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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 6, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to six petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages entitled "Conference Interpreters: The Cornerstone of Bilingualism in Parliament".

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

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages and all the staff and analysts who did an excellent job on this study of the challenges facing the parliamentary interpretation service in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To allow greater flexibility in summoning members, we want to table a supplementary report with two amendments. In recommendation 2, we would like to change the wording to "at least 48 hours" for witness participation.

In recommendation 3, paragraph b), we would add this at the end:

...or any equivalent ISO-compliant system approved by the House, failing which it will be up to the committee to decide whether or not to hear the witness without the appropriate equipment.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-293, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to another Act (interim release and domestic violence recognizance orders).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I introduce, in both official languages, this bill to amend the Criminal Code and make consequential amendments to another act, in relation to interim release and domestic violence recognizance orders.

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

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

MYANMAR

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting four petitions today.

The first petition is a new one and, if members will bear with me, there are a number of different elements to it. It highlights the situation in Burma and calls for engagement by the Government of Canada.

In particular, the petition highlights a number of needs and issues. It calls on the government to suspend high-level political contact with Burma and not recognize the junta State Administrative Council as legitimate government. It calls for the imposition of sanctions, as well as action in terms of the recommendations of the fact-finding mission to Burma. It calls for engagement with international partners to seek a global arms embargo on Burma. It calls for the suspension of all financial assistance and loans to central government channels, including funding to the peace process through the Joint Peace Fund, and redirecting this aid directly to civil society. It calls for support of all efforts to empower a democratic federal government in Burma that recognizes the legitimate voices and concerns of all the various territories and nationalities.

Routine Proceedings

It also calls for action around cross-border humanitarian assistance to support ethnic civil society and internally displaced persons, as well as those in Thai-based refugee camps. There are significant concerns that have been raised by the Karen Peace Support Network around more than 3,000 Karen IDPs who have fled into Thailand and the challenges they have received in terms of accessing support from Thai authorities and being given access to humanitarian support. The community wants to see greater engagement from Canada with Thai authorities around supporting Karen and other refugee communities that are in Thailand.

Finally, the petition calls for Canada to renew its multi-year financial commitment to support the Rohingya, which at the time of the preparation of this petition was set to expire on March 20, 2021.

This petition, in general, reflects the concerns of ethnic minority communities in Burma who are seeking to work constructively with the majority community to advance democracy and at the same time have some specific concerns about the future of the country and ensuring that all communities are heard and respected.

• (1010)

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting is with respect to Bill C-6, the government's bill on conversion therapy.

The petitioners are supportive of efforts to ban conversion therapy but are calling on the government to fix the definition to address the reality that poor drafting in the definition would lead to many unintended consequences, consequences that the government has verbally denied will actually be consequences. However, a close reading of the details of the legislation leaves petitioners very concerned, and they are looking for greater clarity from the government on the language of the bill.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is in support of Bill S-204, a bill currently before the Senate, but which I am hopeful will be before the House of Commons very soon.

This bill would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ without the consent of the person it was taken from. It would also create a mechanism by which someone could be deemed inadmissible to Canada due to involvement in forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

The petitioners want to see this Parliament pass Bill S-204 as soon as possible, noting that it has been over 10 years that various members of Parliament from various parties have been working on getting a legislative initiative like this moving forward.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fourth and final petition highlights the human rights situation in Ethiopia.

The petitioners are concerned about the situation in Tigray, as well as other regions. The petitioners call on Canada to be more engaged with the situation, working to end all violence and address the underlying causes of violence, to address humanitarian issues,

to support independent monitoring, to call for international investigations into credible reports of war crimes and gross violations of human rights, and to engage directly with the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments around the conflict in Tigray and other human rights challenges in the region.

Finally, the petitioners want to see the Government of Canada support short-, medium- and long-term election monitoring in Ethiopia.

The Speaker: I want to remind the hon. members presenting petitions that the key words we want to concentrate on are “concise” and “precise”. Just keep it to a minimum, so that you get your point across and it does not go on much longer.

The hon. member for Beaches—East York.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions to present today.

The first is e-petition 2997. The petitioners note that animals in puppy mills are kept in cramped, filthy conditions with no opportunity for exercise, socialization or veterinary care. They describe really cruel conditions. They call upon the Government of Canada to ban the operation of puppy mills in the entire country.

The second petition is e-3063, on mink farming. The petitioners note that the plight of millions of mink in Europe has been highlighted in the news around the world due to mink being culled after the spread of COVID on mink farms between mink and between mink and humans. They again note the cruelty on farms, but really draw the connection to one health approach and the interconnectedness between humans, animals and our environment. They call upon the Government of Canada to ban the farming of mink in the entire country.

The third petition, e-3096, is also related to fur-farming. Again, it notes that fur-bearing animals are intensely farmed and killed for their fur every year in Canada, that agencies provide public funding to the fur farms sector despite industry decline, that UNEP has listed “unsustainable agricultural intensification” and “increased use and exploitation of wildlife” as two of the seven factors driving the emergence of zoonotic diseases. The petitioners call for the Government of Canada to introduce a nationwide ban on fur-farming for all species of animals.

• (1015)

FOOD POLICY

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, finally, e-petition 3022 is on food policy. The petitioners note that Canada's current food system, including how our food is produced, processed, procured, distributed, consumed and disposed of, is not aligned with the Canada food guide and the food policy for Canada and is jeopardizing the health of millions of Canadians. They note that during the pandemic, when food security is top of Canadians' minds, it is imperative that Canadians have access to an abundance of affordable and healthy plant-based food.

The petitioners, supporters of Nation Rising, call upon the Government of Canada to direct a minimum of \$390 million over three years, which is 10% of the funding allocated to supply-managed animal agriculture industries in 2019, to operationalize the Canada food guide and the food policy for Canada, including relevant funding to implement a national school food program and overhaul Canada's food system to a plant-based one.

TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually this morning to present a petition on behalf of many of my constituents. It relates to what, at the time the petition was written, was the prospective purchase by the Government of Canada of what was then known as the Kinder Morgan pipeline, now Trans Mountain. Many of the points I have reviewed in the petition are still relevant, such as that it is still the case that there is no proven way to clean up a spill involving bitumen diluted with diluents, a substance called dilbit.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to cease any financial expenditures to promote the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline and especially its construction across unceded indigenous lands.

HEALTH CANADA

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege today to table a petition on behalf of petitioners from Port Alberni. They are concerned about a Health Canada file that is open right now for a medical marijuana facility at 7827 Beaver Creek Road in Port Alberni. It is a Walmart-size cannabis facility that would be located right across the street from Kackaamin, a first nations family trauma and addictions healing centre, which is doing great work of healing from our shared history of colonialism and residential schools.

Kackaamin has never been consulted in the initial planning of this facility and has requested that this facility be located elsewhere. The petitioners cite that the purpose of the Cannabis Act is "to protect public health and public safety". They also cite that the Government of Canada has commitments to reconciliation, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

The petitioners call on the Minister of Health to acknowledge the implicit racism in the policy choices of Health Canada's cannabis licensing process and handling of this file and adhere to the purpose of the Cannabis Act and the principle of reconciliation. They would like the minister to expedite review of this file and cancel all

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cannabis licences and applications at this site, at 7821 Beaver Creek Road, apologize to Kackaamin and reaffirm the government's commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

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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.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

The House resumed from May 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: When the House last took up debate on this motion, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby had 15 minutes remaining in his time for his remarks, and then of course the usual 10 minutes for questions and comments. We will go to him now.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I say again in appreciation this morning that I am speaking from the traditional territory of the QayQayt First Nation and the Coast Salish Peoples.

[*Translation*]

Yesterday, I mentioned that this pandemic had been a tale of two countries: one is a country where billionaires have seen their wealth increase by \$78 billion and where banks received \$750 billion in liquidity supports, and the other is a country where people are struggling.

That is the fundamental issue we have to think about as we implement the budget through the passage of Bill C-30.

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● (1020)

[English]

I spoke yesterday about the impacts of this pandemic. I spoke of businesses closing their doors forever. These are small community businesses, family-run businesses and community businesses that struggled to maintain themselves during the pandemic. I spoke about the front-line workers, health care workers and first responders, all of whom have shown incredible tenacity and courage while going about their jobs of making sure as many lives are preserved as possible through this pandemic. We mourn the 24,000 Canadians who have died so far in this pandemic.

I also spoke yesterday, and want to engage today, on what has happened to the vast majority of Canadians through this pandemic. The government, through Bill C-30, is basically doing a victory lap. It is saying, even as this third wave crashes upon our shores, that we need to scale back on supports that are given to Canadians.

This contrasts vividly with the remarkable speed with which the government stepped in, within four days of the pandemic hitting, and provided the banking sector with \$750 billion in liquidity supports. The government's first priority, coming through the pandemic, was to make sure that bank profits were maintained. That is a source of shame that should last for the entire government mandate.

However, to the credit of Canadian democracy, in a minority Parliament the NDP caucus was able to shift the government's priority from banks and billionaires to putting in place programs that would make a difference for people. These included the emergency response benefit, support for students, support for seniors and support for people with disabilities, which I will come back to because it is full of holes and simply inadequate to meet their needs, as are many of the programs that we forced the government to put into place. We also forced the government to ensure sick leave and put in place a wage subsidy to maintain jobs and maintain businesses. We also fought and pushed for rent relief for small businesses.

All of those things came as a result of NDP pressure. In a minority Parliament, thankfully because of the strength of Canadian democracy, we were able to bring that about. The reality is that there are two countries: one of banks and billionaires, and another of everyone else, where we know that the majority of Canadians are within \$200 of insolvency in any given month and we continue to see Canadians struggling to make ends meet, to put food on the table and keep roofs over their heads. The growing number of homeless people across our country is a testament to the impact of the pandemic and the inadequacy of the government response.

What does Bill C-30 do? As I mentioned earlier, it basically does a victory lap on all of those supports that the NDP forced the government to put in place. Regarding the response benefit, we see a dramatic cut in July. That is within a few weeks. As this third wave crashes on our shores, we see the government moving to dramatically slash emergency supports. We see that the wage subsidy and rent relief are all going to be phased out over the course of the summer, starting within a few weeks' time, at the very worst time in the pandemic.

We spoke last night about the crisis in Alberta, which is now the worst-hit jurisdiction in all of North America. At this critical time,

the government says its job is done, its mission is accomplished and it is going to start withdrawing those supports.

We add to this the impact of government policies, for example CRA going after Canadians who were victims of fraud. We have seen over the past few years numerous cases, including with Desjardins, in which private information was leaked out, and fraudsters used it to apply for CERB in people's names. CRA is demanding repayment from people who never received payments in the first place.

Members will recall that last June the government wanted to go even further. It wanted to put people in jail if somebody else used their private information and defrauded the public. Fraud is a serious issue. The government should have put in place systems to prevent that, but the government overreach of asking people who were victims to pay back moneys they never received is unbelievable. That is how the government is reacting to ordinary people.

What has it done at this unprecedented time? This is the first crisis in Canadian history where the ultra-rich have not been asked to pay their fair share. Through World War II, Canada put in place an excess profits tax and wealth taxes to ensure that, because we were all in this together, everybody had to pay their fair share. Coming out of World War II, after vanquishing Nazism and fascism, we had the wherewithal to make unprecedented investments that led to the most prosperous period in Canadian history. These were investments in housing, education, health care and transportation.

What has happened this time? What has the current government done through this pandemic? It has basically given a free ride to the ultra-rich. Canadian billionaires, who have received over \$78 billion in increased wealth, are not being asked to chip in or pay their taxes. There is no wealth tax, even though the PBO estimates that would bring in \$10 billion a year. There is no pandemic profits tax, even though the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates it would create \$8 billion. That would be enough to eliminate homelessness in our country and ensure the right to housing, a roof over every single Canadian's head, yet the government refuses to do any of that.

The government did put a symbolic luxury tax in place, which is less than 1¢ for every dollar the PBO believes would be raised for the public good if a wealth tax were put into place. Curiously, that is one little symbolic gesture that the Liberals love to wave. They put a tax on yachts, so that means they are taking care of massive inequality, but it is not even in Bill C-30. What we actually see is a shell game. It is smoke and mirrors, with a tiny symbolic luxury tax of less than 1¢ for every dollar that a wealth tax would bring in, and that is not even on the government's radar screen.

It made the commitment and the promise, but as we have seen with so many other promises by the Liberal government, it is simply not worth the paper it is printed on. To reference previous broken promises, we just need to point to public universal pharmacare. Canadians have been waiting on its repeated promises for over 25 years. Regarding child care, we are told this time that the Liberals really mean it, but there are nearly 30 years of broken promises. Regarding boil-water advisories, there is over a decade of broken promises. The government says it really wants to tackle inequality. That is very rich, given that it has not done that either in the budget or in the budget implementation act.

