow our life sciences ecosystem and create the biomanufacturing capacity necessary to ensure that we are more resilient in the face of future pandemics.

This includes over \$1 billion for biomedical research, clinical trials and the necessary infrastructure at universities and research hospitals to undertake this work. This includes a nearly \$60-million investment in the University of Saskatchewan's VIDO-InterVac to support its ongoing COVID vaccine research and expand its facility in Saskatoon.

We are also making targeted investments in critically important health care research, including areas such as women's health, diabetes, pediatric cancer, regenerative medicine, antimicrobial resistance, and in the creation of a national genomics strategy worth \$400 million to build on Canada's expertise.

If members and the Canadians listening to these incredible investments proposed in budget 2021 in science, health innovation and research are dizzied by the sheer size and scale of these investments, then I would not blame them. We are going to be unrelenting in our focus on science and evidence as the driver of policy decisions and strategic investments. I was pleased to note yesterday that the non-profit advocacy group, Evidence for Democracy Canada, commented that in budget 2021, "science underpins targeted investments to drive equitable recovery and long-term prosperi-

ty", and that Evidence for Democracy was "pleased to see strategic investments across the Canadian science ecosystem, including targeted research funding".

There is so much more, and I know members will appreciate our focus on protecting Canadians as we invest in innovative research and development. Budget 2021 promises strategic investments in emerging technologies to capitalize on areas of Canadian strength.

This includes \$360 million over seven years to launch a national quantum strategy, working with great Canadian universities like Université de Sherbrooke, UBC, University of Waterloo and others.

There is \$444 million over 10 years to support the next phase of the pan-Canadian artificial intelligence strategy for commercialization, talent retention, research and training, computing capacity and artificial intelligence standards.

It promises \$10 million over two years to the Canadian Space Agency to plan for the next generation of earth observation satellites and \$80 million over 11 years to replace and expand the aging but critically important ground-based infrastructure to receive satellite data.

There is \$90 million over five years to the National Research Council to retool and modernize the Canadian photonics fabrication centre in Ottawa.

This budget builds on the historic investments in fundamental research from budget 2018 and our government's innovation and skills strategy. It sets us up for growth and success, both today and for the future. It focuses on the pandemic today, but also addresses looming threats that require better science, better data and better governance.

My time is running short, so I will not dive deep into our climate innovation, climate research, climate action and low-carbon job-creation investments. We are talking billions of dollars in transformative investments to get us to the net-zero economy, which dovetail wonderfully with our carbon-pricing mechanism that the Supreme Court has, after so many unnecessary years of Conservative knuckle dragging and climate denial, confirmed as being within federal jurisdiction. Yes, we will be establishing and applying a climate lens that ensures climate considerations are integrated throughout federal government decision-making. We are talking about Arctic research and a census of the environment statistical trend-monitoring effort.

I will not delve into our investments in gender-based violence research and knowledge mobilization, with funding for community research—

• (1640)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to go to questions and comments. The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague brought up tourism, and I want to talk to him about air travel.

On page 74 of the budget, there is an announcement of \$105 million over five years for something known as the “known traveller digital identity pilot project”. A Google search of known traveller digital identity takes us to a World Economic Forum document, where it is called the “known traveller digital identity (KTDI) concept”. It talks about things like attestations of citizenship, educational degrees and so on, including vaccination for viral disease.

I am wondering if my colleague could expand on just what the government is investing tax dollars for on this front?

**Mr. William Amos:** Madam Speaker, the member's question is important because many Canadians are wondering about travel, the future of travel and what restrictions may or may not be imposed.

The Prime Minister has been very clear on this. Issues related to travel, international travel and discussions around what documentation is going to be necessary are being discussed regularly at an international level. However, the picture is not entirely clear yet.

It would be important for the member to watch closely for what our Minister of Transport and our Minister of Public Safety say about these issues going forward. Obviously the budget does not outline all of the details. The member could expect that further details will follow in the weeks and months to come.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague said in his speech that his government was going to invest and had invested where COVID-19 has struck hardest.

One area that COVID-19 has struck hard and will continue to strike hard for the next 10 years is cancer care. Gastroenterologists, oncologists and hematologists in Quebec have told us that cancer is a chronic illness, and if it is not diagnosed and treated in time, mortality rates, recurrences and treatment costs go up. On top of that,

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cancer diminishes a patient's quality of life and puts their life in danger. The costs of that are even higher.

Health care costs are going to skyrocket over the next 10 years. We are in the middle of a global health crisis, so how could the government commit the strategic error of not investing and not immediately increasing health transfers on a stable and ongoing basis? After the first wave, the Prime Minister said that the government would invest in health transfers after the pandemic. We are in the third wave. The end of the pandemic will be the fifth wave. How could the government make this mistake, and what does it have to say to the patients who will die because of it?

**Mr. William Amos:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

This is obviously a very important issue for all Canadians. Health care is currently the main priority. As we announced in March, the federal government plans to increase health transfers to the provinces and territories by \$4 billion.

The Prime Minister has clearly indicated that he is open to discussing health transfers. The federal government has obviously been there from the beginning of the pandemic, investing in the health care system with equipment, vaccines—

• (1645)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have just enough time for one last question. The hon. member for Windsor West.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my question will be specific with regard to persons with disabilities.

In the budget, over three years and \$19 million is being set aside for consultation about persons with disabilities. What we do know is persons with disabilities are under-represented in the workforce. Fewer have jobs. What we do know is that they are overrepresented in poverty. We also know, from this Parliament and the previous one, that persons with disabilities are often the last to get any type of assistance whatsoever.

I am trying to find the reason, and perhaps the member could give us some specific details around it, why it is going to take three full years during a pandemic to consult persons with disabilities about the proper supports they need when we know that they are in the highest brackets for risk, have the highest unemployment rates and the highest needs for assistance.

It is going to take the Liberals three years and cost \$19 million to tell us persons with disabilities need more support and a more equal society, because we do not have that. What is—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to get the parliamentary secretary to answer in 10 seconds or less.

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**Mr. William Amos:** Madam Speaker, I will simply say that our government's record in defence of persons with disabilities is unblemished and solid. We have legislated in the matter. We have invested historic amounts and we are going to continue investing historic amounts. Consultation is an ongoing thing, not a one-off matter.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, National Defence; the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Health; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Women and Gender Equality.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to join all of my colleagues here today to talk about a historic budget delivered by our first female Minister of Finance and, of course, our Deputy Prime Minister. Let me take a moment at the start of my remarks to compliment her on her tremendous work. I am very fortunate to have a youth council in my riding of Kings—Hants that has a number of young leaders who happen to be women, and they look up to her. I know that many other women across the country, and I as a man, look up to the work that she has done. Kudos to her.

I only have 10 minutes and there is a lot in this budget, but I am hoping to highlight some of the initiatives that I am most pleased about as a member of Parliament for Kings—Hants and also as chair of the rural Liberal caucus.

Let me start with the extension of the wage subsidies and the programs that we have put in place to support individuals and businesses through the pandemic. For Canadians who are tuning in, September 25 is the deadline that we have put on extending those measures. This matters for small businesses. This matters for individuals. It really matters to ensure that we have certainty and continuity of programs across the country regardless of where our case levels are. Some places, for example my riding, are quite well off. Others are going through real challenges right now, so a tip of the cap to the government on being able to put those measures in place. I have already heard from small businesses in my riding that are supportive of this measure.

Yesterday's announcement on child care was important. It relates to a national child care plan with \$27 billion over the course of the next five years and a commitment to ongoing spending in this domain. What is really important to note is that child care has traditionally been viewed in the realm of very well-intended social policy; however, as we have come to understand what it means, it is an economic driver in the same sense. The Minister of Finance said that yesterday. This type of program matters for parents to be able to get back to the workplace. It matters particularly for women, and it is about creating affordable spaces. I was very pleased to see our ongoing consultation with the provinces and territories get us to the point of \$10, on average, a day for affordable daycare and early education for Canadian youth. This is going to have long-term impacts across the country and certainly deserves to be noted.

In the context of Nova Scotia, under our former premier, Stephen McNeil, whom I have great respect for, the provincial government ran an agenda on being fiscally conservative and socially progressive. The province adopted pre-primary, which is along the same lines of thinking that this government is taking. It makes sense and the program pays for itself. We have other models across the country that we can lean on, but I am really proud of the work that we have done in my home province as well.

Affordable housing is a national issue, but I want to give the context of my part of the country. Nova Scotia has one of the lowest COVID case counts in the federation. We are one of the safest places in the world. People from around the world and indeed across our country want to move to Nova Scotia for the quality of life and the many benefits that our province offers. That has also put pressure on our housing market. Right now there are challenges for young people trying to find housing. Renters and individuals are trying to find basically a place to put a roof over their heads.

We have invested \$1 billion through the rapid housing initiative, but I was very pleased to see an additional \$1.5 billion toward that fund and a commitment of \$2.5 billion over the next seven years through CMHC to help support affordable housing. This is going to make a difference in the lives of Canadians and certainly to the people that I represent in Kings—Hants as well.

There is additional income support for seniors. A large proportion of the population that I represent in my riding is made up of seniors, particularly in the rural areas. The increase of 10% in old age security for those who are over age 75 is certainly a welcome investment, and I am very pleased to see that come through. I know many seniors in my riding are going to be pleased to see that.

With regard to the universal broadband fund, those representatives for rural Canada all knew before the pandemic about the importance of connectivity and broadband, whether for schools and children having the opportunity to do course work and homework online, or for banking or entertainment. We are moving to more of a digital society.

● (1650)

To make sure the gap is closed between rural and urban broadband, our government has made historic investments. We had already committed \$1.75 billion to the universal broadband fund, and budget 2020-21 commits another \$1 billion. We are on track to meet our goal of having 98% of Canadians connected by 2025. This is a good thing, and I want to contrast this with the last government, which put in 10 times less funding than this government has to try to meet these objectives and outcomes. I am proud that we are a government focused in this regard, and as the rural caucus chair I was very pleased to see the Minister of Rural Economic Development have this in her purview and in her tool kit in the days ahead.



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I want to talk about the Canada community revitalization fund. I do not want to say it is a rural issue. It is certainly an issue across the country. We know that community gathering spaces are very important. In my riding they are largely driven by non-profit organizations, such as the Lions Club, the local legion and community halls. These are all run by volunteers who put in additional hours at the end of each week to help make a difference in our communities. They have not been able to run their traditional fundraisers to help keep the lights on or put new roofs on buildings. Normally those are pancake breakfasts and bean suppers, and they have not been happening.