• (1025)

The proposed act includes some curious and somewhat bizarre measures. For example, the budget implementation act acknowledges the increasing poverty of seniors, but says that seniors are only in this crucial poverty over the age of 75. Seniors from 65 to 74 would not get an OAS top-up, but seniors over 75 would. Poverty impacts all seniors, and for the government to discriminate is unacceptable. Also, the government acknowledges that students are having a tough time throughout this pandemic and would waive loan interest payments, but it is still forcing students to pay the principle. Students have to pay their loans back despite having to struggle through the pandemic.

I mentioned earlier the issues for people with disabilities who have struggled unbelievably throughout this pandemic. The NDP fought, not once or twice, but half a dozen times to finally get a one-time payment of \$600 for a third of people with disabilities. Of all the fights that I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, it is the one for people with disabilities that the government resisted the most. Contrast this with the \$750 billion given to the Bay Street banks in the blink of an eye. In four days, the government weighed in to maintain bank profits. However, of people with disabilities, who are struggling through this pandemic, who are half of the people who line up at food banks every week and who are many of the homeless in this country, one-third were given a one-time \$600 payment. What does Bill C-30 reserve for them? The government has decided that it will do a three-year consultation to figure out whether people with disabilities really have any needs to be met. These people are being asked to wait three years, but it took four days for the government to weigh in with a \$750 billion liquidity support bailout package. It is unbelievable, unacceptable and irresponsible.

Members might ask if there are any elements in the budget implementation act that I support. This government, which is so tired and so prone to spinning and acting rather than actually doing what comes with being the government, was struggling for inspiration. I gather somebody in the Prime Minister's Office discovered that they could be inspired by the 2015 NDP election platform. Tom Mulcair went to the public with a commitment for universal child care and a commitment to raise the federal minimum wage. Members will recall that the Prime Minister and Liberals at the time mocked the NDP for bringing these things forward. Well, that is the only thing that has inspired this government now. After six years of failure, the Liberals discovered that maybe the NDP election platform for 2015 was good and copied some of its elements. Now, in good faith, we say to the government let us get going on a mini-

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mum wage and let us get going on child care. We are here to make sure these things happen. We do not want this to be yet another empty Liberal platitude and another empty Liberal broken promise. We want to work with this government to make those things realities and not just other commitments or promises that it breaks for a quarter of a century, which has been the history of Liberal governments.

My final point is this. We do not see any real response to the crisis in housing affordability. It was Liberals who ended the national housing program, and they have yet to respond in any meaningful way. We also see the tragic, broken commitment to indigenous peoples and dozens of indigenous communities who do not have safe drinking water, and this government is now putting off any commitment to end the dangerous situation of boil-water advisories for another half decade. What message does that send to indigenous people, and what message does that send to indigenous children?

• (1030)

Bill C-30 has elements showing that the Liberals were able to copy the NDP platform from 2015. They should be inspired more from what the NDP is putting forward today, resolve these issues on behalf of Canadians and end the appalling levels of inequality that we are seeing in this country.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy listening to the hon. member. Often, budgets do not have a lot for NGOs and charitable organizations. As I have done a lot of work in that area, I am very pleased that there are a number of items for them in this budget, which I hope the member supports. They include the community services recovery fund of \$400 million; the Canada community revitalization fund of \$400 million; the \$220-million social finance fund, which is a very creative way of funding socially progressive businesses; and a second tranche for the investment readiness program because the first \$50 million ran out. We are also looking at the inventive idea of government social impact bonds and making NGOs and charities eligible for the SBF.

I was very pleased that those were in the budget, and I hope the member was as well.

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• (1035)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I like my colleague very much and I know that he is well meaning. However, we have been speaking about the tens of billions of dollars that the government refuses to collect. Every year, \$25 billion goes to overseas tax havens. That means that over the course of the last five years, the government has refused to collect \$125 billion from overseas tax havens. A pandemic profits tax would mean \$8 billion. Issuing a wealth tax would mean \$10 billion a year, each and every year.

The member talks about a few million here or a few million there for the charitable sector, but we should contrast that with what Canadians are living through: People with disabilities are struggling to make ends meet; there is growing a number of homeless people in this country; and 55% of Canadians are \$200 away from insolvency. Despite this, we have no public universal pharmacare, no right to housing and a vague commitment on child care that the government has not followed through with yet. All of these things are needed, and there are billions of dollars that the government is refusing to collect from the ultrarich in this country.

Am I happy that a few million dollars have been given to the charitable sector? I am not unhappy about that, but it does not meet the needs of Canadians. It does not mean that an indigenous child has—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to the member's comments regarding day care. Day care is largely under provincial jurisdiction, and the Liberals have promised it in every federal election up until 2006. Unfortunately, the federal government is running most of its expenses now with structural deficits that are mostly on the credit card.

Given these facts, would the member not agree that it would be easier to go to his provincial government, which is NDP in British Columbia, to work toward a day care system that is modelled after the system in Quebec or in any other province? They could use that as a basis for getting started, rather than using a one-size-fits-all “Ottawa knows best” day care solution that will see little to no flexibility for shift workers or students, and will not have the ability to reach people to a large extent in rural communities.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, first off, the member is citing an area where the Conservatives are very contradictory. The Conservatives say they support our public health care system, which is also in provincial jurisdiction, and universal health care, resulting from the work of Tommy Douglas and the NDP, is something that all Canadians accept. There is massive support across the country; it is our proudest institution. Putting into place universal access to child care and early childhood education has the same fundamental benefits. Yes, it has to be negotiated with the provinces. There needs to be standards and the funding needs to come from the federal government.

That brings me to his second point about structural deficits. The Conservatives, over their decade, left \$250 billion in overseas tax havens. The Liberals have done, in their half-decade or more, about half of that. We therefore see in both parties a refusal to make the

ultrarich and profitable corporations pay their fair share. If we have deficits in this country, it is because we have had poor financial managers, whether they were Conservative or Liberal.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech.

I was pleased to hear him talk about our two counties because that is what the Bloc Québécois has been saying for a long time now, since our party was created.

That being said, I was surprised to hear him describe the post-World War I and post-World War II experience in a positive light. Ottawa took that opportunity to create taxes and resume taxation, which was supposed to be left to the provinces. That seems similar to what we are experiencing right now and it shows Ottawa's tendency to take over more and more powers every time there is a crisis. The federal government is launching a gluttonous operation to centralize power, just as we saw following the Patriotes' rebellion and the 1980 and 1995 referendums.

In the budget, the federal government infringes on the provinces' jurisdictions and is making funding cuts so that it does not have to increase health transfers. That means that the provincial governments' jurisdictions are getting smaller and smaller, and there provinces are now being reduced to mere administrators. That problem could have been remedied had the House adopted the Bloc Québécois's amendment to the amendment, which sought to increase health transfers.

The member voted in favour of our amendment to the amendment, and I thank him for that. Why did most of his colleagues, including his leader, vote against our amendment to the amendment?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the question is whether the Liberals are willing to go after tax havens and bring in a wealth tax. As everyone knows, the federal government has enormous power. We should be taking money from the ultra rich and the big corporations that are making huge profits, and putting it towards improving people's lives across the country. This needs to be done through negotiations with Quebec and the provinces.

Take the health care system for example. It is thanks to the NDP that we have universal health care in this country. However, it must be funded with—

The Deputy Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the member but we need to move on to another question.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

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[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that in this budget the Liberals made clear they would not tax the super-rich. We know that a few years ago when allegations were raised about KPMG shell companies and offshore tax fraud and tax havens, the Liberals not only shut down the investigation, but brought in one of the top KPMG people to handle Liberal finances. I guess those who run offshore shell companies for the uber-rich are probably great at handling Liberal finances. There are hundreds of millions of dollars hiding in offshore tax havens while working Canadians follow the rules and pay their fair share every day.

I would ask my hon. colleague about the efforts that are needed to force the Liberal government to reopen the KPMG investigation. We need to start naming the names of people who set up these shell companies and of the uber rich who are hiding their money and our taxes in these offshore havens.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Timmins—James Bay always stands on the side of regular families, whether they are in Timmins—James Bay or across the country.

He pointed out two things. The first is the massive amount of money that the government is ready to ensure can be kept by the ultrarich and profitable corporations. They can take it overseas with impunity. In fact, the Liberals have signed multiple tax treaties with overseas tax havens, which give companies and individuals the ability to take the money offshore. For the second thing, I have good news for the member. The NDP forced a vote at the finance committee, and a study on KPMG and tax havens will be starting this afternoon.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, if he can, to clarify the NDP position on the study into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, which recommended the shutting down of man camps. In last night's late debate, we noted that the spread of COVID through Alberta is a crisis. The hot spot is the oil sands region, and there is a continuation of construction at places like Site C and TMX, which I know the hon. member opposes, although I am not sure about his leader.

Can the hon. member clarify what the hon. member for Burnaby South meant when he ducked a question on this last night and did not directly answer the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith? He was asked whether he would shut down the man camps.

• (1045)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot there for a 30-second question.

No, I did not get a question last night, so the member is unfortunately mistaken. She is also mistaken about TMX. I visited the TMX site. The member for Burnaby South and the NDP caucus have pushed hard on this, as the member knows. That is why we got the initial PBO study, and the revision of the initial study, on TMX and the escalating costs.

The reality is that TMX is not in the national interest. The Liberal government wants to pour more than \$18.5 billion into Trans Mountain. We need to invest that money in clean energy and in the

just transition. We need to do that as country if we are to really combat climate change.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to virtually participate in today's debate on the budget implementation act, as this is an important piece of legislation, which I believe we need to pass swiftly in order to deliver much-needed support to my constituents in Scarborough Centre.

Budget 2021 is an important and transformative plan, and Bill C-30 begins the process of putting this vision into action. It is a vision that recognizes where we are today, which is not yet through a pandemic that is still causing real challenges for many. It also recognizes the need to be ready for a post-pandemic Canada and begin laying the foundation for an economic recovery that would ensure no one in our country is left behind.

In Scarborough Centre, we are in the grip of the third wave. Most of our community is a designated COVID hot spot. Residents are eager to be vaccinated, and with more and more vaccines flowing into Canada every week, thanks to the diligent work of the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, vaccination rates are steadily rising. Vaccinations are a team Canada effort, and I am proud of how the federal and provincial governments are working together. I am especially proud of the hard work being done by local health authorities and our frontline health workers.

It is clear to me that there is still the need to support small businesses and individual Canadians through this pandemic. My community is one of small businesses. If one drives along Lawrence Avenue East from Victoria Park to Bellamy, they will not see any national chains. They will see countless family-owned and family-run restaurants, convenience stores and small groceries. These businesses are struggling and they still need our help.

Budget 2021 answers that call. We will extend the Canada emergency wage subsidy and the Canada emergency rent subsidy and lockdown support until September 25, allowing businesses to keep staff on payroll and pay the rent as the pandemic curtails revenues. We will also improve the Canada small business financing program designed for small and medium-sized businesses by expanding loan eligibility, increasing loan maximums and expanding program eligibility.

The budget also continues important support for individuals and families by providing up to 12 additional weeks of Canada recovery benefit support and expanding availability until September 25. We are committing to maintaining flexible access to employment insurance benefits for another year and extending the EI sickness benefit from 15 to 26 weeks.

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Since the beginning of this pandemic more than a year ago, our government has been firm in its commitment to all Canadians. We will be there support them for as long as it takes. At the same time, budget 2021 looks ahead to a post-pandemic Canada and to laying the foundation for Canada to build back stronger, with a recovery that all Canadians can be a part of.

This pandemic has not impacted everyone equally. While I have been privileged to be able to work from home, many of my constituents cannot. Those with essential jobs, or jobs that cannot be done remotely, have to keep going into work. They stock our grocery shelves and cook our take-out meals. They sort and deliver our online orders. They expose themselves to greater risk, both in their workplaces and during their commutes. They are lower income and often from racialized communities. COVID has hit these communities harder.

The pandemic has also had a greater impact on women. Last summer, at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, we studied the impact of the pandemic on women. We heard how the pandemic has led to women taking on more caregiving responsibilities within the household, especially in intergenerational households, both for children now doing virtual learning, as well as older parents needing care.

One of the key messages we heard was the importance of access to quality and affordable early learning and child care as part of any post-COVID recovery. As the first wave of the pandemic receded last summer and people began to return to work, we saw that women who had lost their jobs were not returning to work at nearly the same rate men were. One of the reasons is access to child care, and not all families can even afford child care when it is available.