This fund was an initiative that I would say was driven by the rural caucus, among others, to put a fund in place that could help support those community spaces and organizations that do tremendous work. A tip of the cap to the organizations in Kings—Hants. This is the type of fund we want to put in place to help support them. I know it will matter far beyond the boundaries of my riding. It will matter across the country, and I suspect other members have looked at this and said it is good public policy as well.

I want to talk about support for our tourism sector. I am sitting in Hants County in the Annapolis Valley, which is one of the most beautiful areas of the country. I know I am biased as the member of Parliament representing the area, but it is home to the highest tides in the world and a growing wine sector. I would invite all colleagues, when it is safe to do so, to please join me and visit Kings—Hants. Tourism is an important sector. In budget 2020-21, there is \$500 million to help support tourism through the regional development agencies. It matters to the businesses in my community and indeed across the country. These were certainly mechanisms that I was happy to see in the budget.

As for heritage, we know what culture and sport mean across the country. Through the RDAs, \$200 million will go to help support community festivals, such as the Apple Blossom Festival for example, which has been running in my riding since the 1930s. There are a lot of good events that go on. This type of funding is going to help those organizations get through another year until we can perhaps get back to a new normal on the other side of the pandemic.

There is also \$100 million in the budget to help support Destination Canada, which gets Canadians to explore their backyards. My fiancé and I had a great opportunity last summer to explore Nova Scotia and the Atlantic provinces. Businesses benefited from this. Of course, this year international travel is going to be unlikely until the vaccine rollout is completed in late September. That funding will be an important mechanism to help support businesses along the way, not to mention the broad supports for small businesses writ large to digitize. As more consumers move online, those mechanisms are going to help main-street businesses to compete. This will make sure they have the tools to adapt to an increasingly digital economy and society.

I will mention two final points. First, as the youngest member of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, for young Canadians and students we have delivered \$6 billion and a whole host of mechanisms that I am not going to have the time to describe, but that are important. Students have been adversely impacted by the pandemic and I am pleased to see the supports there. Second, as a member of Parliament who represents one of the largest agricultural

ridings in Atlantic Canada, there are a number of mechanisms to support our agriculture sector, including transitions to a low-carbon economy and incentives to help support our farmers. They are already doing tremendous work, but our government is going to be there to help support them.

• (1655)

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we understand completely that with COVID we need to have some short-term investments and my colleague has outlined a fair number of them. However, there remain some long-term foundational, structural issues in this economy and in Canada that need to be addressed. These are things like our competitiveness, the flight of foreign capital, our regulatory frameworks, which are holding us back, and our tax structure.

Could my hon. colleague give us some insight into why these foundational, structural changes are missing from the budget? What does he think we should be doing to address them?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague opposite hit on the point of regulatory reform. I do not know if she is aware, but in September 2020 I talked about the importance of regulatory reform as a mechanism in addition to the necessary spending the government is taking on. That is certainly the line of thinking I support. I appreciate her bringing it forward.

There are tax changes in the budget that focus on trying to level the playing field, particularly with digital giants and some of our smaller businesses on main street. I welcome those. There are also investments in the budget to help support innovation through a variety of sectors, so there are a lot of mechanisms in the budget to support that.

I will continue to push on my side of the House for those types of interventions and my colleague can know they certainly resonate with me.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech.

No doubt there are a lot of fine things in this budget. Everyone has had good things to say, including the Bloc Québécois and the other parties.

The Bloc has made suggestions about the aerospace sector, the electrification of transportation, forestry, social housing and day care. On this last point, we are truly pleased that Quebec is a model for the rest of Canada, and it is a credit to us.

However, what are the Liberals telling seniors? They will receive \$500 just before an election is called, plus a 10% increase, but not for another year. What are we to say to the seniors, parents and grandparents we know? Even though the Liberals still have a lot of fiscal room, there is nothing in this budget for seniors.

*Government Orders*

• (1700)

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I am sorry to have to reply in English, but my French is fair to middling.

[*English*]

Regarding support for seniors, I was very pleased to see the 10% increase in old age security for seniors who are over age 75.

I will be honest: I would have liked to see a bit more emphasis on the guaranteed income supplement. That was a mechanism our government used in the last Parliament to bring a lot of seniors out of poverty. As opposed to going across the board on old age security, I think we should be focusing on those seniors who are earning less and focusing on top-ups. I do not necessarily even support the suggestion by the Bloc Québécois that we increase old age security across the board for those who are age 65 and over, but would like to see us be a little more targeted. However, it is going to make a difference for seniors and there are other mechanisms to support—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have time for one last question. The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, 20% of Canadian homeowners live in energy poverty. They live paycheque to paycheque. They cannot afford the upfront costs to do the retrofits needed to make their homes more efficient or take on new debt through loans, yet that is what this budget offers them.

When will the government provide meaningful support for people living in energy poverty that will help them do the retrofits needed and help us in our fight against climate change?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I would reject the premise that our government has not been doing anything to help individuals suffering from energy poverty or anything along those lines. From day one, we have increased taxes on the 1% and lowered taxes for middle-income and lower-income Canadians. There is the Canada child benefit. I look to this budget for investments to support workers who are working—

[*Translation*]

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

The hon. member for Joliette.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to the budget presented by the Minister of Finance. It is certainly a historic budget, since this is the first time that a female finance minister has presented a budget in the House of Commons.

The budget is 739 pages long. It is a lot of work to read through it all. The budget contains many new elements, measures and programs. In fact, it contains nearly \$150 billion worth of new elements since last fall's economic update.

The Bloc Québécois tries to meet with as many people and business owners in every industry across Quebec as it can. We ask them what their needs are and what they think should be included in the budget. We try to compile that data and present it.

Since budgets are usually presented in March, we shared our expectations with the minister in February. I should also mention all of the work that was done by the Standing Committee on Finance, which also engaged in similar exercise.

Reading through the document, we can see that it reflects many of the Bloc Québécois's demands, and we applaud that. Aerospace is one example. This is probably the first time the government has explicitly recognized the importance of this industry to our economy, and it has included various measures, which we are very proud of. The budget also includes a number of measures for transportation electrification and for the environment.

Because we are going through a pandemic, this budget extends measures to support entrepreneurs who have lost revenue. These measures include the Canada emergency wage subsidy and the Canada emergency rent subsidy.

The budget also includes a stimulus plan with a number of measures that set the stage for future post-pandemic growth.

It also includes measures for the pharmaceutical industry and vaccine production capacity. I would remind the House that Quebec championed this in the 1990s and early 2000s. When Ottawa stopped supporting the industry, one major pharmaceutical company after another basically left Quebec. Now the sector is practically in ruins, but we must find a way to rebuild it.

Another interesting element of this budget is the fight against tax avoidance and evasion. What is being proposed is not revolutionary, but it is the first time that we see a clear indication that the government is going to fight against those who do not pay the taxes they owe. These are often legal, but definitely unethical, schemes. We have much to do to solve the problem, but a step in that direction has been taken. Several interesting measures have been proposed.

Naturally, if I were a Canadian outside Quebec, I would be pleased with the key measure in this budget, subsidized child care. Quebec implemented this family policy more than 20 years ago. It is more comprehensive than what is in the budget, and it works very well. It allows women to have a much higher labour force participation rate than before and higher than that of other provinces. It is a feminist policy that will stimulate the economy. I want to once again acknowledge Pauline Marois's initiative. She worked very hard to implement this measure in Quebec. It shows that having female finance ministers can lead to the implementation of very useful policies.

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Earlier I was talking about our budget demands, which we submitted in February. There was nothing terribly surprising in there, but we did make two key requests. Much like the Government of Quebec, we called on Ottawa to fund health care according to the means it has available, in other words by covering a bit more than a third of the cost, or 35%.

The federal government is currently funding just 22% of health care expenses. If nothing changes, that will go down to 17% or 18%. We are in the middle of a health crisis. Health is more important than ever. This is the ideal time to correct this imbalance. Despite our calls for funding, we find nothing in this budget to fund health care. The only stop-gap measure is in Bill C-25. There are also standards for long-term care facilities in Quebec that will come with an envelope in a few years.

• (1705)

The budget is also missing everything we requested to protect the dignity of seniors. Over the past few years, there have been many policies to support every segment of the population except for seniors, who rely heavily on old age security. This pension has not been indexed for a very long time and it is time to make up ground. Many seniors live in poverty, and four out of ten seniors get the guaranteed income supplement. In other words, they do not have money to spare and rely on public supports.

We wanted there to be just one class of seniors, namely people aged 65 and older. In the budget, however, the government has created two classes of seniors, those 65 to 74 and those 75 and over. We do not agree with this. We wanted old age security to be increased by \$110 a month to keep up with inflation and restore seniors' purchasing power.

We know what seniors are worried about because we went to visit them before the pandemic. We cannot wait to see them again. In the meantime, we speak with them over the phone or, sometimes, on a tablet or similar device.

Seniors do not complain, but rent prices are skyrocketing, whether in seniors' homes or elsewhere. Seniors' purchasing power makes it difficult for them to make ends meet. The cost of food, utilities and basic necessities is increasing and we need to restore the balance. This is what we have been calling for, but the budget sadly does not have much in it, as my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles pointed out.

Upon reading the budget, we see that, in August, a one-time payment will be made to seniors aged 75 and up. That gives us a good idea of when the government plans to call an election, if that is what the Prime Minister wants. The government will therefore make a payment in August and then call an election.

The budget also provides for a 10% increase in old age security benefits for those aged 75 and up. However, this increase will be implemented in a future bill and will come into effect not this summer but the summer after, as though this is something that can easily be put off until later. In my opinion, that problem should be dealt with right now, but that is not what is set out in the budget. Also, I would like to once again remind members that these measures should apply as of age 65.

In that regard, an economic analyst for Radio-Canada, Gérald Fillion, wrote a very interesting article that was published this morning on the Radio-Canada website. It said, and I quote: "Two questions come to mind. First, why not increase old age security by 10% as of this year? Second, why do these measures apply only to seniors aged 75 and over? Why not those aged 65 and over?" Those are very legitimate questions that we too want to ask the government. The FADOQ network and seniors' groups in Quebec also spoke out against this approach.

Gérald Fillion made a number of points. He noted that, in Canada, people's income drops precipitously when they retire. The technical term is net pension replacement rate, which was 50.7% of pre-retirement income in Canada in 2018. Across the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD, the rate is seven percentage points higher. In the European Union, it is 63%.

These data are from a study of 49 countries, among which Canada ranks 32nd, well behind countries such as Italy, India, France and Denmark, and just slightly above the United States, where inequality is surging. These statistics are alarming, so we must take action. Seniors were the first victims of the pandemic, but there was already inequality before the pandemic.

In his conclusion, Gérald Fillion said that, considering Canada's poor showing in the OECD ranking, it would have made sense for the 10% increase to begin this year and apply as of age 65 and for this issue to be free from electioneering. I could not have put it better myself.

• (1710)

The other thing we wanted to see in the budget, which Quebec also requested, as I was saying, is health care funding. It is not there, and that is plainly a political choice. It is not for lack of money.

In the budget, the government announced a \$354-billion deficit for a slew of programs. It was entirely possible to get the money needed to fund health care properly out of that amount, so it is a political choice not to have done that. In the fall economic statement, the deficit was \$382 billion. In the budget, it is \$354 billion, which is a difference of \$28 billion. That is the exact amount Quebec and the provinces are asking for in increased health transfers this year. That shows that it was entirely possible to do that, and it is a political choice not to.

As far as the debt is concerned, let us not forget that the federal government's financial situation is temporarily weakened right now because of the pandemic. We have astronomical numbers in front of us, but we see that the ratio will improve fairly quickly. For example, in the last years of the budget, in 2025-26, the ratio should return to 1.1% of GDP. The analysis does not go any further.

However, a Conference Board of Canada study found that the federal government's deficit would be cut in half by 2030-31. That is a significant decrease, but the Conference Board of Canada also points out that the opposite will happen to the provinces, which is troubling. The Conference Board of Canada, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the finance ministers and the premiers are all saying there is an urgent need to act.

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Ottawa is running a huge deficit during the pandemic, but it will recover quickly. However, the exact opposite is true at the provincial level, because of the explosion in health spending and costs. This is putting the provinces in an untenable situation, and there is an urgent need to act.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer, the Conference Board of Canada and others have calculated that health transfers must be increased to 35% to balance the cost burden with projected tax revenues. It is simply a matter of increasing transfers to 35%. It has to be done. That was deliberately left out of the budget.

This omission is deplorable and completely unacceptable, but I believe it is part of a deliberate logic. When we read the budget, listen to the speeches and look at where the government is headed, everything points in that direction.

Ottawa seems to delight in ultimately putting the provinces in a position of dependency and ensuring that their position becomes increasingly insupportable.

At the same time, we see Ottawa saying that it will fund, support and back the provinces, but it will impose standards and have the final say over how things are done. The federal government is telling the provinces and Quebec that they will no longer have the flexibility to follow through on policies, but that it will. This means that if the provinces want to receive cash from Ottawa, they will have to yield to its way of doing things. They will become Ottawa's subcontractors, and Ottawa will determine the priorities. That is what is happening to long-term care facilities.

With regard to the child care system, Quebec is being told that there will be no conditions, but how long will that last? There were no conditions for health care, but now we have conditions and are getting peanuts. Gaétan Barrette, Quebec's Liberal health minister, once accused the government of "predatory federalism", which is a serious thing to say.

● (1715)

What is in the budget? The budget contains a number of measures that create an infrastructure and enable the government to interfere in provincial jurisdictions. It contains a framework for mental health care, a framework for women's health and a framework for reproductive health. These things are all the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. There is also a framework for the extraction of the minerals critical to the green transition. Moreover, the government has once again brought up Canada-wide securities regulation, against the wishes of Quebec. The budget also talks about a federal office for recognizing foreign credentials, which is something that Quebec and the provinces have done. There is also mention of a Canada water agency that would be responsible for water management, as well as a federal framework for skills training. People talk about how good Quebec's skills training program is all the time. The Quebec National Assembly implemented a program modelled on what was done in Germany and other European countries. This is one example to learn from. As the leader of the Bloc Québécois said earlier today, students do not tell teachers how to correct their work, which is what the government appears to be trying to do.

This is all very troubling. All of these measures, frameworks and policies do not represent significant amounts in the budget, but they reflect the government's intention to set up the infrastructure to keep moving in this direction. The government's vision is to control specific areas that, according to the Constitution, fall under provincial jurisdiction. The federal government has the power to spend, and that enables it to stick its nose into everybody's business, but as a result, we are becoming less and less of a federation with provincial autonomy and more and more of a centralized country where everything happens in Ottawa. The federal government could not care less about the provincial autonomy that Quebec holds so dear. It is draining resources away from the provinces. Given the increase in health care spending, the provinces have no more room to manoeuvre. If they want some breathing room, they need to turn to Ottawa, which will tell them how to do things. That is very troubling.

Earlier, I quoted what Gérald Fillion had to say about that. I would now like to quote Antoine Robitaille. This morning, he wrote a very interesting column in *Le Journal de Montréal*, where he said the following, and I quote:

However, as is often the case in Canada, when something seems necessary and desirable, the federal big brother ignores the constitutional rules and takes the lead.

A Canada-wide child care program obviously infringes on an area of provincial jurisdiction.

As I said, for now, Ottawa says it will not impose any rules on Quebec. We wonder how long that will last.

A little further on, Antoine Robitaille referred to the dissenting opinion of Supreme Court Justice Malcolm Rowe in last month's decision on the constitutionality of the carbon tax. Rowe was quoting constitutional expert Peter Hogg.

According to the latter, if in a federal nation paramount central power "completely overlapped regional power", then that nation stops being federal.

In such a system, the provinces can exercise their jurisdiction as they please—"as long as they do so in a manner that the federal legislation authorizes!"

It is hard for a nation like Quebec to continue evolving in accordance with its own choices when this kind of dynamic prevails.

Antoine Robitaille uses the subsidized child care program as an example to expose the government's attitude and how it likes to do things here in the House. This is very worrisome for Quebec, which wants to have autonomy and do things its own way. I introduced a bill in the House a few weeks ago regarding a single tax return administered by Quebec. In committee, the Liberals told us that it was out of the question, that they could accommodate Quebec if they wanted, but it was too complicated and everything would be managed here, because that is how it works. Quebec will become a subcontractor. This is an unacceptable approach. Several aspects of the budget set the stage for continuing to move towards a country that is less a federation and more a central state. Obviously, for Quebec, this is completely unacceptable.

In closing, I just want to say that this is a difficult time for autonomists.

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• (1720)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on what has been mentioned by a number of members from the opposition regarding the issue of seniors who are 75. I see the announcement in the budget as a very strong positive. In the last federal election, we made a commitment to do exactly what we are doing in this budget. We are fulfilling an election promise in which we said that we were going to do this for seniors 75 and up. Now we have opposition members criticizing us for fulfilling an election commitment.

I would remind my colleagues to reflect on the first few years of this government, when we actually increased the guaranteed income supplement for all seniors 65 and over. We literally took hundreds of seniors out of poverty from Winnipeg North, not to mention the thousands across the country.

I wonder if the member might reflect on whether he believes it was important for us to fulfill that commitment that we made to seniors 75 and over. We said that is what we would do, and it is exactly what we did.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comment and question.

Indeed his party made that promise, but it is not enough. Our view and that of seniors in our ridings is that it is unacceptable to create two classes of seniors, in other words people 65 to 74 and people 75 and older.

Again I refer to Gérald Fillion, who said that many seniors live in poverty and that “nearly four out of ten people 65 and older in Quebec...have to use the guaranteed income supplement to meet their needs in retirement”. He is not just talking about people 75 and older, but all seniors 65 and older. To us in the Bloc Québécois, creating two classes of seniors is unacceptable.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Indeed, I agree with his comments on certain points. There are many things that we, the Conservatives, asked the federal government for and that are in the budget.

There is one thing that surprises me and I will make a connection between the two issues. First, we spoke about the fact that people 75 and older will be entitled to \$500 in July, but that there is absolutely nothing in this budget for those between the ages of 65 and 74.

The other issue that we feel strongly about is EI sickness benefits, which will increase from the current 15 weeks to a maximum of 26 weeks in 2022. Until then, people could become sick, have a serious illness and lack resources for at least 10 to 15 weeks. The House had even adopted a motion calling for the benefit period to be increased to 50 weeks.

I would like my colleague to comment on that.

• (1725)

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I sincerely thank my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable for his questions and comments. I completely agree with the points he raised.

First, people over the age of 75 will get \$500 right before the election is called. This cheap election ploy is revolting and unacceptable. Then, the increase to old age security for people 75 and over will be included in a bill, which, if I understand correctly, will not be introduced until after the election. This will be the second election campaign on that same promise, and it will all depend on whether the Liberal government is re-elected, which is far from a sure thing, given how much things can change during an election.

I want to talk about how the House adopted a motion to extend EI sickness benefits to 50 weeks. We, legislators, gave the government an instruction, but the government has not complied. The House voted in favour of 50 weeks, but the government is currently offering just 15 weeks and will ultimately increase that number to just 26 weeks. That is unacceptable.

[English]

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the pandemic has laid bare the inequalities in our society. First nations have had some of the highest rates of COVID-19 infection. This is directly linked to the third-world living conditions, especially inadequate housing.

The housing crisis on first nations is a result of decades of federal neglect. Unfortunately, this budget has no specific housing strategy for and by indigenous communities. There is a housing crisis that requires immediate federal action. Building first nations housing will save lives.

Does my colleague agree that we must see major investments in housing for first nations and indigenous communities?

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I completely agree.

Take, for example, the Attikamek community in Manawan, which is located in the northern part of my riding. The housing situation there is absolutely deplorable. We are often talking about five, six, seven or eight and sometimes even up to 10, 12 or 14 people crammed into small, overcrowded bungalows. Often, these homes are old and in a state of disrepair. They also often have mould problems.

A lot of work needs to be done in that regard. I would also like to remind members of the importance of having social housing in urban areas for first nations and indigenous peoples. That is a top priority for our party.

*Private Members' Business*

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague and friend from Joliette for his very inspiring speech. I feel like he taught us a course on federalism. I want to come back to that because I think it is very important for Quebec.

The government is keeping us in a state of dependency. It therefore becomes the father who tells us what to do. It is a type of supervisory federalism, in which agencies, call centres, federal offices and all sorts of things like that are created.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that because it is extremely important for Quebec. The government's vision of federalism is completely inappropriate.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend from Repentigny for her comments.