• (1050)

This is not just a social issue; it is also an economic issue. If our economy is going to return to previous levels and grow, we need both men and women to be able to choose to participate in the workforce. A lack of access to child care is a major barrier to labour market access for some Black, indigenous, racialized and newcomer women.

The words of Armine Yalnizyan, an economist and the Atkinson fellow on the future of workers, really resonated with me. She said:

...there will be no recovery without a she-covery and no she-covery without child care. Let me be really clear. If we don't do this, we are actually voting to move towards economic depression—and not a recession but a prolonged contraction of GDP—by policy design.

Our budget's plan for early learning and child care is not just innovative social policy. It is a necessity for our post-pandemic economic recovery. When women can choose to participate fully in the workforce, it is easier for businesses to access the labour and talent they need to grow their business.

When I was a mother of young children, as my husband and I were just beginning our lives here in Canada, we could not afford quality child care. I had no choice but to stay home and put off entering the workforce and beginning my career in Canada. I cherish the time I got to spend with my boys in their early years, but I want women today to be able to have the choice to make the decision that is best for them. It is their choice, and I support them whatever

it is, but I want them to have a choice. This is a policy whose time has come.

We must also recognize the impact this pandemic has had on seniors. My riding is home to many long-term care homes, which I always enjoyed visiting before the pandemic. It has been painful to see how they have suffered over the past year. Budget 2021 proposes to invest \$3 billion, working with the provinces to develop national standards for long-term care, and improve the safety and quality of life for seniors in care.

I was recently able to announce over one million dollars in joint federal-provincial funding to help two long-term care homes in my riding to improve their air quality and ventilation systems. This is vitally important funding that will keep seniors safer and healthier, as well as the hard-working staff. I am so glad to see the federal and provincial governments working on this. This is what we owe our seniors, and I hope this co-operation can continue to work to develop national standards.

Since we took office in 2015, 25% fewer seniors are living in poverty. With budget 2021, we are building on that progress by increasing OAS by 10% for seniors age 75 and over, which will help lift even more seniors out of poverty.

We are also providing needed assistance for our youth, who have seen major disruptions to learning during this pandemic. With budget 2021, we are extending the waiver of interest accrual on Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans until March 31, 2023. We will also double Canada student grants and create new training and work opportunities for young Canadians, so they gain valuable skills and experience in the workforce. Our youth are our future. We must support them and set them up with the tools and support they need to succeed.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to see these important initiatives passed, so our constituents have the support they need to make it through this pandemic and build back stronger than before.

• (1055)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder what the hon. member's view is with respect to comments made by former deputy minister of finance David Dodge, of the Chrétien era, who is also the former governor of the Bank of Canada. He has been saying the budget does not focus on growth, is not a reasonably prudent fiscal plan and does not invest in growing Canada's economic policy. Does she agree with the former governor and deputy minister's comments? If she does not, why not?

Government Orders

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, budget 2021 aims to finish the fight against COVID-19 and provide much-needed support to businesses and families finding it difficult to make ends meet. We are investing in them, but at the same time we are also laying the foundation for the post-pandemic recovery. We are investing in our seniors, child care and our youth, so we can lay the foundation for the economic recovery post-pandemic.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before the pandemic, Quebec's debt to GDP ratio was 31.2%. Now it is 51.2% and will drop slightly to 49.2%. That is pretty worrisome, especially since that projection leaves little flexibility for the future.

What does my colleague think about the lack of flexibility this budget gives us in case of future crises?

[*English*]

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, I am proud of our government, which is working with provincial governments to make sure we end this fight against the pandemic. Over the last year, we have continued to work with provinces and territories. We have made sure we provide the support they need to fight this pandemic. That support has ranged from PPE and vaccinations to investing in the safe restart agreement, where billions of dollars have been provided to the provinces to end this fight against the pandemic and lay the foundation for the economic recovery we all need beyond this pandemic. We will continue working with the provinces to make sure we lay the foundation for an economic—

The Deputy Speaker: We will continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during the budget speech, the Liberals announced a symbolic luxury tax with a small tax on the purchase of a yacht costing over \$250,000 or a private plane costing more than \$100,000, which might gain 1¢ on the dollar of the revenue that would come from a tax of 1% on the wealth of Canadians with over \$20 million. They did not even include it in the budget implementation bill we are now debating.

I wonder if the member for Scarborough Centre can tell us what credibility the Liberal government could possibly have on any notion of tax fairness when we have seen billionaires increase their wealth by \$78 billion during this pandemic alone.

• (1100)

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, we have seen that this pandemic has not affected all Canadians in the same way. Minority communities, racialized communities and indigenous communities have been hit hard. I have seen, in my own riding of Scarborough Centre, that communities with workers in low-paying jobs have been affected, and we have continued to invest in those Canadians.

Since we came into power in 2015, we raised taxes on the top 1% to lower taxes for the middle class. The NDP voted against that. We invested in the Canada child benefit, which has lifted over a million kids out of poverty. We will continue investing into our middle class to make sure we set a pathway for economic recovery.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-30, which would implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021.

At the outset, it bears recognizing that budget 2021 is unlike most budgets tabled in the House throughout Canada's short but storied history. Much has been written about the length of the budget, and, yes, it is the longest budget in our history. It is also the first federal budget in Canadian history to be tabled by a woman finance minister, a glass ceiling long overdue for shattering, and it does come with over two years past since the previous budget, budget 2019.

Budget 2021 is truly one of a kind, one might say unprecedented, much like these last two years have been, as Canadians persevere through the worst global pandemic health crisis in recent memory. This unique budget responds to these unique times, the serious challenges created and exacerbated by COVID-19. It lays the foundation for a more prosperous future, a more inclusive future, a greener future and a future that we can be proud to pass on to our kids and grandkids, knowing that we seized the moment and emerged from this dark period in our history with a bold vision for a better Canada and the courage to act on it.

While it is prudent for the government to begin charting our path out of this pandemic, that is not to say that it is yet behind us, far from it. In fact, today, here in Nova Scotia, we are under lockdown. Our schools and shops have moved online, and strict gathering restrictions are in effect; this, as the third wave and its more dangerous, more contagious variants are hammering Nova Scotia with its highest daily case rates of COVID-19 since the start of this pandemic. It is a reminder to all of us how quickly things can change, even with leadership that listens to and respects the expert advice of public health officials.

Not long ago, Nova Scotia was the envy of Canada, with low cases and no community transmission. All it took was one thoughtless group of interprovincial travellers and, just like that, COVID-19 began to spread across our province like wildfire.

We are in a race. It is variants versus vaccines.

That is why on the morning of my birthday, as soon as I became eligible, I signed up for the first vaccine I could, the AstraZeneca. Yesterday, I got my first jab at Boyd's Pharmasave, a new pharmacy in north end Halifax, opened by Greg Richard and celebrated for its inclusive approach to pharmacy, particularly for the LGBTQ2+ people. I thank Greg.

Getting vaccinated and defeating COVID-19 are the first steps to the economic recovery outlined in this budget. The sooner everyone is vaccinated; the sooner life returns to something more like normal, the sooner we are safe, the sooner we can hug our loved ones, the sooner our businesses can open up again and the sooner we can all go back to work.

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As our vaccine rollout continues on schedule, putting Canada consistently in the top three of the G20 for vaccines administered by population, budget 2021 would extend our substantial and effective COVID-19 financial aid programs to Canadians and to the businesses at which they work and upon which they rely.

A year ago, when COVID-19 ground Canada to a sudden halt, the impact on our daily lives and our local economies was immediate. Our government sprang into action. From day one, we promised we would be there for Canadians, and that is exactly what we have done.

Here are the numbers to prove it: nine million Canadians received the Canada emergency response benefit, putting food on the table for out-of-work families; \$2 billion for businesses and non-profits through the emergency rent subsidy; 4.4 million Canadian jobs protected through the emergency wage subsidy; and \$8 out of every \$10 in financial aid to Canadians through this pandemic has come via our federal government.

We promised we would be there for Canadians for as long as it takes, and this budget keeps that promise.

First, the budget will extend flexible access to EI benefits for one more year until the fall of 2022. These changes have made it easier for Canadians to qualify for higher benefits sooner. Next, we will be extending the Canada recovery benefit until September 25 to cover Canadians who do not qualify EI, like self-employed and gig workers. The budget also includes new measures for low-income workers, a significant \$8.9-billion investment to expand the Canada workers benefit for one million Canadians, lifting one hundred thousand people out of poverty. Other parties have talked about it, but we are the ones doing it. This budget will introduce a \$15-an-hour federal minimal wage.

For businesses being asked to lockdown to help stop the spread, like those in my riding today, the budget will extend the Canada emergency rent subsidy to the end of September. For businesses that have seen a drop in revenue because of COVID-19, the budget will also extend the Canada emergency wage subsidy to the end of September. We are going further, introducing a brand new program we are calling the Canada hiring benefit. For businesses experiencing a decline in revenues, this subsidy will make it easier for businesses to hire back laid-off workers or to bring on new ones.

All told, these investments are our plan to support Canadians in regaining the one million jobs lost to the pandemic. We have done it before, and we will do it again.

- (1105)

The pandemic has exposed an urgent need for national action on child care. From the day our finance minister assumed that office, she has made it clear that fighting the so-called “she-cession” is a priority of our feminist government. We cannot allow the legacy of this pandemic to be the scaling back of all the hard-fought advances that women have made in workforce.

That is why budget 2021 makes a generational investment to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. Our plan aims to slash fees for parents with children in regulated child care by half on average by 2022, with the goal of reaching \$10 per day

child care on average by 2026. This is a necessary investment, one that is a long time coming. While other parties have talked about doing it, we are the ones actually doing it, putting \$30 billion on the table to finally get this done for Canadian families.

I come to the House from a long career in city planning in the public, private and academic sectors, including in my hometown of Halifax, the riding I am now honoured to represent as a member of Parliament. That career showed me first-hand and up close how vitally important housing was to a community. Without access to housing that is safe, secure, dignified and at a price people can afford, every other goal a person has in life becomes secondary.

I made the jump into politics in 2015, and became the first city planner elected to this place, because I believed the federal government needed to do more to support the communities Canadians called home, to help undo the decade of neglect by the previous government when it came to community investment, including in affordable housing.

We spared no time getting to work, and today Canadians have a federal government that is finally making the necessary investments in housing. The national housing strategy, released in 2017, has already delivered \$25 billion in housing projects, and remains on track to reach \$70 billion by 2027-28.

At home in Halifax, as our population rapidly grows, so does the need for more affordable housing. I recently announced the new Canada-Nova Scotia targeted housing benefit, which provides \$200 a month to qualifying, low-income, vulnerable individuals to help pay for housing.

To help increase housing supply, our federal government has made major investments in Halifax so far this year, including \$8.6 million under the rapid housing initiative to create 52 units in Halifax via three projects in partnership with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, the North End Community Health Centre and Adsum for Women and Children.

Because of the success of the rapid housing initiative which, as its title suggests, invests in projects that can create affordable housing quickly, budget 2021 proposes a \$1.5 billion top-up to this program. This funding will create up to 4,500 permanent, affordable homes on top of the 4,700 we already have built under this initiative, all within 12 months.

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This budget recognizes that building an equitable Canada requires targeted investments that support marginalized communities. To continue down the path of reconciliation, this budget invests \$18 billion in indigenous communities, including another \$6 billion for infrastructure and \$2.2 billion to end the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls once and for all.

To fight systemic racism and empower under-represented communities, the budget makes a number of substantial investments, including \$200 million toward the Black-led philanthropic endowment fund to support Black-led charities and organizations serving youth; new funding to combat hate and racism during COVID-19, particularly against Asian Canadians; and enhancing the communities at risk security infrastructure program to protect communities at risk of hate-motivated crimes.

For our seniors, we are building on our progress made; 25% fewer seniors live in poverty than when we took office in 2015. Budget 2021 goes even further by increasing old age security by 10% for seniors aged 75 and older. Today, our investments in senior benefits are over double our expenditure in the Canada child benefit. By 2026, our investments in seniors will surpass the total expenditure of the Canada health transfer and equalization payments combined.

This is a historic budget. Certainly, its size makes it difficult to speak to all the important investments it proposes. In short, this is the budget that will lead Canada out of the pandemic, chart our economic recovery and build a brighter tomorrow. I hope all members in the House will join me in voting in favour.

• (1110)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one thing the parliamentary secretary missed was the investments in growth.

Both Robert Asselin, the former adviser to Mr. Morneau, the previous finance minister, and David Dodge said that the budget had no answers for investment and growth.

I am worried about the brain drain in Oshawa. We have Ontario Tech, and to get out of this pandemic, we need to make investments in the technological jobs of the future. A study by Brock University basically said that in 2018, 65% of engineers, technological engineers, software engineers, left the country as soon as they graduated.