Ottawa has been going down this road for years now. It is building itself up into an increasingly central power that looks less and less like a federation where Quebec can exercise a certain degree of autonomy.

Some time ago, Anglo-Canadian activist Naomi Klein pointed out in her book, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, that those in power often use crises as an opportunity to shape policy.

This budget is an excellent illustration of that. In this 739-page document, the government sets out a framework for making all the decisions about what can be spent in areas under provincial jurisdiction even though it knows that the provinces will continue to suffocate if Ottawa refuses to increase health transfers. All of the pieces are in place to transform the federation into a very centralized state.

• (1730)

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I get the impression that my colleague has a lot to say on the matter. That said, I hope he will not mind if I move on to another topic.

The thing that got me about the budget is that Liberals can just make a promise, repeat it endlessly and then break that promise. In this budget hundreds of billions of dollars were handed out to almost every group that asked for it. I am talking about dairy and supply-managed farmers. Since the conclusion of the Canada-United States-Mexico agreement, they have been waiting for the full compensation the government promised during the negotiations that were made at their expense. There is absolutely nothing in the budget for them.

As the member for Joliette, what will my colleague tell dairy, poultry and egg farmers about the budget?

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, it is unbelievable that compensation was included in last year's fall statement but in the 841 pages of the budget, which proposes new measures totalling almost \$150 billion, there is still nothing with regard to compensation for supply-managed producers. That is truly unacceptable.

I moved a motion in the House to ensure that producers receive full compensation for the new NAFTA. My motion received the unanimous support of the House because the former member for

Beauce stepped out to go to the washroom. We were expecting this to be included in the budget, but it is not.

I thank my colleague for asking this question during the in camera committee briefing. I remember the officials who answered that there was no mention of it in the budget. That is unacceptable.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### SUPPORT OF OIL AND GAS SECTOR

**Mr. Ziad Abouttaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC)** moved:

That:

- (a) in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize that,
  - (i) replacing oil and gas with more environmentally sustainable options is not technologically or economically feasible,
  - (ii) Canada's energy needs require the use of oil and gas to heat Canadian homes, schools and hospitals, to propel vehicles, to bring food to Canadian tables, and to produce electricity,
  - (iii) Canadian oil and natural gas are produced with the highest environmental standards in the world, and domestic producers are global environmental leaders and responsible corporate citizens,
  - (iv) using Canadian resources creates Canadian jobs,
  - (v) First Nations involved in Canada's oil and gas industry experience significant and profound positive economic effects, including higher rates of employment, higher incomes, and improved health and educational attainments,
  - (vi) tax revenue from the fossil fuel industry is an important contributor to the national treasury, facilitating transfer payments benefitting all Canadians and allowing Canada to afford the social programs all Canadians depend on; and
- (b) the House recognize that,
  - (i) Canada's oil and gas industry from Western to Atlantic Canada is essential to the well-being of the nation and should be celebrated,
  - (ii) tax and regulatory barriers limiting the responsible growth of Canada's oil and gas industry should be removed.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today and present my private member's motion, Motion No. 61, in support of the oil and gas sector.

As the title simply states, this motion would call on both the government and this House to recognize the importance of Canada's energy sector. While the title of this motion is simple, the reasons we need to pass this motion are not.

Right now, Canada is facing a serious and unprecedented crisis. COVID-19 is running wild across our provinces, putting hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of work. With the pandemic have come massive budget deficits that need to be paid off so we do not doom future generations in order to help this one. Lastly, there is the crucial role this industry has played in developing green technologies.

These are issues that cannot be solved by any one industry, government body or person, but if we, as legislators, work to support our industries, we can certainly help to address these issues. One of those industries that can do the most to help is our energy industry.

As of January 2021, our national unemployment rate was 9.4%. The January 2021 unemployment rate in the United States was 6.3%. In the United Kingdom, it was 5%. Obviously they are doing a better job getting vaccines than us, but we clearly have a way to go in getting Canadians back to work.

Our energy industry can certainly help with that. I am going to speak a bit about Alberta, which is my province and the province I am most familiar with, but what I am going to say applies to every province and territory in Canada. The energy industry in Alberta is one of my home province's largest industries and equal to 10.6% of Canada's GDP. It creates billions of dollars in revenue, and more importantly, it creates hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs for Canadians and indigenous peoples, directly and indirectly related to the actual process of extracting and refining oil and gas products. These are good jobs. They pay well, put food on the table and kids through school. These jobs guarantee Canadians get ahead in life and that they can help their kids, parents, partners and people important to them get ahead in life.

The jobs created by our energy industry are not just in drilling and refining either. Sure, we need people up on the rigs, but we also need chemists and engineers to refine the oil and gas into a final product. We need environmental specialists to help preserve the area around the projects and to help restore them afterward. We need lawyers to help comply with regulations and accountants to pay the taxes that go to the federal and provincial governments. The list goes on.

These are blue-collar jobs and white-collar jobs. These are student jobs and professional jobs, jobs for every Canadian. These are jobs that are sorely needed, especially as we will hopefully soon be seeing the end of this pandemic. I mentioned the unemployment rate earlier, but another statistic I would like my colleagues to keep in mind is one I used in a previous speech in this House. Over 200,000 Canadians lost their jobs in January of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We should be supporting industries once we finally can reopen our economy. Our oil and gas industry can play a crucial role in creating jobs for the thousands of Canadians who will be returning to work soon.

• (1735)

These jobs are not just limited to Alberta. As I said earlier, these are jobs that are created in every single province and territory from coast to coast to coast. Newfoundland and Labrador has offshore drilling projects. British Columbia has natural gas. Saskatchewan has potash and oil. Some of Canada's first energy projects have originated in Ontario.

Across the country, this industry is creating long-term jobs for Canadians, and, as our Alberta premier said, whether they are a Canadian by choice or by chance, our energy industry will welcome their hard work.

I mentioned the issue of budget deficits. Last year we saw a \$354-billion deficit, the largest in Canada's history. The deficit this year is looking to be just shy of \$155 billion, assuming there are no unexpected expenditures and that COVID does not continue to add onto that. I know the hon. Minister of Finance's budget from yesterday has a fiscal anchor of unwinding COVID-related deficits

### *Private Members' Business*

and reducing the federal debt as a share of the economy. This is good news, and Canada's energy industry is here to help.

I am sure all my colleagues here are familiar with how important energy royalties are to Alberta's budget. Our former premier Ralph Klein paid off all of Alberta's provincial debt, in part thanks to resource royalties from our energy industry. I am not saying that the government should follow the example of the Klein government, but we can certainly learn from it. The revenues generated by Alberta's oil and gas industry help to fund programs and services for Albertans across the province from Fort McKay to Peace River, Taber to Medicine Hat and everywhere else in the province.

Right now, with the massive budget we are looking at in response to this pandemic, we should not dismiss the opportunity to support this industry, which is crucial to our economy, not just because of the jobs that it creates, but also because of the revenues it brings us. A well-supported oil and gas sector will help raise government revenues to help pay for services needed by Canadians, shrink the deficit and pay off our debts.

We should be supporting our oil and gas sector because of its massive contributions to developing green energy technology. I do not know how many of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle know this, but Canada's oil and gas sector has been one of the biggest sources of world-renowned developments in green technology over the past several decades. Canadian energy companies are world leaders in this field. They are making sure that our oil and gas products are among the cleanest in the world in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

A little over two weeks ago, I had the pleasure to visit Enhance Energy in Clive, Alberta. Clive is a very small town in rural Alberta in the constituency of my good friend, the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe. Honestly, the company blew me away with its facility and its technical operations. I was shown how it is working to develop new technologies to help with the green development of oil and gas, especially with carbon capture technologies.

When I visited, I saw some numbers on how much carbon the company was able to capture, and I think it is representative of just how cutting-edge this industry is in Canada. The amount of carbon it has the ability of capturing is equal to taking over 300,000 vehicles off the road. I am not talking about electric cars or hybrids. I am talking about classic combustion motor vehicles, fuelled by gasoline. This is all thanks to the technological developments made by a Canadian oil and gas company. If that does not deserve our support, I do not know what does.

*Private Members' Business*

● (1740)

As members know, this is just one example of a Canadian energy company developing cutting-edge new technology to help our carbon production. There are hundreds of other examples. As I said, Canada's oil and gas industry is on the cutting edge of developing green technology. I am talking about carbon capture, about the new, more efficient ways to extract and refine energy products and more. Given the focus that yesterday's budget had on environmental spending, on green technologies and on cutting carbon emissions, I am sure the Minister of Finance will be happy to hear about all of the ways that our energy industry is helping to fight climate change.

Canada's oil and gas sector is one of our country's greatest economic drivers. It is responsible for creating hundreds of thousands of jobs from coast to coast to coast. It helps put food on the table for families, just as it helps create and sustain revenue streams for the provincial and federal governments. This revenue pays for education and health care for all Canadians. Last, but especially not least, it is a major driver of world-renowned innovation and technological development to help protect our environment.

Simply put, the importance of Canada's oil and gas sector cannot be overstated. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians from across our country depend on this vital industry and its well-paying jobs. Companies within this sector deserve our support. This is an industry that has done so much over the years to support Canadians and support Canada, so I think it is time that Canada moves to support it.

Here are some key facts about the oil industry.

In 2019, Canada's energy sector directly employed more than 282,000 people and indirectly supported over 550,000 jobs. Canada's energy sector accounts for over 10% of the nominal GDP. Energy is the largest subsector of Canada's economy, accounting for \$221 billion, in 2018 figures. Government revenues from energies were about \$17.9 billion in 2018. More than \$1.1 billion was spent on energy research, development and deployment by governments in 2018-19. Canada is the sixth-largest energy producer, the fourth-largest net exporter and the eighth-largest consumer.

From the year 2000 onward, Alberta's share in the total economy averaged about 5% of Canada's GDP and 20% of Alberta's GDP. Its share of jobs was 0.4% in Canada and 2.9% in Alberta. The oil and gas industry's major suppliers of its inputs include manufacturing, at 18.7%; finance, insurance and real estate services, at 18.8%; professional services, at 2.8%; other mining industries, at 12.8%; administration services, at 7.9%; and the oil and gas industry itself, at 7.4%. By the way, on global energy demand, the energy supply and demand projection to 2040 shows that while domestic fossil fuel consumption growth slowed, crude oil and natural gas production continues to increase.

I thank my colleagues for listening today. I hope that Motion No. 61 in support of the gas and oil industry will get their support.

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, while listening to my colleague, a very simple question came to mind.

We know that his leader made an announcement earlier about carbon pricing. After reading his motion, I am wondering whether my colleague himself believes in carbon pricing.

Does he agree with his leader about putting a price on carbon?

● (1750)

[*English*]

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, I was expecting a question regarding the bill and the importance of this industry, but the member chose to ask me this question.

Our leader has put forward a very comprehensive plan that is going to make a difference in dealing with climate change and the challenges that we are facing. As I said in my speech, the oil and gas industry in Alberta and across Canada is going to play a crucial role in being able to deal with climate change challenges. This is the way we are going to do it. This is the way Conservatives believe in.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member talked a lot about the economic benefits of the oil and gas industry, but one of the big concerns for me and other Canadians is the economic cost. We have the cost of climate change, of course, and the cost of health care. We just had a report showing that the health care cost for Canadians from the air pollution caused by burning fossil fuels totally negates the actual economic benefits.

There is also the cost of cleanup. The oil sands cleanup, according to documents from the Alberta energy regulator, will cost between \$130 billion and \$260 billion. The cost of orphan well cleanup will be between \$40 billion and \$70 billion. That is a total of \$300 billion.

Why should we be celebrating all those costs that the industry has put on the taxpayers of Canada?

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, we are celebrating the hundreds of billions of dollars this industry contributed to building Canada and Canada's economy over the last decades. This industry is still going to be a factor in rebuilding after COVID and dealing with climate change in the future.

Economies are created to build economies. It would be unfair to ignore what the industry has done for Canada and for all the provinces. We have to recognize, celebrate, support and help this industry to continue developing technologies to deal with the climate change challenges. I believe every member understands that this industry has one of the most important roles to play.



If we care about climate change and the environment, this is one path through. We must support and celebrate this industry, because it is going to help us deal with those challenges.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, for a brief question.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I really appreciate what my colleague has put forward this evening. The truth of the matter is that we are very concerned about the environment on this side of the floor. That is why we encourage the use of our oil and gas industry, rather than what is being shipped up our east coast, which is so unethical and so unclean. If we are truly concerned about moving forward with the environment, that is what is important.

I would just like to ask the member if he is aware of how much the oil and gas industry was reflected in this budget. Amanda Lang indicated that it was in the budget. I am just going to quote her, and perhaps the member could give us his perspective on it. On Power Play with Evan Solomon, she said, “I will say this, Evan, and this is kind of like one of those more boring line items, but it's important, especially for resource industry companies, and that is, there is a form of a corporate tax increase in this budget that the Liberals have talked about for a while. It's a reduction on dividend interest deductions allowable. Super boring-sounding—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I need to allow time for answers. I did ask the member for a brief question. The hon. member could elaborate on that.

The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech and in some of the answers to questions, there is no way to think beyond this other than to support and give this industry what it deserves.

For members who have not had a chance to visit and understand how the industry performs in Alberta, I would invite them to come by and check it out, without having to read reports from here and there. Members should come to Alberta, check out what we are doing here, and they will be impressed.

• (1755)

**Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address members and those in my riding of Nickel Belt in the area of Greater Sudbury, Canada's mining capital, located on the territory of Robinson-Huron treaty territory of 1850, on the traditional unceded lands of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapiitae peoples, and home of the Métis people.

I want to first thank the hon. member for Edmonton Manning for his motion. He is a successful entrepreneur, and I would like to view myself along those lines as well. Like me, he wants nothing but success for Canada's natural resources industry and the communities that rely on them. This is why I want to address the motion in two parts, starting with the positive.

### *Private Members' Business*

[*Translation*]

This approach reflects who I am, a positive, constructive and friendly person. I got into politics to make a difference.

I want to help improve lives by serving the many communities in my large riding of Nickel Belt, by meeting more people and making new friends throughout the process, because that is the key to a rich and meaningful life.

One of our guiding principles is to always be able to find the positive in what people have to give.

[*English*]

Let us look at areas where the government and I agree with my hon. colleague.

First, it is clear that he enthusiastically supports the workers who depend on Canada's energy industry. So do we. I know that the Minister of Natural Resources, who is an MP from an energy-producing province, shares this support for workers in the sector.

Second, we agree that this sector is a vital source of jobs all across the country and for indigenous peoples. In fact, we support programs that encourage greater participation. Canada's energy sector creates and supports well-paying, high-skilled jobs that generate tax revenue that fund our cherished social programs, and the sector is leading the way in innovation during this global fight against climate change.

It is true that Canada currently relies on oil and gas to heat our homes, schools and hospitals; to power our vehicles; and to fuel an agricultural sector, which provides food on the table across Canada and around the world. That is why we encourage the energy sector to continue its work to reduce its carbon footprint, so it remains competitive in the low-carbon, global economy displacing dirtier sources like coal.

[*Translation*]

However, this is where I start to disagree with the member opposite.

My first issue is that the motion seems to glorify the status quo. It completely disregards the necessary path companies must take in a difficult environment, an environment in which many investment fund managers are investing their billions in countries that are taking climate change seriously.

With all due respect, this is ridiculous and completely disregards the fact that climate change is real, no matter what the Conservative Party members think. Climate change is already causing damage and this will only get worse if Canada and other countries fail to take serious action.

[*English*]

Companies such as Suncor, Cenovus and Canadian Natural Resources get it. They take this crisis seriously. This is critical because they are among companies with the kind of ingenuity and financial muscle we need during this transition period.

*Private Members' Business*

Cenovus, on its website, says, “We believe companies that fail to adapt to this transition will face growing carbon-related risks, while those that act now will position themselves for long-term business resilience.”

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

I can also quote Premier Jason Kenney, who told his party faithful that Alberta could no longer stick its head in the ground and “pretend that the aspirations behind the Paris thing are not hugely influential in how capital is allocated and how market access decisions are made”.

Not only does the motion fail to recognize that others are skating to where the puck is going, I think it also fails to accurately reflect this government's vision for the sector.

I want to make one thing clear about net-zero emissions. We have to explore Canada's natural resources as cleanly and sustainably as possible while supporting research into how we can create export-focused industries around hydrogen, petrochemical products, packaging recovery notes, or PRNs, carbon capture and carbon fibre.

[*English*]

I also must object to a motion that does not recognize the role our government has played, a role that has safeguarded jobs during this pandemic, including more than \$2.8 billion invested in supporting energy workers and their families during this pandemic.

[*Translation*]

This funding is helping to maintain and create thousands of well-paying jobs. It is also helping to improve the sector's environmental performance so that it can play a key role in Canada's clean growth future.

I would like to add one final constructive criticism. The motion fails to mention that we are responding to this new global investment climate with a powerful climate plan. This plan includes a price on carbon pollution, a ban on coal-fired electricity by 2030 and, most recently, an initial investment of \$15 billion to help meet our 2030 and 2050 Paris targets, with funds to improve energy efficiency, provide clean fuels and support businesses.

It is important to reduce emissions, make low-carbon products and help the forestry industry and others plant two billion trees over the next 10 years. Our government is also investing \$3 billion over five years through a new net zero accelerator fund. This will help expedite decarbonization projects with large emitters, contribute to the global scaling-up of clean technologies and accelerate Canada's industrial transformation across all sectors.

[*English*]

I have offered enough constructive criticism on Motion No. 61. I would like to end on the same positive note that I began. The member, as I said, is a successful businessman, a person who surely recognizes the opportunity when he sees it. I would like to invite the member, his colleagues and all Canadians to view the energy transition in a positive way.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

This represents one of the last trade opportunities of our time and an opportunity for Canada to be a world leader. It is an enormous challenge, no less intimidating than those we faced in the past, such as building the trans-Canada railway, building the St. Lawrence Seaway or developing an offshore industry in the often dangerous waters of the North Atlantic.

We accomplished those three things, and we will accomplish many other things in the future. We can meet our Paris targets. We can do it while encouraging our oil companies to become the cleanest and most innovative in the world.

[*English*]

We also respect and celebrate the workers from across Canada in the energy sector. Their innovation, drive and determination are so important. Workers in the Canadian energy sector will be crucial in this transition to a net-zero future, but we need all Canadians to pull together for a common goal. We simply cannot afford to leave anyone out.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, as in every debate, when I am faced with a motion, I try to figure out the intent and what the motion hopes to achieve.

As I read my colleague's motion, looking for the intent, I was reminded of a comedian that I like, Yvon Deschamps. Deschamps is a master of irony, and his method is simply to take a social issue to its logical extreme to show how absurd it is. That is truly what it reminded me of.

In reading the motion, I thought about my first days in the House of Commons and the rallying cry of my Conservative colleagues, “Build a pipeline!”, which I found to be a bit ludicrous. It reminded me of what we saw in the United States a few years ago with Sarah Palin and her famous line, “Drill, baby, drill”. It seemed like those people had no understanding of the climate crisis we are facing and the harmful effects that fossil fuels can have.

Let us leave that aside for now. I might come back to the motion's intent later, unless it comes up along the way. I suggest we do the most useful thing we can do when faced with any proposal, namely analyze the text.

Motion No. 61 calls on the government to recognize that it is impossible to replace fossil fuels. Another way to say that is that fossil fuels are “irreplaceable”. This implies that they are without equivalent, that nothing is equivalent to fossil fuels.

*Private Members' Business*

Personally, when I talk about something that is irreplaceable and without equivalent, what immediately comes to mind is water, which is indeed irreplaceable and has no equivalent. It could also be the air we breathe. My relationship with my girlfriend is certainly irreplaceable, and so is my son. However, I do not think oil is irreplaceable. In fact, let us go a step further and say that red wine and cheese may be irreplaceable, but I do not think oil is.

I seem to be missing something about what my colleague is trying to say by claiming that oil is irreplaceable. This strikes me more as something Yvon Deschamps would say in his act than as something a politician might say, but whatever.

The first paragraph of the motion reads as follows:

- (i) replacing oil and gas with more environmentally sustainable options is not technologically or economically feasible,

I do not know where my colleague lives, but there are already many technologically and economically feasible proposals for replacing oil. These proposals and these new technologies would have benefits for our economy. The first thing I think of is the battery supply chain, which we are currently studying at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

We should remember that it is now possible to store energy and that battery efficiency is increasing exponentially, which is quite promising. We can do this in Canada because we have everything we need here, including critical metals and, in Quebec, the rare earth elements needed to produce permanent magnets for electric vehicle batteries. There are potential options with a very low carbon footprint. I do not know if my colleague knows about them.