Could the parliamentary secretary point out where the investments in growth are in this budget to keep our youngest and brightest in our country?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, of course, our youth are so terribly important, and we are focused on them through this pandemic. Education is the smartest investment that anyone can make, and our government is absolutely committed to make life more affordable for students. We have made a number of investments in students, including the way student loans are orchestrated. The budget implementation act would also extend the waiver of interest on student loans.

Beyond that, and more to the member's question, this budget has investments in community infrastructure and the infrastructure of science and innovation. It has investments of \$250 million in the aerospace technology and \$750 million for a job fund.

The budget is absolutely focused on growth and emergence from this pandemic in a way that is equitable and green for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his speech. He concluded his speech by talking about investments for seniors. I really felt as though he was reaching out to me, ready for my question.

Does his government think that only seniors who are 75 and over experience financial insecurity?

Has the government done the math to see how much it would cost to extend that to everyone aged 65 and over, which should be the case?

[*English*]

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, seniors are front of mind for this government. In fact, as my hon. colleague knows, this government created a ministry for seniors to specifically look after the health and fortune of them.

A number of the investments we have made in seniors over the past several years have dramatically increased the amount of the federal budget that goes to seniors. In fact, by 2026-27, as much as \$81 billion of the federal budget will be directed toward seniors. As I said in my speech, that is more than the combined health transfer and equalization payments. Today, in fact, our investment in seniors is greater than that of the Canada child benefit.

We will continue to invest in seniors in a way that rewards them and thanks them appropriately for creating the world we live in today.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know this budget will do nothing to end fossil fuel subsidies. We see the federal government giving billions of dollars every year to companies like Royal Dutch Shell and Imperial Oil.

We know that Canada's richest Canadians increased their wealth by \$78 billion this year, yet there is no meaningful action on a wealth tax.

I think my hon. colleague and the Liberals will vote against the NDP motion to provide dental care to six and a half million Canadians who do not have any coverage today, which would cost \$1.5 billion per year as estimated by the parliamentary budget officer. Why does the member not support allocating \$1.5 billion so Canadians can have access to this basic health need, when there are tens of billions of dollars of available funds that his government refuses to tax?

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• (1115)

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his dedication to Canadians.

Clearly, especially in the context of the pandemic, there is a long list of things that we would all love to do right away. We have had to make some tough decisions on what gets funded and still maintain what has just been reaffirmed as Canada's AAA bond rating. Our ability to make those investments does come through some changes, as the member mentioned, in tax fairness.

I want to take this opportunity to touch on the fact that fighting tax evaders in Canada and abroad is a priority for this government. Since 2015, we have invested over \$1 billion in the CRA's ability to crack down on complex tax schemes, in increased collaboration with international partners and in ultimately bringing offenders to justice. Changes like that will increase the coffers and allow us to check off more of those things on that long list of very meritorious programs that we need to initiate for Canadians.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to sit in this virtual Parliament and address the 2021 budget, a budget which unfortunately saw this pandemic as an opportunity to reimagine the economy, rather than something from which Canadians desperately need to recover. This is obviously, as the Liberals say, an election budget. It is an inflation plan. It is an inflation tax. It is not a recovery plan and it is a huge credit card bill.

If we can contrast, historically in Canada governments used to promote jobs and jobs of the future. Instead, the Liberals have taken this opportunity to promote credit and credit cards. The Prime Minister was even so bold to say he was going to go into debt so Canadians do not have to. Imagine that, we have a Prime Minister who in his private life before politics never did have a job that supported his lifestyle. When the vacations came, it was dad's credit card, along with the ski vacations and the cars. There was always somebody else paying the bill.

This might explain why the Liberals are now practising a certain type of economics. They call it modern monetary theory. In other words, the Liberals have no plan ever to balance the budget. What they are leaving for Canadians and future governments is debt forever. Some people think this is the highest intergenerational theft in the history of Canada. He is leaving \$1.4 trillion to future generations, a burden on our kids and grandkids.

The amount is huge. The Prime Minister is printing \$3 billion a week to service his agenda. Instead of leaving a better economy to our kids, the Prime Minister, with his action, is destroying their opportunities for a better future.

Here in Oshawa, we have a huge investment in the jobs of the future. We are a university town. Ontario Tech has made huge investments in educating the kids of the future for the jobs of the future, which will help us get out of this pandemic.

Sadly, in 2018, Brock University did a study with the University of Toronto and the Munk School of Global Affairs. It was entitled "Reversing the Brain Drain: Where is Canadian STEM Talent Going?" This was in 2018, before the pandemic. It found that 65% of Canadian software engineers are leaving Canada right after they get their education here, plus 30% of other STEM students are leaving

Canada. In other words, Canada is making investments to educate kids for the jobs of the future, but because of the government's lack of opportunities for kids to stay in this country, they unfortunately are leaving and they are leaving in accelerated numbers.

The next phase of global growth and recovery is going to be centred on technology. As the Liberals praise themselves that they are building back better, I would say that they are building back broken. This budget, as I just asked the parliamentary secretary, has no incentive for young people to stay.

As other countries promote growth, Canada stalls with this budget. My colleagues have spoken about Robert Asselin and David Dodge saying that this budget has no answer for investment in growth. We see the United States, and also China, India, Italy, the United Kingdom and Japan, that are all going to be winning the future technological race with our own Canadian students. Our youth is our most important investment and most important resource. We need to do things to keep them in this country.

I have been working with youth locally and one of the things that they told me is mental health issues are huge and very important in this global pandemic. The provinces asked the Prime Minister for a very simple investment. It was \$4 billion and during this horrible pandemic, what did he say to the provinces? He said to wait for it, they will do it later.

In my member's statement last week, I actually addressed the need for all Canadians, now more than ever, to have improved access to mental health.

• (1120)

There are organizations in Oshawa. If members can see behind me, the Simcoe Street United Church houses The Back Door Mission. There is also an organization called The Refuge that really focuses on street youth and youth with mental health issues. However, they cannot do it alone. They need the support of the federal government.

My colleague from Cariboo—Prince George has been pushing a 988 suicide crisis line in order to help Canadian—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. I cannot recall if at the front end of his remarks he indicated his intention to share his time. I wonder if the hon. member could indicate so to the Chair.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska.

To finish off my thought on the mental health issue, it matters. The pandemic has had a horrible effect with these lockdowns. Fortunately, the Conservative leader has identified the importance of improving access to mental health in our recovery plan.

Some of my colleagues have quite rightly said that this budget fails to provide security for all seniors. I got a call from Maurice, a senior in my community, who does not fit in the Liberal agenda of supporting a two-tiered senior demographic. My mom, who is 93, is very pleased, but, unfortunately, this budget leaves many seniors behind. What we are seeing in this budget is the politics of division practised by the Liberal government that is putting one group of seniors against another. This goes against everything that Canadians have stood for in the past as far as fairness to all Canadians when we put budgets forward.

When we talk about youth in Canada and how to get them to want to stay in our country, raise their families and have a career here, we have to look at their housing opportunities. It has been the Canadian dream to own a home, to invest and stay in this country, but this budget has absolutely nothing to help young people own a home who want to. It addresses social housing, but if we listen to students and young people, they do not want social housing. They want the opportunity to live the Canadian dream. Again, unfortunately, in this budget, we are not seeing that.

I can say there is one thing about housing in the budget that is a good idea, which is creating the beneficial ownership registry. I am supportive of that. I think it is a good idea, but the 1% on foreign owners is just going to be the cost of doing business. The government has to look at this again because we have to make sure there is a path for home ownership for young people.

This budget completely omits any emergency support for new businesses. I have talked about some of the small businesses, such as Julie and Victor at the Bulldog Pub & Grill in south Oshawa by the 401. They bought their business just before the pandemic occurred. Conservatives have been asking the government to be more flexible in its programs and we support these programs for businesses and individuals, but there is nothing in the budget for these businesses.

Then there are veterans organizations. I am wearing my 420 Wing tie today. We had the president attend a Veterans Affairs committee and report on what we could do to help veterans associations. Brian Wilkins and Mike Gimblett from Oshawa gave their input, but nothing is reflected in this budget.

We know how important it has been to support the government in its efforts to help Canadians through the most significant health and economic crisis in our lifetime. Conservatives have continuously supported these efforts and will be supportive for the number of investments and programs the budget includes for us to make it through this pandemic, but, unfortunately, there is very little to get excited about in the long term. It is just endless debt and deficits. What we desperately needed was a real recovery plan that would secure the future of all Canadians, get folks back to work and help small businesses recover. Conservatives have that plan. We have done it before and we can do it again.

● (1125)

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, the member spent a significant portion of his time decrying what he suggests is a lack of support for young Cana-

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dians. I find that hard to believe, given that there is more than \$5.7 billion in dedicated support specifically for young people in this budget, which constitutes the largest dedicated youth support package globally of any developed economy and is likely the largest dedicated youth support package in the history of any budget in Canada. The measures include reinvigorating the Canada student loan program, making it more affordable to pay those debts back; delaying the time by which students have to pay them back until they get their feet under them; reducing the cost of education through the Canada students grants program; and literally several hundred thousand job placements for young people so they can help kick-start the economic rebound on the back end of this pandemic.

My question to the hon. member is: did he simply write that speech without reading the budget at all?

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary. He is very good at the Liberal rhetoric and talking points, but he was not listening to my speech and, of course, I looked at the budget.

What I did say is that there is no investment for growth in this budget. It is not just me saying that, it is Robert Asselin, who actually was the adviser to Bill Morneau who had to leave this government because it was out of control. David Dodge said exactly the same thing.

If the member would like, I will send him a copy of “Reversing the Brain Drain: Where is Canadian STEM Talent Going?” We are actually good at educating kids in this country, but what I said to the parliamentary secretary and my colleagues is that they are leaving, and they are leaving at an accelerated rate. In my community, we need these students to stay. Sixty-five percent of software engineers are leaving. We need to have a plan to keep them here and keep our youth in Canada. That is what I was talking about, and we need it in the budget.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the question that was asked by my colleague.

The member spoke about supports for young people in his intervention. He spoke about the brain drain, about losing young people as they are leaving our country, and how desperate that situation is.

I have to say that, in Alberta, cuts to our post-secondary institutions have been devastating, and there are more young people leaving the cities of Calgary and Edmonton than anywhere else in the country. I completely agree with the member that this is a dire situation.

The NDP is proposing a plan where we would actually relieve some of that student debt, which makes it very hard for students to stay in this country, and it makes it very hard for them to start their life and contribute to our economy. We are looking at up to \$20,000 of student debt forgiveness.

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I am just wondering if the member would support the idea of reducing federal student or if he would rather that the federal government continue to make profits on the backs of students.

• (1130)

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that relieving the debt of students does not stop them from leaving.

My comment and my point in my speech is that, since this government has come to office, it has shut down numerous industries. The member is from the west and knows that the oil and gas sector is heavily technologically advanced.

However, the government is almost incentivizing Canadians to get educated here, but then they are leaving. My concern is that they are our brightest and our youngest, and we need them to come out of this pandemic but also for our country in the future. This budget does nothing to address that in order to incentivize them to stay in our country, and it is a crisis where this Liberal government, again, has dropped the ball.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our colleague from Halifax indicated that he thought this was an unprecedented budget that was going to spring into action. However, my analogy is that maybe the government started with a broken spring.

I would ask my colleague to analyze the budget, as he started to in his speech. We have supported many of the programs that have gotten Canadians this far, with the wage subsidy and rental extensions, but this is a huge spending budget, as my colleague has pointed out. About half of it may be there to help us get out of COVID, but the other half is a lot of promises that have been broken before and have had to be repeated in this budget. I wonder if my colleague could expand on that.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is correct when he mentions the word “unprecedented”. There is unprecedented spending and incompetence with respect to where the money is going.

We are supportive of the programs that are supporting Canadians and businesses to get back to work. However, as I was trying emphasize, unfortunately what the Liberals do for any problem is throw more money at it. We need legislative changes. We need ideas coming from the government.

We in the Conservative Party have ideas for a recovery plan. It would have been great if the Liberal government had used the pandemic budget as an opportunity to give hope to Canadians and let them know that we are working together for them. However, they have ignored the desires of Canadians in this budget, and it is unprecedented and unfortunate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the Liberal budget implementation bill.

As members know, this budget has been criticized by many analysts. It raised many expectations about the management of the pandemic and vaccine procurement. I will not get into that because I think everything has been said about the government's dismal failure, which has caused this third wave since the Liberal government

mismanaged the contracts it signed with the companies that are providing us with vaccines.

There were two other major issues: reopening the economy and proper management of public finances, debt and deficits. I will focus my speech on those two aspects. I have 10 minutes, but we could talk for hours about all the very troubling things in this budget.

Others before me covered this so I will not talk about the fact that the government managed to do what no one ever thought possible: create a new class of seniors. Deciding to inject money to help seniors was wishful thinking, in other words the government had good intentions, but it decided to give money only to seniors 75 and up instead of giving it to those 65 and up. Everyone fell off their chair when they heard that. It was a clumsy measure and I hope the government will rectify the situation as soon as possible. Every day, we are getting calls at our constituency offices about that announcement.

The second important element, and I will only talk about this very briefly, is the Liberal obsession with interfering in provincial jurisdictions and desire to grab powers they do not have. We need only think of their interference in health and day care, in particular the fact that they are leading people to believe they are going to establish a day care program to reopen the economy. I can tell you that in Quebec it took more than five years to create and build day cares and to train staff. They are telling us that they want to do this. First, they are interfering in a provincial matter; second, they are leading people to believe that this will help reopen the economy. It will take at least five years for this measure to begin to come to fruition. I can tell you that, in Quebec, not every family has access to a day care space.

I will come back to the main points of my message: deficits, debt and the reopening of our economy.

In 2003, those were the issues that motivated me to get into provincial politics. I am older now, I have a lot of grey hair, but, back then as a young father I was concerned about debt and the consequences it can have. The Liberals never talk about tax increases that make life increasingly expensive. Without even asking them, the government takes more money out of taxpayers' pockets to pay for all the goodies they are handing out. It is crazy.

Government Orders

One of the figures that is striking is when you add up the deficits and debt created by the Liberal government under this Prime Minister since it came to power, since 2015. In the last six years alone, the Liberals have put us \$162 billion in debt, and this is not just because of the pandemic. Keep in mind that in 2015, when Stephen Harper's Conservatives left, the deficit had been eliminated. The budget had also been balanced following the global stock market crisis. The Liberal government managed to run deficits during good economic years. These deficits have taken away our ability to deal with this pandemic without creating another gap for future generations and for today's workers who will pay more taxes. That is what will happen when interest rates go up. That will be the reality, whether the Prime Minister likes it or not. Any newly minted economist would be able to explain these basic facts to him.

What is striking is that, in six years, the Prime Minister has borrowed and added to the debt more than any prime minister in Canada since 1867. Since 1867, every Conservative and Liberal government combined borrowed a total of \$630 billion to stimulate the economy and support Canadians. In six years, the government has managed to put us further into debt.

• (1135)

This all has consequences not only for our economy, but also for our ability to deal with a potential new crisis. The further we go into debt, the less freedom we have to tackle any new challenges and support Canadians. This government's investments and expenditures are not justified. People will say that I am being partisan because I am a Conservative, but that is not it.

Allow me to talk about the Parliamentary Budget Officer, an impartial officer of Parliament. Just yesterday he presented a report explaining that the government had announced \$101.4 billion in new expenditures over the next three years as part of its economic recovery plan. He said that \$69 billion of that \$101.4 billion is the figure actually considered stimulus spending.

He then raised a red flag about the government's data. Much like the Prime Minister, the government acts as though money grows on trees, that money can be printed or that it is no big deal and the budget will balance itself. Those are the words of the Prime Minister himself. The government is telling people that we could see a 2% increase in economic growth and that this would create 334,000 new jobs in Canada. The Parliamentary Budget Officer refuted that and said that a more realistic economic growth would be 1% next year. That would create 74,000 new jobs, not 334,000.

This government talks a lot and leads people on. The Prime Minister tries to be positive, figuring that people will believe him because he is handsome, nice and well-spoken. He thinks that that should be enough. However, the numbers speak for themselves and cannot be ignored, because taxpayers will be directly affected by the inevitable tax hikes. That is the reality.

How do the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance explain this?

They say we can afford to borrow for Canadians because interest rates are low. However, if that is the case, why not just tell Canadians to go buy a house that is twice as expensive because interest rates are low? No problem, since interest rates are low. Why not get

a new car? Why should Canadians settle for a small family sedan when they could buy a Ferrari? No problem, because interest rates are low; these things will pay for themselves.

If this is good for the government, why would it not be good for the taxpayers?

It is for the simple reason that fathers and mothers, workers and youth who believe in a better future know that this is hard-earned money. They know this because when they take the time to look at their pay slips, they see the line showing just how much money they are sending to the government. They also remember the government expense scandal. I do not want to harp on the WE Charity scandal, with the billion dollars sent to friends who had helped the Prime Minister's family, but those are the facts.

The government has to lead by example, and it starts at the top. This government, with its free-spending Prime Minister, is sending the wrong message. It is saying that work is not important, that people should not bother saving, that money grows on trees and that, unfortunately, when calls for help come in, we might not be able to answer them because the country is up to its eyeballs in debt. The government will just say it is time to print more money, and that will drive up inflation.

In conclusion, I think this is a bad budget. It does not set the stage for good economic recovery, and it will mortgage our children's and grandchildren's future. I cannot accept that.

• (1140)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all day the Conservatives have been critical of the amount of spending in this budget, the budget implementation act, and what we are providing for Canadians. However, I have yet to hear a Conservative talk about what they would remove from this budget in order to bring spending down. That is the basic way governments budget. If they think they are budgeting too much, which the Conservatives believe, they start to look for areas where they can decrease. Instead, as we heard from the previous speaker, all we are hearing about is where funding is missing.

Can the member tell us where he would start cutting in the budget and who he would take the money from? Would he take it from seniors? Would he take it from younger people? Would he take it from the supports for businesses? I would like him to explain where he would remove money.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Mr. Speaker, nobody ever heard a Liberal spare a thought for future generations. Nobody ever heard a Liberal, be it the finance minister, the Prime Minister or even my colleague who just asked the question, express any concern about how this growing deficit might affect future generations. Over the past six years, the deficit has been higher than it was under any Canadian prime minister since 1867. The Liberals have never shown that they care about our children and grandchildren even the tiniest bit. It is unbelievable.

If they had the guts, they would table a plan to balance the budget. They would tell people that money does not grow on trees. We would help them figure out the best ways to support Canadians. Every political party has been willing to help the government whenever necessary, especially by identifying problems with their hastily passed measures, which allowed fraudsters to take advantage of the system. The fact is, Canadians are the ones who will end up paying.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Richmond—Arthabaska for his speech. I completely agree with his criticism of federal centralization.

However, I want to ask him a very specific question. In 2009, the Conservatives were in power and they set up the Canadian securities transition office, a Toronto-based single securities commission that served as a pan-Canadian securities regulator.

The current government is taking up that project. At the time, the Conservatives pushed hard for that. What is their position on it now?

• (1145)

Mr. Alain Rayes: Mr. Speaker, that is a very relevant question. I thank my colleague for it, but I do not have an answer for him. I am not an expert in that area and so I do not want to get into it.

What I would like to say is that there is an obvious difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Liberals are a centralizing government. A Conservative government respects provincial jurisdictions, works in partnership with the provinces and does not criticize provincial premiers from other parties, as the current Prime Minister does, which is causing conflict.

There is no doubt that our leader and a future Conservative government will focus on working with the provinces to find solutions to the country's problems. If those problems fall under provincial jurisdiction, then our government will work with the provinces so that they can take the necessary measures with the resources they need. As we announced, the provinces need to be given more money for health care, with no strings attached, so that they can do their job. They have the expertise to do so.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest the part of my colleague's speech when he talked about the concern many workers have when they look at their pay stubs and the very real struggles many are going through.

Part of the budget implementation act sets a federal minimum wage at \$15 an hour. This is something I ran on all the way back in 2015, and I can remember the Liberals openly criticizing it then, so it is very interesting to see it in this act six years later.

Does the member support the \$15 minimum wage for federal workers? Does he think it is adequate in the year 2021? Does he have any concerns that it would take another six months for it to actually be implemented?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes: Mr. Speaker, to be clear, this is for federal employees. It is up to provincial governments to determine the minimum wage in each province.

The idea is to make sure that workers earn a decent wage. To do that, we need to support our small and medium-sized businesses, we need to support the economic recovery, we need to make sure the right conditions are in place so that all workers can earn as much as possible. This will give them a chance to raise a family, right here in Canada, and fulfill their dreams. That is what everyone wants. However, going into debt, as so many people are doing right now, is not the way to go about it.

We Conservatives believe in empowering individuals. That is our ultimate goal. We want to help businesses create good jobs and encourage investment in this country to increase our collective wealth. This will automatically result in the best possible wages for all workers, whether they are unionized or not. I think we should all be focusing on ensuring the best possible wages for all employees.

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Kingston and the Islands.

I have been listening with great interest to my colleagues' speeches on Bill C-30, and I am pleased to have a turn to speak to this important legislation.

Much like budget 2021, this bill focuses on finishing the fight against COVID-19, healing the financial, social, emotional and physical wounds caused by the pandemic, and creating more jobs and prosperity for Canadians across the country. The purpose of Bill C-30 is to help Canada build back better and become a fairer and more equitable country.

We need to rebuild, but not haphazardly. We need to make sure that we address the gaps that the pandemic has exposed and even exacerbated. As we rebuild, we must protect the most vulnerable.

Government Orders

[English]

When I mention vulnerable people, I am thinking, for example, of the elderly. The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on our seniors. Since day one, I have received calls from seniors in my riding of Alfred-Pellan. They were worried about the situation and all the measures that were being implemented to ensure our communities' safety. They were anxious about not seeing their families and their friends. They were preoccupied about the impacts that the situation would have on their finances.

That is why, building back better also means ensuring that we protect the health and well-being of seniors in our communities. After a life of hard work, they deserve a safe and dignified retirement without financial worries. This question must be asked: What can be done to help them? More and more of them are living longer than before, and many of them rely on their monthly old age security benefits.

It is in that spirit that our government has reduced the age of eligibility for old age security from 67 to 65. We made sure that seniors, including those who are more vulnerable, can live their retirement in dignity. With Bill C-30, we are implementing another of our government's commitments, which is to increase the amount of benefits for seniors aged 75 and over.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Seniors become more vulnerable with age, especially when it comes to their financial situation. Indeed, Canadians are living longer and longer, and many of them rely on old age security.

That is why Bill C-30 proposes to amend the Old Age Security Act to increase these monthly payments by 10% for seniors aged 75 or over. By giving an increase to those 75 or older, we are providing targeted support. In practical terms, this would give seniors in this group greater financial security at a time in their lives when they face increased care expenses and a greater risk of running out of savings. The increase will be implemented in July of next year.

In the meantime, to address immediate needs, the 2021 budget also proposes to provide a one-time payment of \$500 in August of this year to old age security pensioners who will be 75 or older in June 2022. The targeted increase to old age security will really improve the lives of people who deserve more support, especially single seniors who are struggling to make ends meet, like Solange, Antoinette and Leonardo, who live in my riding.

This would increase benefits for about 3.3 million seniors across the country. For those receiving the full benefit, it would mean an additional \$766 in annual benefits in the first year, which would be indexed to inflation thereafter. I am thinking of Jeannine, who lives in my riding. She lives alone, and this money would help her buy all the food she needs instead of going without meals to pay her rent.

I believe that our society has a duty to do more to support seniors. That was true before the pandemic and will still be true afterward. COVID-19 has laid bare society's vulnerabilities and inequalities in Canada and around the world.

Seniors have felt this on a financial level. Many have run into economic hardship as they took on extra costs to stay safe. They have also faced social challenges. Many seniors in the Alfred-Pellan community and across the country spent the past year isolated from their family and friends. For far too many of them, COVID-19 has been tragic. I am thinking particularly of those living in long-term care facilities. They have been the overwhelming casualties of the pandemic in Canada.

In fact, another thing the pandemic exposed is the systemic problems that affect long-term care facilities across the country. The situation in these institutions was such that the Canadian Armed Forces were deployed to lend a hand to the teams on site. My riding was not spared, and I had the opportunity to meet the soldiers deployed to the long-term care centres in Laval. I am grateful for their work.

The pandemic has laid bare a rather dire situation, which is why I am so pleased to see that budget 2021 proposes to provide \$3 billion over five years to support the provinces and territories in ensuring standards for long-term care are applied and permanent changes are made when necessary.

I know that many people are worried about this measure, but I want to assure those who are wary that our government will work with the provinces and territories and respect their jurisdiction over health care. We must protect seniors and improve their quality of life, no matter where in the country they live. This is true for long-term care facilities, which is why this investment is so important.

• (1155)

[English]

It is also true for seniors who still live at home. That is why budget 2021 proposes to launch the age well at home initiative to help Canadians age in dignity. With this investment, community organizations could provide practical support to low-income and otherwise vulnerable seniors. For example, the program would support initiatives to pair seniors with volunteers who would help them prepare meals, do housekeeping, run errands, do odd jobs around the house or even help them get outside their home.