There is also green hydrogen, as opposed to grey hydrogen, that can be produced from biomass and can be used for heavy-duty transportation. I am thinking about the forestry industry, which is an excellent candidate to replace the fossil fuel industry. Thanks to the bioeconomy, we now have replacements for many petrochemical products.

This may interest my colleague, who said earlier that the oil industry accounts for many jobs, such as chemists and engineers. The Standing Committee on Natural Resources heard from experts in the forestry industry who said that all of these chemists and engineers could play a part in the transition to forest biomass-based bioindustries, which would significantly reduce our carbon footprint.

Therefore, I think that to claim that it is impossible to replace oil and gas products is an irony worthy of Yvon Deschamps, the absurdist comedian I mentioned earlier.

The second paragraph of the motion states:

- (ii) Canada's energy needs require the use of oil and gas to heat Canadian homes, schools and hospitals, to propel vehicles, to bring food to Canadian tables, and to produce electricity,

I live in Quebec, where most homes, including my own and those of my parents and friends, are heated using hydroelectricity. The same is true for many schools. Today, some schools are even heated using forestry waste, or biomass.

• (1810)

The same is true for hospitals. Electricity is also used to propel vehicles. Countries around the world are making the transition to electric vehicles. I do not know whether my colleague has ever heard of them, but we have been talking about them for 20 years. We have kicked into high gear when it comes to the electrification of transportation. It is one of the best ways to reduce our carbon footprint, bring food to Canadian tables and produce electricity. Of course, there are places that produce electricity using oil, but Quebec is certainly not one of them. This motion is clearly not directed at Quebec.

The third paragraph of the motion says, "Canadian oil and natural gas are produced with the highest environmental standards in the world, and domestic producers are global environmental leaders and responsible corporate citizens".

Right away, that reminded me of big tobacco. It was like listening to big tobacco in the 1990s. Members may remember that, back in the 1990s, cigarette makers were pushing smooth, velvety flavours, smooth cigarettes. At one point, there was even an ad about the athlete's cigarette. Talking about oil and natural gas that comply with environmental standards is like talking about a healthy cigarette. It is a devious way to avoid addressing the real situation we are facing, which is climate change. Once again, any attempt to divine my colleague's intent brings me right back to irony.

The fourth paragraph of the motion states that "using Canadian resources creates Canadian jobs". Sure, that may be true. At one time, Canadian natural resources, be they oil or gas, did create jobs for Canadians, but we know that is increasingly less true. Albertans need to know the truth. I encourage my colleague to tell Albertans the truth.

Let us look at the oil sands projects that have been abandoned. We know that big investment funds no longer want to get involved in the oil sands. As for Keystone XL, the last one in the running, our American neighbours have decided to make the shift towards a low-carbon economy. They dropped Keystone XL. When we came to the House, no investors wanted to commit to the Teck Frontier project. They dropped that too.

I can name one promising natural resource sector that creates jobs, and that is forestry. Our party commissioned a vast study on the entire forestry potential of Quebec, a study that is very conservative, not in the Conservative Party sense, but small "c" conservative, meaning there was no exaggeration. We know that in the long term, over 10 years, if we make the shift towards the bioeconomy, we can create 16,000 jobs in Quebec alone. This natural resource sector could create jobs, and the bioeconomy could easily be incorporated as part of a transition plan for the Alberta economy, since the skills are already there in terms of chemists and engineers working on these kinds of processes.

*Private Members' Business*

The fifth paragraph deals with first nations. I will go over it quickly. I need not remind my colleague of the whole kerfuffle with the Wet'suwet'en. Let us just say that there are many indigenous communities that do not look favourably on oil and gas projects.

The sixth paragraph is on the tax revenue from the fossil fuel industry. I would just like to say that, at the end of the 1970s until the early 1990s, we know that the government had to invest \$70 billion to make oil sands technologies profitable. We know that Quebec's share in that investment is 22%. Fourteen billion dollars to support the oil and gas industry. We know that, from 2017 to 2020, an extra \$24 billion was invested in oil and gas. I am still waiting for the economic spinoffs from the oil industry.

My time is up, but I had so many other things to say.

● (1815)

[English]

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to speak in the House this evening in regard to Motion No. 61, put forward by the member for Edmonton Manning. The title of the motion is “Support of oil and gas sector”.

I agree with the member that fossil fuels have brought wealth to Canada. I know that the motion comes from concern for the workers in this sector, and I share that concern. However, the substantial benefits have come at a great cost, and we must admit that and quickly find a new way forward, a path without fossil fuels. I therefore disagree almost entirely with the sentiment and substance of the motion.

There are eight substantive parts in the motion. I would like to go through them one by one, just as the member for Jonquière did.

In (a)(i), the motion states:

replacing oil and gas with more environmentally sustainable options is not technologically or economically feasible

That simply is not true. It reflects the complete lack of understanding among many Conservative members of the House regarding the climate crisis we are in, and reflects their lack of vision for bold solutions that we need to create a livable future for our grandchildren.

When we are discussing the shift to a low-carbon future at the natural resources committee, the Conservative lines of questioning are almost always along the lines of it cannot be done, it will be prohibitively expensive or the people of Canada would not stand for this. The people of Canada expect us to do this, and they are becoming more and more disappointed and cynical about the feebleness of our response to climate change. Options that are more environmentally sustainable are technologically feasible.

The electrification of Canada's vehicles is happening faster than even some of the most optimistic experts could have imagined. Even the Conservatives have admitted this in their belated plan to fight climate change. To fuel those vehicles, we need non-emitting clean electrical sources. Eighty per cent of Canada's electricity is already non-emitting, and renewable energy solutions such as wind and solar projects, combined with utility-grade storage and the

strategic renewal of our electrical grid, can be built out to fill in the difference.

Those solutions are economically feasible. Wind and solar are recognized as the cheapest energy sources on the planet. Instead, we see both the Conservatives and the Liberals throwing billions of dollars at the fossil fuel industry, building more and larger pipelines in a desperate attempt to pump oil out of the ground faster and faster at a time when world oil demand is predicted to decline over the next 30 years. That demand must decline, and decline quickly, if countries of the world are to live up to their Paris targets. It must decline if we are to halt the climate change that is already costing us in fire, floods and drought. The cost of that inaction is in the trillions of dollars.

In (a)(ii), the motion states:

Canada's energy needs require the use of oil and gas to heat Canadian homes

While more and more Canadians are cutting their ties to gas stations by buying electric vehicles, a KPMG survey found that 70% of Canadians want their next car to be electric. One of the lowest hanging fruits of the fight against climate change in Canada is the energy efficiency of our homes and buildings. With a serious program to retrofit our buildings, reduce energy consumption and change the building codes to ensure that new buildings use little or no energy, we can easily get rid of a quarter of our carbon dioxide emissions.

In (a)(iii), the motion states:

Canadian oil and natural gas are produced with the highest environmental standards in the world

I have no doubt that most domestic oil and gas producers are doing their best to reduce their industrial emissions. The amount of greenhouse gases produced when extracting oil from the oil sands has come down in new projects. Yes, we have some of the highest environmental standards in the world, and Canadians fully expect that, but this cannot change the fact that the oil sands will require an investment of over \$200 billion to rehabilitate. No company has put that sort of money aside to do that work, and guess who will end up paying? More and more companies are abandoning thousands of idle wells, with billions of dollars coming from taxpayers to clean them up. A recent study found that all the financial benefits of the fossil fuel industry in Canada are negated by the health costs created by burning fossil fuels.

In (a)(iv), the motion states:

using Canadian resources creates Canadian jobs

Yes, I agree. Our country was built on natural resources. My province of British Columbia is a world powerhouse when it comes to forestry. Canada is recognized as the world leader in mining. Many parts of the country are rich in hydroelectric power, which provides the energy needed by industry and homes.

The oil and gas industry has provided many good jobs over the past decades too, and jobs are obviously at the core of the motion. Workers in the oil and gas sector have either recently found themselves out of work or are increasingly worried about their future in that industry. These are good jobs that pay very well, and I think it should be the goal of members in the House that we create an economy that will provide work for all Canadians, including those now employed in the oil and gas sector.

● (1820)

In (a)(v), it speaks to first nations' involvement in this sector. I agree that first nations should benefit and increasingly are benefiting from natural resource projects in their territories. Oil and gas projects have created situations with different benefit and risk scenarios for different first nations, some getting good jobs and others concerned about contamination of their lands and waters.

In (a)(vi), it states, "tax revenue from the fossil fuel industry is an important contributor to the national treasury". While, yes, we must ensure that the Canadian economy continues to provide jobs and production to keep that funding available for social and infrastructure programs. A simple glance to the future would tell anyone with their eyes open that we should diversify our industries and tailor them to what the future will need. We need to go where the puck is going.

Investment firms and pension plans are increasingly pulling out of the oil sector. They are not doing this because they believe in climate change and want to do the right thing; they are pulling out because they see no long-term profits in new oil projects, and we need to do the same.

These are the last two asks of the government in this motion.

First, "Canada's oil and gas industry...is essential to the well-being of the nation and should be celebrated." Yes, the oil and gas industry has provided Canada with wealth and a comfortable lifestyle over the past 80 years. I am of an age where I have benefited immensely from the strong Canadian economy that oil and gas, and forestry, mining, agriculture and manufacturing have produced, but oil and gas will not be essential in 20 or 30 years.

Second, "tax and regulatory barriers limiting the responsible growth of Canada's oil and gas industry should be removed." This is the kicker. The Conservatives believe that all the woes of the oil and gas sector come down to two things, the carbon tax and regulations; the carbon tax they just created in their latest policy on climate, the same regulations that the member for Edmonton Manning praised in (a)(iii), the same indigenous rights that he praised in (a)(v). All the pipelines being considered now were assessed using the regulations created by the Conservatives during the Harper government.

The challenges facing the oil and gas industry are not the making of the current government or of any other government in Canada.

### *Private Members' Business*

They are challenges rooted in the climate crisis facing our planet. They are challenges rooted in the fact that it is cheaper to create electricity with wind and solar rather than with natural gas. They are challenges rooted in the fact that it is cheaper to own and operate an electric car than one with an internal combustion engine. No amount of tax and regulatory changes will change this or will fix this.

This motion comes from a nostalgic view of the past and would do absolutely nothing to help the workers in the oil and gas sector. We must face the facts and build a new sustainable economy that will create those good jobs across our country.

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will start today by thanking my colleague from Edmonton—Manning. He is a great advocate for the Canadian oil and gas industry. He does great work here and has proven on the floor of the House of Commons again today virtually that he represents his riding very well.

Alberta's industrial heartland lies just outside Edmonton. I am certain a lot of his constituents work in that gem of an industrial infrastructure in Canada, which provides so much industrial benefit to this country. We can talk about Canadian champions. We can talk about the way the industry built up in that whole area, where we produce and add value to our resources. We are not just hewers of wood and drawers of water. We add significant value along the way.

I joined my colleague at the Enhance Energy and Wolf Midstream facility in Clive, Alberta to look at the actual end of the pipe where the CO<sub>2</sub> is collected, up in the industrial heartland, and brought down for storage 150 kilometres away in central Alberta. It is magnificent world-leading technology, a highway to sequester the carbon that is produced in industrial facilities in Alberta. So many firms are going to come to Canada because of the forward thinking that this industry has provided in Canada. I again thank the member for Edmonton—Manning for everything he has brought to the debate on this.

As everybody knows, I have been a member of Parliament for a year and a half. I have learned a lot from my colleagues every day, including the member for Edmonton Manning. When I came here, it was under the premise that people in this place did not really understand the Canadian energy industry, including the Canadian oil and gas industry. I will say here today, after the remarks from every member of the other parties, that premise is resounding in spades.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

I remember when I first got here, over a year and a half ago, I would go to committee meetings where certain people would say that the solution to our problem in Alberta is to get a big fund to transition everybody out of oil and gas jobs. I would sit there slack-jawed at the ignorance on display from some of my colleagues from across Canada about what this industry represents to Canada and how much it contributes to our national life every day.

We are world champions in the environmental production of our petroleum resource. We have reporting standards that are far greater than anywhere else in the world. I contrast investments in the Canadian oil and gas industry with those in the United States and those overseas. I can attest that the only country that comes close to Canada's environmental standards is Norway. It has a declining base and is drilling further and further into the North Sea in order to access more resources because its \$1.1-trillion wealth fund is built and entirely dependent on hydrocarbon resources.

We talk about a European business model, and I have heard a number of times in this debate about how the world is moving on. We should take a look at where the world is moving on to. The world is moving out of Canada because we are easy pickings to move away from, but in so doing, it is funding investments in the Middle East, which has a far worse environmental standards and human rights standards. They also have no transparency at all on how it is producing its oil.

We are comparing apples to oranges. Canada is the bar. Everybody else is below that bar. As Canadians, should be supporting that bar and looking at this industry as the champion we have built over the last decades here in Canada. As Canadian, we should accept it because it adds so much, not just from the employment perspective of 450,000 direct and indirect jobs, but also from a taxation perspective.

I will go through those numbers because we are talking about \$130 billion in exports from our oil and gas industry per year. That is over 22% of our Canadian exports, which are contributing to the value of life here in Canada. Imagine our Canadian dollar if we did not have Canadian oil and gas exports. All kinds of taxation comes from here, provincially, federally and municipally, and it is in the hundreds of billions of dollars. It is an average of about \$24 billion per year going back for the last 18 years.

Even the numbers going forward are great, quite frankly, for what we will contribute to Canadian taxes. It represents about \$240 billion over the next 10 years, which is another \$24 billion a year that will be going to Canadian taxpayers so they can have nice hospitals, pandemic responses, good schools, good universities and good seniors care. These are all funded by an industry that is a net contributor to Canada through and through. It has been for my whole lifetime and that of most members in this House.

• (1825)

We actually advanced with the free trade agreement in the United States. The core of that free trade agreement was our energy agreement, and trade with the United States has been fundamentally important to our lifestyle rising up in Canada. We can actually afford the things the rest of the world took for granted, and we have learned to take them for granted in Canada. One thing I am seeing quite clearly here is the division, between producing provinces and

non-producing provinces, of knowledge about what this industry brings to Canada. I can assure members that revenue has been shared equitably across this country, and we have added so much value—

• (1830)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Unfortunately, the time for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper. The hon. member will have four minutes the next time this matter is before the House to continue his speech.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, home to Canada's largest army base, I am honoured to stand up for the women and men who serve their country as members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

On International Women's Day I asked the Minister of National Defence a simple question: Who was the minister trying to protect, himself or the Prime Minister?

It was the Prime Minister who shut down the investigation by the Standing Committee on National Defence into the appalling record of this government in defending gender equality for women serving their country in the military. That is the answer the minister was silent on. That silence was a roar to Canadian women. Female MPs such as the one for Pickering—Uxbridge should be ashamed when the name of the leader of the Liberal party is used in the same paragraph as Harvey Weinstein's and Jeffrey Epstein's to make the point that Canada is going backward, not forward, when it comes to making progress and combatting sexual misconduct and violence against women in all its ugly faces.

Kathleen Finlay is the founder of the ZeroNow Campaign to combat sexual trauma and gender-based violence. She recently had this to say about the self-titled feminist Prime Minister:

When [the] Prime Minister...was asked on March 30 if he had any knowledge in 2018 about allegations of sexual misconduct involving then General Jonathan Vance, he gave a sharply self-satisfied "No" to Global National's Mercedes Stephenson. That "No" was punctuated by a loud echo. No concern was expressed about sexual misconduct in the military. No reassurance was offered to victims. Just "No." It was more than a brusque reply to a reporter's question. It was a huge sign of disrespect to countless women who wonder if they are ever going to be protected from the plague of gender-based violence and sexual harassment that has infected Canada's military, law enforcement and federal public service.

When is the Prime Minister going to stop disrespecting women?

It is time for the Prime Minister and the Liberal party to take lessons from the opposition when it comes to actions in support of gender and minority rights. I am proud to be a member of today's Conservative party, which encouraged strong women such as Leslyn Lewis to run for leader of our party. She would be a fine addition to the House of Commons.

I am proud of Conservatives like the late Lincoln Alexander who, in addition to being the first Black cabinet minister and lieutenant-governor of Ontario, was a bigger man than racists who dress up in blackface. The honourable Lincoln Alexander was actually called too sensitive by the leader of the Liberal party when a Liberal MP used an obscenity after Mr. Alexander defended the unemployed.

The Prime Minister has an outrageous record of making bad decisions when it comes to Canada's military. This policy failure of the Prime Minister and his government, and his failure to deal with sexual harassment in the military, can be traced to his treatment of women. It is no different from the way the Prime Minister treats women in his own party, such as the former justice minister during the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

This is what a former female Liberal MP and member of the Prime Minister's caucus had to say:

In a feminist government, throwing [female members of Parliament] under the bus, I didn't appreciate that, especially at a time when we're saying that we believe in women.... You believe in them when it's convenient and you leave them when it's not. So there were just a number of different instances that just didn't sit right with me and the principles that I hold dear, and I wanted to make sure that I was able to look at myself in the mirror the next day.

It is a time when Canadians are being exposed to more dangerous variants. We will continue that long after.

• (1835)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, eliminating all forms of misconduct and abuse of power and creating a safe work environment for everyone in the defence team have always been our top priority. We know that any organization, including the Canadian Armed Forces, must work hard to eliminate the toxic masculinity that creates an unacceptable culture. Fundamentally, harassment of any kind is morally wrong and counter to the principles that guide our military and their civilian colleagues.

When, despite our efforts to prevent it, sexual misconduct occurs, those responsible must be held accountable regardless of rank or position. When allegations of misconduct are raised, they must be directed to the appropriate authorities so they can be investigated fairly, independently and with respect for the rule of law and the rights of all involved.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Since forming government, we have worked hard to eliminate sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. It is clear, though, that the measures we have implemented have not gone far enough and have not moved fast enough. We have seen with the recent allegations against the Canadian Armed Forces most senior leadership that there is still much room to improve.

That is why budget 2021 commits over \$236 million to eliminate sexual misconduct and gender-based violence in the Canadian Armed Forces, including expanding the reach of the sexual misconduct response centre, creating a new oversight mechanism and providing online and in-person peer-to-peer support.

[*Translation*]

In the interest of obtaining fair outcomes, we are also committed to protecting the integrity of investigations. This includes ensuring that there is no suggestion or perception of inappropriate or political influence on these investigations or their results.

[*English*]

Regarding specifically the allegation against General Vance, on March 1, 2018, the Minister of National Defence had a meeting with the CAF ombudsman. As this meeting was coming to a close, the ombudsman raised the issue of an informal allegation against General Vance. So as not to have any political involvement in a potential investigation, the minister would not accept details. Instead, he directed the ombudsman to share the allegation with the appropriate authorities, including the CFNIS.

The minister, on his end, immediately shared this matter with the Privy Council Office, which is directly responsible for Governor in Council appointments, including the chief of the defence staff. They reached out to the ombudsman the very next day to begin an investigation. The ombudsman, in his own words, had no actionable evidence.

[*Translation*]

A fair and impartial investigation of allegations of wrongdoing is fundamental to our justice system. It is a vital element of our concept of democracy.

[*English*]

Such investigations must never be or even appear to be tainted by political influence. This is why the minister and, through him, our government handled these allegations by following the proper process.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, at a time when Canadians are being exposed to more dangerous variants and our economic recovery will be delayed by years while our trading partners are moving forward, it is time the Prime Minister cleaned up his act.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Why does the Prime Minister think that having female members of his caucus mouth empty platitudes will fool Canadian women? Just like the WE scandal that involved members of the Prime Minister's family, he can only get away with misleading the public for so long before the truth comes out. He must stop the cover-up and allow the Standing Committee on National Defence to do its work. It is time to move forward, not backward, when it comes to issues of gender equality and human rights.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Madam Speaker, there can be no perception of political interference in any investigation, particularly in a case as sensitive as one related to allegations of sexual misconduct at the highest levels of our military. It would undermine the integrity of the investigation and put a just outcome at risk. It would mean no justice for a victim and no accountability for a perpetrator. This, in turn, could discourage other affected persons from coming forward. This is why it is imperative that investigations be carried out fairly and independently by the appropriate authorities.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

That is why we are working on devising even stronger and more independent mechanisms for reporting misconduct and investigations of such allegations in the Canadian Armed Forces.

We are committed to eliminating the culture of toxic masculinity from the Canadian Armed Forces.

[*English*]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, one year ago, my riding was shaken by the tragic news of a newborn infant found deceased in a portable toilet in the Downtown Eastside. That horrifying incident was followed by a horrendous video where a woman was violently assaulted in broad daylight and nobody did a thing to help.