This kind of support is what Miguel and Jane from my riding need to allow them to stay in their home. Their kids help, but additional support is much needed. This help is particularly useful to elderly people with no children to look after them, like Anne and John.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all Canadians and the economic impacts of the situation are undeniable. However, the consequences have not been the same for everyone. Our government's recovery plan puts people first, but focuses on the groups that have been most affected by the situation.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Canadians have been combatting COVID-19 for over a year now. We are all tired, but we cannot give up. Now is the time to finish the fight against COVID-19, get back on our feet and secure the recovery by protecting the most vulnerable. This is certainly true for seniors, who deserve to live out their retirement in dignity.

I therefore support Bill C-30 and urge all members to do the same.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that has been very puzzling to me in terms of the government's fiscal approach. As we know, the Minister of Finance, and of course we are very proud to have the first female minister table a budget, is new to this portfolio. We were well into one year of the pandemic when she assumed the role. At that time she had a mandate letter from the Prime Minister. This mandate letter said for her to create no new programs and to create fiscal guardrails, so what we have is a budget that completely defies the mandate letter from the Prime Minister.

Could my colleague explain to me if the Liberal mandate letters to the ministers from the Prime Minister actually mean nothing?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for her question.

The mandate letter clearly sets out what the minister must do as part of her job. The federal government has always been there for seniors. This instruction was always part of her mandate letter.

Since taking power, we have made improvements for seniors. We reduced the age of eligibility for old age security from 67 to 65. We increased the guaranteed income supplement, and we also exempted those making less than \$5,000 from any clawback of the guaranteed income supplement.

Jeannine, a woman in my riding—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

• (1200)

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the member for Alfred-Pellan said that the pandemic has exposed the inequalities that exist. He gave the example of one of his elderly constituents, who is pleased that she can buy all the food she needs.

I have received dozens of calls from seniors in my riding who are forced to rely on food banks. They are outraged that the Liberal government is claiming to help seniors by giving money to food banks. In so doing, the government is admitting that people are unable to feed themselves with the money they have. At the same time, it is creating two classes of seniors by refusing to help those aged 65 to 74.

How can the member be proud of a budget that creates inequality?

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague across the aisle for her question.

I do not agree at all with her conclusion.

Earlier, I gave the example of Jeannine, a 79-year-old woman in my riding. She was doing well until her husband died and she began receiving only one pension. The increase we are proposing will make a difference in her life, so she can buy all the food she needs instead of skipping meals to pay the rent.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the people of Eabametoong have now gone over 20 years without access to clean water. We remember when the Prime Minister made the promise that within five years every first nation would have clean water. However, that never happened. The government ignored all the reports saying it had to invest properly, and it would not put in the proper money. We are now told that communities can wait another five years for the Liberal government to start addressing this crisis.

Why is the government continuing to deny first nation families the basic human right in this country to clean water?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague across the aisle for his question.

During the pandemic, we were all deeply shocked by the tragedies that occurred in institutions across Canada. The government acted accordingly.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to talk about the budget implementation act and what this budget has to offer.

For starters, I will note that, as usual, I am perplexed by the approach the Conservative Party has taken on the budget. When listening this morning to the comments from Conservative members, I heard the member for Brandon—Souris say that the budget is too high, there is too much money in it and we are spending too much. However, in the same speech, he went on to say that we need to spend more money on housing, more money on provincial transfers, more money on funding health in the provinces, more money for small businesses and more money for veterans, without giving a suggestion as to where money needs to be taken.

I asked a question of the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, who spoke just before my colleague. I asked him where he would start to cut funding and where he would remove money in this budget. I also asked him to explain his budgetary process to me. In the response I got from him, he went on about the debt again without actually answering me, and at one point I heard him say that all political parties wanted to help when it was necessary. That perhaps provides the most insight into the Conservative position on this.

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In the beginning of the pandemic, when we had unanimous-consent motions to adopt supports for Canadians, the Conservatives knew they had no choice but to support them because public opinion would have turned incredibly negative toward them. They therefore supported help back then, although perhaps they would have preferred that every person fend for themselves at the time, instead of taking the approach that we should work together, collectively as a society, to get through this.

Nonetheless, the member for Richmond—Arthabaska stated, in his response to a question, that all political parties wanted to help when it was necessary. My take from what he said is that, basically, it is not necessary for us, as a collective society through the channel of the government, to support Canadians anymore. At least it is a step in the right direction in understanding where the Conservatives are coming from. They appear to be coming from a position that it was important to help Canadians before but not so much anymore. I understand it now, and it starts to provide some clarity.

I hand it to the NDP—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Please don't.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: No, Mr. Speaker, I want to hand it to the NDP. I like to pay credit where credit is due, despite the fact that the member for Timmins—James Bay does not want to hear a compliment.

The New Democrats fight for what they believe in. They come here and say to put more money into things and that we have to do dental care and support Canadians in this regard. At least they are consistent in their approach. Their approach has been consistent from the beginning. They supported the supports for Canadians. They pushed them hard, and they are continuing to push even harder for more supports now.

Compare them with the Conservatives, who supported initiatives back then to help Canadians but now do not. It makes me think they are driven completely by their perception of public opinion on matters, as opposed to thinking long term about how to support Canadians in getting through something like this.

Of course, the members from the Bloc Québécois have also been consistent on this. With regard to health transfers, we know that every time there is a debate in the House, somehow it is linked back to health transfers from the federal government to the provincial government. They are consistent in that regard. I respect that, and I hope that the Bloc and the NDP will support the budget implementation act, despite having identified some concerns.

It is the Conservative approach that continues to have me baffled. The Conservatives come in here and criticize the amount of spending, and yes, we know that it has been a lot of money. However, nobody, when elected in 2019, could have ever imagined we would be in this position talking about this kind of debt.

• (1205)

We are here because of a global pandemic that has impacted the entire planet, and to address what our response to it should be. In the response, there has been a simple choice: Do we let everybody fend for themselves, or do we take the approach that society should work together through the government? We let society as a whole

take on the debt and shoulder the burden of the pandemic, socially and economically, to the best of its ability. This is as opposed to watching individuals take on the burden entirely themselves, which obviously, as we know, would have skewed more toward those who are less fortunate, those who are working on the front lines and those who are working more precarious jobs. They are the people who would have been impacted the most had we not chosen to collectively support each other and go through this collectively.

There is a lot of debt attached to this; there is no doubt about it. However, we made a choice and that choice was clear: We will do this together.

When I listened to the comments from the member for Brandon—Souris, I noted that even as he was saying we are spending too much but not doing many things, he was still incorrect in his assertion of what we were not doing. I would love to go through all of the elements he discussed: housing; provincial transfers; health funding; health care, and in particular mental health; new supports for small businesses; and support for veterans. I would love to talk about all of this, but I will talk for a few moments specifically about supports for businesses.

The government has been there for Canadians and businesses from day one, and what is being proposed in this budget implementation act is the extension of benefits, in particular the extension of the wage subsidy for Canadian small and medium-sized businesses. It will make sure that people can stay on the payroll and can get through the pandemic so that when we come out on the other side of it, jobs will still be in place, which will help our economy bounce back and rebound quicker.

There are, in addition to that, more supports for small businesses. What we see in the budget is the new Canada recovery hiring program. The federal government recognizes that if we are going to get back to the low unemployment rate that we had before we went into the pandemic, we need to make sure that we are putting measures in place to help businesses bring new people on board to get the economic engine moving again. There is also the Canada recovery benefit. It is more specifically for individual Canadians. The government has said that it will include an additional 12 weeks in the Canada recovery benefit, to a maximum of 50 weeks.

The government has made it clear that it is going to be here, whether it is through the wage subsidy, the Canada recovery benefit or the various programs, to make sure that Canadians have the supports they need. The Conservatives know that, and I think it scares them a little, to be honest. In question period, there has never been a question on this, or it has been very rare. I feel for the member for Abbotsford, who is in his new portfolio as the finance critic. He never gets to ask a question in question period.

The last thing the Conservatives want to do right now is start asking questions about the budget. They do not want to highlight anything in it, because they realize how good it is for Canadians and Canadian businesses. That is why the member for Abbotsford is not getting to ask any questions.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I am getting laughs and heckles from members on the other side, but they should stand up and explain to me in a question why the member for Abbotsford does not get to ask any questions. He is the critic for finance.

Why is he not asking any questions in question period? It is because the Conservatives realize that talking about the budget is not in their best interests right now. They would rather go for personal attacks against the Prime Minister and against the Minister of National Defence, and all of these other things they love to drum up scandal about, instead of talking about government policy. If you can hold on and wait, an hour and 50 minutes from now you will get to see it live for yourselves.

In conclusion, the government is there to support small and medium-sized businesses, which are the backbone of the country and its economy. We will be there. We have been there from day one, and we will be there to the end. I strongly believe that Canadians know that, and I am hearing it from businesses in my riding. I look forward to supporting this budget implementation act.

• (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member wavered during his speech and talked directly to members as opposed to through the Speaker. I want to remind him that he is to address all questions, comments and debate through the Speaker.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member said something like, “Society will work together through government to come through this together”. How does he address, for future generations, the legacy the government is leaving with no plan on coming to balance? How does he justify the actions of the government to our children and grandchildren?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, for the record, the reason I feel the need to say that society will support itself through the government is because if I say the government is going to support Canadians, these members are going to say that it is not the government's money, as though we do not know that. I am trying to set the record straight so they understand that I know whose money it is.

To answer his question, I will throw it right back at him. Why is his own political party, on its election platform, saying it is going to take 10 years to balance the budget? It is because governments, political parties and politicians know that although saying the opposite is a great talking point, as long as the economy is growing faster than debt is being taken on, as long as the GDP exceeds the debt being taken on, we are in a good position to continue to grow and to see the economy prosper.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing that has come to everyone's attention during the pandemic is the significant inequality that remains in Canada. We have seen a greater impact from the disease itself and from its economic impact on seniors, young people and working people on front lines and in factories. However, we are not seeing the Liberals respond to calls for greater fairness going forward, such as with a dental care plan to help seven million Canadians get access to oral health care they cannot afford, for a fraction of 1% of current health care costs. As well, they refuse to tax the super wealthy, even while billionaires in

Canada have increased their wealth by \$78 billion during this pandemic. The token luxury tax we have seen on airplanes and yachts is not even in the budget implementation act.

Why are the Liberals doing nothing to ensure that those who have done so well by Canada's economy are paying their fair share?

• (1215)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am borderline offended by the fact the member does not recall that I spoke in favour of the private member's bill he brought forward about dental care. I did not indicate whether I was going to support it or not. I actually thought it was good that he was bringing forward the bill to have a discussion about a national dental care strategy. I strongly believe dental care, like pharmacare, needs to be part of our health care package in Canada.

The member should not sell out the fact that he does not have the support of all Liberals on his private member's bill. I am sure there are a handful out there who genuinely appreciate what the member brought forward. I certainly appreciate it. Whether the devil is in the details and I can support it at the end of the day, I look forward to continuing my speech when the second hour of his debate comes up.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Madam Speaker, this is just a reminder that the Green Party exists as well, as far as opposition goes. I will await my colleague's comments on that.

I would like to point to some substance, and I am not sure how much there was in his speech today, but I really want to get a clear answer on why there was a two-tiered system set up for seniors in this country. Can I have an explanation on the \$500 one-time payment and the OAS increase only being extended to those 75 and over? I really need help understanding this.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I certainly have great respect for the members of the Green Party and I apologize if my colleague felt left out when I did not include them when I was talking about the opposition. Maybe it is because I have nothing bad to say.

To answer her question, what we know from the data is that the older someone gets the more they burn through their savings, the more they burn through their retirement and the more expenses they incur as a result of health care and so on.

Would the member rather take the available money for those top-ups and give it just to people over 75, or would she rather go all the way back to 65 but give people less money? These are the questions I am sure are being debated in the budgetary process, and I am sure she can respect them. I would love to hear what her position is on that. Do we give more to people over 75 or less to everybody?

Government Orders

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, growing up I was a huge fan of a television show called *Bonanza*. Maybe people have heard of it. It was a fantastic show. Let me tell members what I am not a fan of. I am not a fan of the spending bonanza that has gone on here in Ottawa over the last two years.

When we look at the accumulation of debt, and I am going to talk about this, \$509 billion in new debt over two years has been put forward by the government. The Liberals have doubled the national debt in basically two years. Despite doing that, there are glaring gaps in the needs of Canadians, and I want to talk about some that have been basically ignored by the government despite the spending bonanza.

I also want to say I am sharing my time with the member for Prince Albert.

The first thing I want to talk about is broadband. This is a massive issue in my riding of Dufferin—Caledon. Not a week goes by that I do not receive a phone call or email from people in my riding decrying their lack of access to affordable high-speed Internet.

On April 30 I received an email from Andrew. Members from the Liberal government should hear this email because it is heart-breaking. He said, “Dear Kyle, I am writing today for the urgency of us receiving affordable Internet in the very near future. I have been out of work since February of 2020. My daughter has been forced to home school. I am unable to find a job that does not require me to work from home. I use my cellphone data plan and my wife's just to try and look for work. Having no Internet in this day and age with corona is literally crippling myself and my ability to provide for my family.”

When we talk about the bonanza of spending by the government, why have there not been rapid massive investments in broadband? This is critical in ridings such as mine that have a large rural component. They do not have 5G networks that they can use their cellphone plans on. They do not have unlimited data plans that they can use to work from home or school their children at home, which is what we are doing during the pandemic.

The failure to rapidly invest in this is a massive failure for the government. It is talking about having everyone hooked up to high-speed broadband by 2030. I became a lawyer because I am not good at math, but my math tells me that is about nine years from now. That is not going to be good enough for Andrew, and it is not going to be good enough for the huge bunch of Canadians who do not have affordable high-speed Internet. It is a shame on the government that it has not fixed it, especially given the pandemic.

There is another thing I am stunned the government has not moved on, in either the budget or the budget implementation act. On December 11, my colleague put forward a motion for a 988 suicide number.

The motion for the 988 number was passed unanimously in the House five months ago, and the only thing that has been brought forward by the government is that it may have the CRTC look into it. All we are hearing these days is about the mental health crisis going on in this country as a result of the pandemic. This is hard on people. Having access to a three-digit number for everyone has never been more important than it is now.

I have spoken about my own personal experience with depression. I can tell members that having access to a number anonymously, and speaking to someone anonymously, would save lives. Sometimes people do not have the strength to call a family member or a friend. A simple number to remember, and that is anonymous, will save lives. Quite frankly, I find the lack of action on this stunning.

• (1220)

I also want to talk about new business. In December I talked about Paul, a gentleman in my riding who had opened a new business in April 2020. He had to delay the start in March. Paul has been trying to make things work. He has been doing things like running up his line of credit and looking at ways to refinance his home. Why do new business owners like Paul have to do that? It is because there are no support programs out there for them.

The government can claim it is not aware of this, except I have raised this in question period and I have raised it during Adjournment Proceedings. The government is well aware that there are no programs for new businesses. Why not fix that in this budget? When we are spending \$509 billion, can we not find some money for new business owners who have put their livelihoods on the line to start new businesses? The government is aware of this. All I can say to Paul is that the government does not care if his business succeeds or fails. It is the only message left that we can send to Paul, especially looking at the budget and looking at this BIA.

Another glaring omission from the government is action on housing prices. A 1% luxury tax for foreign buyers is going to do nothing. We have heard it over and over again. It is just going to be looked on as the cost of doing business, especially when real estate prices are going up 25%, 30% or 40% in a year. The 1% tax is a joke. The government should have gotten serious, because we know foreign buyers are an issue. There are ways to cool the housing market and we know it is a problem. Young people are saying they are never going to be able to afford to buy a house looking at the prices as they are. The government response has been nothing that has worked.

Recently, I was looking at purchasing a home. When I looked at the price, I was stunned and said, “This seems like an awful lot of money for a house.” Guess what? That house had gone up 50%. It was purchased in August 2020, and by the spring of 2021, it was on sale for 50% more. This is a housing crisis, and the government is doing basically nothing. It has done nothing to address the housing crisis going on in this country.

Government Orders

One of the big ticket items we heard about was the new national child care plan. With a big fanfare, it was announced that we are going to solve child care in this country. What I learned as a lawyer is that the devil is often in the details, and the details in this case are a little different from what is being announced. I would call it a child care idea, because the government is not actually going to spend any money unless the provinces jump on board. It is a cost-shared program. If provincial governments do not agree to take this on, then the money does not get spent. When we look at the fiscal circumstances of the provinces after 15 months of this pandemic, it becomes increasingly concerning that they will not be able to afford this new program, which has to be cost-shared.

Of course, no details of how the cost-sharing will be done have been worked out. The Liberals are going to work it out at some point with the provinces while telling them they need to pay this amount of money if they want the federal money invested. Again, it is not a national child care plan. It is a national child care concept. It is an idea that might happen some day if the government can get the provinces onside. To me, that is not a plan, as I keep saying. It is a concept.

Finally, we have \$509 billion worth of debt. Our national debt has doubled. If interest rates go up to fight the inflation that we have going on right now, the government is going to become unable to pay the interest on the debt.

• (1225)

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the first two minutes of my hon. colleague's speech where he talked about the importance of broadband. I know this issue is extremely important for all rural Canadians, certainly an issue that is important to my riding. However, I do want to correct him. He said that the goal of the government was to connect every Canadian by 2030. That is actually false; it is by 2026, so five years from now, and we have invested \$1 billion further than the previous investments in 2019.

His colleagues are saying “cut, cut, cut”, but obviously he is advocating for more funding for broadband. Therefore, what should we cut in the budget or should increase broadband funding?

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, I would suggest two things in response to that. First, what I have seen is that they want to get a certain percentage by 2026 and 100% of people by 2030. I am saying that we should front-end that money for broadband now and not wait until 2026.

Second, I talked about Andrew, who sent a heartbreaking email to me. I get many like that all the time. People need these investments now. They need the rollout now. Waiting till 2026 or 2030 will not help people who are home schooling their children or working from home because of COVID. They need to get those investments upfront quickly.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member spoke of the hundreds of billions of dollars we spent in the last two years during these extraordinary times. He also spoke quite passionately about the need to support Canadians with mental health.

It is well-known that the one in three Canadians who have no dental care suffer not only physical pain and serious medical issues, but also serious mental health issues due to shame, social exclusion and, frankly, lack of employment opportunities.

The member spoke of a lack of spending in this budget on small business, sending a message to Canadians that the government did not care. Is his and the Conservative Party's vote against the NDP dental care plan a sign that Conservatives do not care about the 13 million Canadians who do not have access to fundamental basic oral dental health?

• (1230)

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, I disagree with much of what the member said.

As I said in response about child care, when we look at specific pieces of legislation, the devil is often in the details. It could be said that it is about X, but it includes many other things. No one should go without dental care. However, the way that motion was put forward, the devil was in the details, therefore I was not able to support it. However, I believe everyone has a right to dental care.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned that some business owners had fallen through the cracks and that this budget did not address that. I have heard from many of my constituents who started a new business just prior to the pandemic and they have not been able to access anything.

I wonder if you can comment a bit further on what you would have liked to have seen in this budget to help people like your constituents and my constituents who are falling through the cracks.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that she is to address the questions and comments through the Chair and not to the individual member.

The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, the problem for new businesses is the requirement to show declines in revenue. That has been generally how businesses access the wage subsidy or the rent subsidy. A new business just cannot do that. What should have been developed was a specific program that would allow businesses to access some funds, whether it was for rent or to help pay wages.

We have been in the pandemic now for 15 months. Clearly, there is a way to design that program so new businesses have some of the supports that other businesses have.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member touched on many things that I thought were very important, things that the government should take to heart as it goes through the implementation of this budget.

Government Orders

I have looked at this budget and have talked to my constituents. When they hear about a \$354 billion deficit, they say “wow”. I can see it on their faces. They cannot understand how that kind of money can be spent. However, they are there for Canadians. They want to ensure that Canadians are taken care of. They understand that during a crisis such as COVID we need to support each other, so they do not necessarily object to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I know we have been down this road before, but apparently the interpreters are having a hard time. They are unable to interpret because of the connection. I wonder if the hon. member can unplug and re-plug his mike or ensure his mike is selected.

That seems to be better.

The hon. member.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, I will go back to what my constituents were telling me with regard to this budget. When they look at the dollar values, the \$354 billion or \$509 billion that have been spent over the last two years, they think that is a lot of money. However, in the same breath, they look at it and say that if we have to support each other and this is what it takes to get them through the crisis, they are willing to do it.

Then they start talking about priorities and whether it has been done right. Did the funds get to the people who needed it? Were the people who needed it the most taken care of? Were the funds delivered in an efficient way? When they start hearing about scandals like the WE scandal and friends and family of Liberal members getting money, they get mad because they feel cheated. They feel they have been taken advantage of and COVID has been used as a reason to do that. That is unacceptable and they are very upset about it. When they hear those things, they distrust government on everything, and that is unfortunate.

I remember back in 2008-09 when we went through the financial crisis under the Harper government. Billions of dollars were put into the economy through municipalities and provincial governments with zero scandals. Therefore, it can be done. We can empower the public service to get the money out, we can prioritize with the provinces and municipalities to get the appropriate projects established and we can spend the money in a responsible manner so taxpayers get value. I think a lot of people will look back on this situation maybe four or five years from now and will really criticize the Liberal government in how it conducted itself, how it aligned itself with areas and made decisions with regard to the crisis that ended up costing the lives of Canadians and our economy.

As we approached an actual budget, in January, I talked to all the municipalities in my riding through Zoom. I told them the rumour was there would be \$100 billion for infrastructure for municipalities, so we should get our ducks in a line and have ideas of what types of things we would want to prioritize as far as spending. I came across the village of St. Louis. It wants a new fire hall. It is taking on more fire services in the rural areas and wants to put its fire trucks in one location instead of the three locations it has right now. It identified that as one of the priorities it would like to get some assistance on, if it was there.

I spoke to the mayor of Nipawin, who talked about how the landfill was getting to the end of its life, that the municipality was looking to get a new landfill and having a new partnership with other municipalities. He was trying to figure out a way forward on that.

Just north of Prince Albert, the Town of Shellbrook, the arm of Buckland and the regional municipality of Prince Albert, it is saying that it really requires water. It is getting together with others to put in a rural water network, costing some \$50 million. It is something that would take care of the farmers, the Town of Shellbrook, the acreage owners outside of the city of Prince Albert. It would probably be about 70 or 80 kilometres long. It is a good project that would get shovels in the ground and be of value at the end of the day.

Those are the types of things at which municipalities are looking.

One of the other priorities that came out of my meetings with the municipalities was high-speed Internet. They feel so neglected. When they start hearing these big announcements about billions of dollars, in this case, \$1 billion over nine years, about \$140 million a year, they thought they should be able to do it. Then when they see the actual rollout and the amount per year, they roll their eyes and say that is never heading their way, that they will never get it. Therefore, they are looking for support to do it on their own. They have been looking at new technologies, and I encourage the government to start looking at some of the new technologies as well.

I have been one of the lucky people in Canada to be involved in the beta testing for Starlink, and it has been fabulous. There have been a few little hiccups, as there are with all systems. Why would the government not embrace Telesat Canada or groups like that, even Starlink, and look at how it can speed this up to get the service to rural Canadians at speeds of some 150 to 200 megabytes a minute down and 40 or 50 megabytes up? Why would we not look at that and ask how we can empower the private sector to provide the service? The technology is there; we just need the will of the government to push it along.

Another thing a lot of people said was that some sectors had done really well during COVID. Those who sell cross-country skis, Ski-Doos, quads or camping equipment were busy. Canadians love the outdoors and since they were unable to travel, they were spending money on things they could do in their own backyards. The riding of Prince Albert is beautiful and there are a lot of things for people to do in their backyards and still respect social distancing. Companies selling lumber right now are doing great.

Government Orders

● (1235)

If we look at those types of businesses, they have done very well, yet some sectors have been left out. People who are in the tourism sector, people who run a fishing lodge in northern Saskatchewan are looking at their second season under COVID, wondering whether they can open or not. They have clients lined up who wanted to go last year, they have held their deposits and now those people want to come this year. They are vaccinated, most of them are Americans, but they cannot get a signal from the government on what the matrix would be for our border to reopen.

In Saskatchewan, the province has at least given us an idea, based on the number of vaccinations and a combination of things, on when we will start to see the province start to open up. The federal government has done nothing like that. It has not given any signals to Canadians or businesses on what a safe reopening would look like and what steps would be required to have that safe reopening. Because of that, we cannot make decisions.

If people are running a fishing lodge, to open up that lodge, they need to fly in with their supplies for the year, and that is an expensive trip. Therefore, they do not want to go up there unless they have clients coming. That takes time. They will have to get a hold of their clients and ensure they have processes in place to come to their lodge. They have to ensure their staff is rehired and trained. People cannot just wake up on a Monday morning and say, “the border is open; let’s go.” There needs to be some proper signals. While those things do not cost money, we have to be in control of the situation, use the science to our best ability and give our best predictions based on that science, not be secretive or silent. That is not an answer and it is not acceptable.