Community advocates believe that there are numerous factors that led to these tragedies, some of which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but most of which had started long before. They call on the government to work collaboratively with advocates in the Downtown Eastside to develop an immediate action plan to end violence against women and to provide core funding to advocacy groups and service providers. Sadly, this has fallen on deaf ears.

Our social security net is woefully inadequate in meeting the needs of those most in need. Too many live below the poverty line. Too many do not have access to safe, secure, affordable housing. Too many cannot afford the medication that they need.

At the grassroots level, family and community members in the Downtown Eastside continue to lead the effort in locating women and loved ones who are still going missing without any government support for their efforts. Other grassroots and frontline organizations had to resort to crowdfunding when they could not access government funding.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these existing issues and pushed them to a breaking point, which has led to one horrific tragedy after another. There are many emergent issues that have

been coined with the term “shadow pandemic” over the years. Rising violence against women is one and rising racism is another. There has also been a sharp rise in gender-based and domestic violence since the onset of the pandemic and quarantine directives.

Anti-Asian hate crimes increased by 700%. Homelessness continues to be a growing problem and in B.C., the opioid overdose continues to kill more people than the pandemic itself. Why is it that the federal Liberal government refuses to declare a national health emergency on the opioid crisis?

The housing crisis has been named time and again as one of the key contributing factors in violence against women, especially indigenous women. Access to washrooms, sanitization facilities and other safe community spaces for women in the Downtown Eastside have been inadequate before the pandemic and the pandemic has made the situation so much worse. Surely, the government recognizes that all of these issues are interconnected and require an urgent, comprehensive and intersectional approach.

On July 28, the YWCA and the Institute for Gender and the Economy released “A Feminist Recovery Plan for Canada”. The report identified that the COVID-19 pandemic is having disproportionate economic, health and social impacts on women. Economic precarity and housing precarity are intrinsically linked. Women workers are on the front lines of the pandemic as the majority of women workers are concentrated in the essential occupations that cannot be done remotely, including health care, cashiers, restaurant workers, cleaners and clerical functions.

As a result, COVID cases and deaths have also been experienced disproportionately by women and 63% of pandemic job losses were experienced by women. For every three months of lockdown, there has been a 20% to 22% increase in domestic violence and the majority of victims of anti-Asian violence have been women.

The pandemic should have been a giant wake-up call that spurs urgent and significant investments to address the core fundamental issues that Canadians struggle with. The government must come to the table with community advocates and develop an action plan to address violence against women and provide stable funding to NGOs on the ground. The lives and safety of women are at risk.

**Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Vancouver East for her important and continuous advocacy for survivors of gender-based violence.



Gender-based violence has devastating impacts on women, children and their families. I commend the Downtown Eastside community advocates in Vancouver as they work tirelessly to provide services to women in need. We hear them, we see them and we are working with them.

Even before COVID-19 came into our lives, gender-based violence was all too prevalent in Canada. Since 2015, our government has taken immediate steps to end it in all forms. More recently, we have seen how the pandemic has increased barriers for women and we have been active on the file, collaborating with all governments and advocates as well as women's and equality-seeking organizations across Canada, including those in British Columbia and Vancouver.

In recent years, we have worked closely with the Feminists Deliver working group and we have sought advice from equality-seeking organizations across British Columbia to support those experiencing social and economic marginalization, including people experiencing marginalization due to their gender, their gender identity and their gender expression. We have discussed our mobilization efforts on gender equality and highlighted the importance of inclusion and the need to elevate unheard and diverse voices.

Women's organizations in Vancouver and all across Canada continue to be the backbone of the movement. They have worked tirelessly to protect and advance the rights of women, girls and people of all gender identities and expressions. These organizations provide shelter, healing and guidance. They serve survivors and their families from all ethnocultural communities, all religions, all work backgrounds and with a multiplicity of life experiences. We have made it our utmost priority to fund and support their work to ensure they have the resources they need to best serve women, girls, LGBTQ2 and gender-diverse peoples.

Since 2015, Women and Gender Equality Canada has invested more than \$118 million in over 300 organizations all across Canada for 345 projects addressing violence.

In 2017, we launched the first-ever national strategy to end gender-based violence, and this was supported by an investment of \$200 million, which was a landmark in our commitment to the safety and security of women.

In Vancouver, we have invested more than \$9 million in 20 organizations for 23 projects addressing a variety of pressing issues affecting women and girls, such as gender-based violence, human trafficking, homelessness, LGBTQ2 equality and indigenous women's safety. We also provided over \$1.4 million in emergency COVID-19 funding to 39 organizations in Vancouver alone.

Yesterday, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, tabled the budget for 2020-21, our plan to continue the fight against COVID-19 and to ensure a resilient economy and a feminist recovery. Our government, alongside all our partners in the provinces and territories and indigenous leaders, are moving forward with a national action plan to end gender-based violence. Budget 2020-21 builds on this work, and is investing over \$600 million over five years.

Women have been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic, but we have always been at the forefront of our recovery. We know

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

of the devastating increase of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. Each life lost is a tragedy. The investments from budget 2020-21 will make a difference. From my riding in the Long Range Mountains to the hon. member's community in Vancouver East—

• (1845)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Unfortunately, time has expired.

The hon. member for Vancouver East.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Madam Speaker, if the Liberal government sees the people in the Downtown Eastside and the organizations that work every day to support the community in need, will it then provide them with core funding and stable funding so they do not have to scramble around from program to program to provide the supports that are so necessary in the community? Will the government then provide resources to the families that are putting up posters for women and girls who are still missing in the indigenous community so they do not have to scramble around to do that work on their own?

The government must use an intersectional gender-based analysis to understand the differential impacts of COVID-19 in policy and program design to ensure that economic recovery policies address gender-based inequalities. It should also ensure that urgent action is taken. It should give them core funding, stable funding and take immediate action to support the families that do this important work right now in our communities. That would be a good start.

**Ms. Gudie Hutchings:** Madam Speaker, we have listened to more than 1,000 experts and advocates working to prevent and address gender-based violence across the country as we build the national action plan. We have heard all of their comments and concerns, and that will be built into the plan. With their help, we are going to reach the most affected during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the women experiencing GBV in B.C.

Since day one, we have been there for Canadians through the pandemic. We have provided \$100 million in emergency funding to those organizations. It got out the door right away, and we are going to continue to provide and help them provide their essential service. We are going to continue to have their backs, too.

Our investments supported more than 1,500 frontline organizations that delivered essential services to survivors of gender-based violence and over six million people benefited every year from the important work of these organizations.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Yesterday, history was made when the first female finance minister tabled the budget to make transformative investments toward a safer and more inclusive Canada. Our government has a strong record in progressing for equality and combatting gender-based violence. There is more work to be done, and we are committed to getting it done.

• (1850)

## HEALTH

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, many of us know that there is often an urgent appeal for blood, and the Canadian Blood Services always needs more blood donations.

There are a few people in my life, very good friends, who would love to donate blood but they cannot, because they are gay. This government has promised for many years to lift the ban on gay blood donations but has not, and I find that really disappointing for many reasons.

There are better ways to screen blood donations. In fact, countries around the world have adopted lifestyle-based questionnaires to lift the ban on gay blood. For example, Argentina, Israel, Italy, Poland, Russia, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, Ukraine, Peru, Chile, Brazil and Bulgaria have but not here in Canada.

The reality is that the gay blood ban, which has been perpetuated by the Liberal government in spite of promises to lift it, remains. It stigmatizes gay men, because it perpetuates myths and stigma about gay men. I find that unfortunate to say the least. I want my friends to be able to give blood and not face this stigma.

My question to my colleague is very simple. Why is the government perpetuating homophobia and not lifting the gay blood ban?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will start by saying that the hon. member ought to turn around in her own caucus. If she wants to begin to disband homophobia in her own party, that might be one place to start.

When it comes to the blood ban, we agree it is discriminatory. That is why our government, from day one, provided the funding for Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec to address and provide the studies that are needed.

The member opposite well knows that the federal government alone cannot implement this change. It requires parties coming together. That is exactly why we provided the funding for the studies to take place: so that Héma-Québec and Canadian Blood Services could put forward an application to the Government of Canada. We are eagerly awaiting that application so that we can end this discriminatory practice.

While we are on the subject of discrimination, I would like to point out to the member opposite that just last weekend, her own colleagues attended a pro-life conference where they strategized on how to put forward legislation to ban and restrict health care for trans Canadians. Perhaps the member opposite, in her advocacy, should start with her own party.

Let us also talk about the continued homophobia that exists in her party. In the debate on banning conversion therapy, a member

recently had to apologize for referring to homosexuals as “unclean”. Her own caucus member had to apologize.

We fully support, and have committed to, ending the blood ban. I would also point out that the member opposite was a member of the Harper government. In 10 years, the former Conservative government did not do a single thing to move forward on lifting the blood ban.

I am quite curious. At what point did the member opposite have this awakening? She could have done a lot as a member of the government for 10 years. We did not wait. We started this process. We look forward to the application. I look forward to the passion of the member opposite in fighting discrimination and homophobia in her own caucus.

• (1855)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, that is code for, “We are not going to lift it. We are going to perpetuate homophobia by not doing what we said we were going to do.”

The member could just come up with a date. The reality is these studies have been going on forever, across different political stripes. However, the member refuses to say when. Frankly, that is homophobia.

Also, the government could put together a strategy for trans health care. It has not done anything on that. It has not worked with the provinces to address issues of consistent access to gender-affirming care. The member is just sitting there pointing fingers. That is irresponsible and, frankly, homophobic and transphobic.

I will ask her again, and maybe she could dispense with the rhetoric this time: When will the Liberals end the blood ban? Would the member agree that not doing so constitutes homophobia?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Madam Speaker, what I think constitutes homophobia is the member opposite's Conservative Party. The fact is the only members in the House voting against banning conversion therapy are Conservatives.

The member can make fake accusations against me or members of this party, but those are all she has. What Canadians can see plain and clear is the homophobia that is rampant in the Conservative Party. The fact that Conservatives are the only members who have actually voted against banning conversion therapy demonstrates that. Canadians will not be fooled.

What is code for the member opposite's comment is that the Conservative Party is trying to hide or spin the fact that it has members who have, just in the last week, had to apologize for damaging, hurtful statements.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We are committed to ending the blood ban. It is something the Conservative Party did not do in 10 years.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Ac-

ordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:58 p.m.)

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