We have had a really serious problem right across Canada in our restaurant sector. Some have adapted, some have not. There is no question that they are struggling. If there is a sector that needs help, tourism, restaurants and these types of businesses definitely need help. Where is that in the budget. If they have a new restaurant, like my friend from Dufferin—Caledon mentioned, they do not qualify. What about a ma and pa restaurant that has around for years? The owners are two or three years away from retirement, but all of a sudden they have to dip into savings. They wonder if they should put another \$40,000 or \$50,000 into it. That money it is coming right out of their savings account. It is coming right out of their RRSPs, and they have to pay tax on that if they put it into their business. There has been no compensation for things like that. There has been no flexibility. People have to make very serious decisions and they do not have good information from the government on which to base those decisions.

When we look at that, it leads into my next topic, which is mental health.

I have been very concerned about my staff in my office, and I am sure my colleagues have been as well. One minute, the people are on the phone crying and the next minute they are yelling. The next call is from somebody who is overwhelmed. Our staff are dealing with that call after call. Mental health is a serious issue right now. To think that we cannot find money for the mental health hotline that the member for Cariboo—Prince George asked for seems irresponsible. Where is the government’s heart? Where is it priority?

In the agriculture sector, farmers are grappling. I will highlight the fact that they are spring seeding now. The census is hitting while they are doing that, by the way, which they are not happy about. I want them to have a safe seeding system. There are some things in the budget that they liked, but the one area that concerns them is the \$60 million over two years for a nature-smart climate solution, where the government will buy farmland. Why does the government want to buy farmland? Farmers are the best stewards of the land. If we want to set aside land for planting trees, why would we not just pay them for it? We could say that this is marginal land, we will pay them for it and they can take care of it and manage it, just like they do in Europe.

Again, the government prescribes things instead of consulting and talking to people moving forward.

In summary, a lot of money is being spent. Some of it is good and some of it is bad. I know the member from Kingston will ask what I would cut from the budget. It is not a matter of cutting; it is a matter of having the appropriate priorities, understanding the needs of Canadians and getting the funds to people who actually need them.

● (1240)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his speech and agree with a number of things. I would like to thank him for supporting science, as well as Telesat and Starlink. I think we have licensed Starlink and we have provided millions to Telesat for exactly what he has asked for.

Also, I am delighted that he raised mental health; it has been a huge priority for our government. As members know, we made the first-ever agreement with the provinces and territories and there is money in this budget for it. I appreciate his support for that.

I am glad he raised the census. I hope every Canadian out there fills it out. I did mine. It took about 10 minutes.

I want to ask him about infrastructure. I am glad he supported that. We have provided more money to that than any government in history. Last summer, one could not go to a community in my riding where the roads were not dug up to deal with sewer, water or paving. It is a great way to inspire the economy.

He listed some great projects. I wonder if he has checked with his province on the approval of those, because the provinces decide which projects get approved—

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have to go to questions and comments, the hon. member for Prince Albert.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, the census is very important, but to put it on the ground during spring seeding in Saskatchewan is very insensitive. To ask these people to come down off their tractors when they are going 18 hours or 20 hours a day is not the right thing to do. The government should have some compassion and at least give them a little extension on time, perhaps until June, or something like that.

Regarding infrastructure, the Liberals have been talking a lot about all this money being spent on infrastructure yet we do not see it. Where is it? I cannot touch it. I cannot feel it. I cannot look at it. Maybe it is all in the Liberal ridings. That would make sense as it would go along the theme of Liberal governments taking care of Liberal Party members. Maybe that is what is happening.

• (1245)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport-Côte-de-Beaupré-Île d'Orléans-Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. I am grateful for his concern for the restaurant, hotel and tourism sectors.

My riding has a large number of tourism and ecotourism sites that are extremely concerned about the nature of the assistance their sector will be getting, particularly with respect to the programs and their criteria.

The criteria for some of the programs announced in the past were too restrictive, preventing people from accessing the help they needed. What does my colleague think about this?

[English]

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, I have heard much the same concerns. The government could consult to Canadians. It could sit down with the sector and ask what it needs to do to revitalize the sector. One of the things I said right off the bat was that by using science, and basing it off science, it could give this sector an idea of when the borders will reopen so Americans or people from other parts of the world can come freely to Canada and take advantage of our nature and beauty. That would allow them to at least plan and see some sort of future in front of them.

The other thing is this. What are we going to do to attract more people to our tourism sector? What type of game plan is there? How are we going to work with Global Affairs and people outside Canada to do just that?

The government should talk to the people who are impacted, understand what the barriers are, remove the barriers so they can proceed, and then it will have a successful program, but it does not talk to anybody but the Liberals.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was happy to hear my colleague talk about the tourism sector as well, because in Edmonton Strathcona we are the heart of the tourism sector in Edmonton and have tons of restaurants. I have spent a lot of time meeting with restaurant owners, servers, bartenders and other people in the sector. They want addi-

tional help for sick time and minimum wage supports. How would the member make sure that the workers in these restaurants are also being protected during this dangerous time?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, that is a great question. Safety has to be front and centre. There is no question about that.

I understand Alberta is going through some tough times right now that we are not necessarily experiencing in Saskatchewan, but if people do not have a job, that is a problem. We have to make sure these businesses are operating so that people have a place to go to work. We need to have that in place in a safe and operable fashion. Vaccines are part of the key to getting to that, and the fact that we do not yet have vaccines in the arms of Canadians is very problematic.

I feel their frustration and concern for them and their family and I want to make sure we are there to support them. Most Canadians would agree with that. However, when we see money going to WE charities or out the door to Liberal friends, that is when they get mad and get mad really quick.

[Translation]

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the House for allowing me to speak about the 2021 budget and explain why I support its implementation.

[English]

First of all, I need to thank our very first female finance minister for putting forward a budget that should make all women and all parliamentarians proud.

As the first woman in this most important role, she acts as such a positive and inspiring role model for young women everywhere in Canada. The amazing work that she accomplished, with the help of the Prime Minister and other ministers as well as parliamentarians who were consulted as she was preparing to introduce this budget, is work that she, her team and, frankly, all Canadians can be proud of.

I truly believe that there is something in this budget for everyone, whether we are tackling the need to support our seniors, women, youth, workers, businesses, indigenous people and racialized communities, or whether it is putting in place what is needed to finally combat COVID-19 with vaccine procurement or Canadian biomanufacturing of vaccines. This budget takes care of Canadians.

• (1250)

[Translation]

The budget contains several provisions that I am happy about. Honestly, I am thrilled to see that we will continue to support our small and medium-size businesses and the Canadians who were hit hard by the pandemic.

Today I am going to focus on new measures that I find particularly worthwhile and important. As a former teacher who spent almost all her time working with children, and as a feminist who believes in equality between men and women, I think that one of the most important things in the budget is the Canada-wide early learning and child care plan.

Government Orders

This measure will provide jobs for workers, the majority of whom are women. It will enable parents, particularly mothers, to reach their full economic potential. Moreover, it will create a generation of engaged and well-prepared young learners.

[*English*]

One of the studies we completed during my time on the committee on the status of women in the previous Parliament was entitled “Women’s Economic Security: Securing the Future of Canada’s Economy”. Throughout the study, we heard from hundreds of women of all backgrounds, and many of them spoke of the need for child care.

The committee was told that families in Canada have long contended with an inadequate supply of high-quality, universal, accessible, flexible, affordable and inclusive child care, particularly for infants and toddlers. We learned that the lack of child care significantly contributes to the gender wage gap, which should not be a surprise to anyone as traditionally women are most often the ones to stay home to take care of their children. I certainly grew up in a very traditional household where my mom did not work until my brother and I were both in school.

This unpaid work that women are usually responsible for, which includes hours spent on the care of their children and housework, limits their participation in the workforce and hurts their economic advancement. Furthermore, this disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work negatively affects their access to education, access to job training, the quality of their health and personal relationships, and their current and future financial resources—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have a point of order.

The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, I believe the member meant to share her time with the member for Nepean.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the member. I was sidetracked there, and I am not sure if I heard her say that, but I will verify with her.

The hon. member for Saint-Laurent.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Madam Speaker, if I did not say it, I definitely meant to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Nepean.

However, it goes without saying that women who have this sort of arrangement and who stay at home may experience poverty as seniors, and many of them, as they are not financially independent and are financially dependent on their husbands, may not flee abusive relationships and situations, because they are unable to do so without any money. I am mentioning these points, because I am trying to prove the point that establishing a Canada-wide early learning and child care system actually tackles several societal issues that we face today.

[*Translation*]

Another thing in the budget that is very important to me is the enhanced Canada workers benefit. Our government introduced this benefit in the last budget, and budget 2021 will enhance this tax

credit and make it more accessible to low-income workers and families earning income from employment or business.

Approximately one million more low-income Canadians will have access to this assistance.

The pandemic showed us just how essential low-income workers are for keeping our society running. They are working in our grocery stores, corner stores and pharmacies. They are working behind the scenes to provide small businesses with all the goods we purchased during this period, and they went to work every day so that those who stayed at home could have the essentials we needed to get through this pandemic.

• (1255)

[*English*]

The budget would allow the government to raise the income level at which the benefit starts being reduced to \$22,944 for single individuals and \$26,177 for families. For full-time workers, this could mean that a single, full-time, minimum wage worker could receive about \$1,000 more in benefits than they would receive under the current system, and could continue to receive the benefit up to \$32,000 of net income in 2021.

The enhancement to the workers benefit would benefit single workers without children the most, because they have limited access to other government supports that are made available to families, such as the Canada child benefit.

Currently, a full-time minimum wage employee is not eligible for the Canada workers benefit, however, under the new proposed system in budget 2021, they would be entitled to \$1,100 with this number being subject to differ, depending on where they live and what the minimum wage is in their province.

I know many hard workers who will greatly benefit from this extra support, and I am happy we would move forward with this enhancement to the benefit when we implement this budget.

[*Translation*]

As a member of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, I was thrilled to see the section of the budget concerning investments in COVID-19-related biomanufacturing. The budget proposes investing in Canada’s biomanufacturing and life sciences sector in order to improve our capacity to develop and biomanufacture vaccines in Canada.

We now know that COVID-19 will be with us for some time to come. There are variants, and we do not know how long we will remain immune after we receive both doses of the vaccine. During the committee’s study of domestic manufacturing capacity for a COVID-19 vaccine, witnesses told us that vaccine procurement is a short-term solution and that Canada must get ready to produce its own vaccines for Canadians in the long term. That is why I mentioned the need for this type of investment during the budget consultations held by the ministers responsible.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Budget 2021 will strengthen Canada's biomanufacturing and life sciences sector by providing a total of \$2.2 billion over seven years towards growing a vibrant domestic life sciences sector. This support would provide foundational investments to help build Canada's talent pipeline and research systems, and support the growth of Canadian life science firms, including \$59.2 million over three years starting 2021-22 for the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization to support the development of its vaccine candidates and expand the facility in Saskatoon.

[Translation]

The budget will invest in skills, training and trades and will help workers transition to new jobs. It proposes an investment of \$250 million over three years to scale up proven third-party-delivered approaches to upskill and redeploy workers to meet the needs of growing industries.

The budget also contains measures to grow our net-zero economy and accelerate Canada's net-zero transformation through innovation. It allocates \$5 billion for that.

I am proud of this budget. We are certainly heading in the right direction.

[English]

I hope that everybody can support it, so that we could get back to helping Canadians and so that we can improve our support to Canadians.

[Translation]

Thank you very much.

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member talked about how the budget protects workers and jobs.

In my riding, I have, for example, the Winnipeg Richardson International Airport and aviation manufacturing firms, like Boeing, Magellan and StandardAero. I have talked to many of the workers from the airport and these companies. They are struggling to just pay their mortgages. It is a very sad and devastating situation for the industry as a whole.

I am wondering if the member could comment on why there is no support for the aviation industry at all, including airports, in this budget.

• (1300)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Madam Speaker, in my speech I was not able to touch on every subject, but the aerospace sector is definitely being helped in this budget. Specifically in my province of Quebec, a lot of the sector would be helped through this budget. That is another reason I am quite proud of what Minister Freeland has put forward in this budget.

I thank the member for giving me the opportunity to mention that. I had missed it due to time constraints.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member mentioned the minister by name. I would caution her not to do so, as she knows the rules of the House.

We will continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is great to see the Liberals supporting child care in this budget. It is something I ran on quite proudly back in 2015, and I agree with her that it would make a huge difference.

My question is regarding the Liberal standard for engaging with the provinces on these sorts of initiatives. This budget implementation act is setting up the legislative framework for the minister to engage with the provinces to get child care up and running.

However, when it came to Bill C-213, which was NDP legislation to set up a legislative framework for establishing a national pharmacare system, the Liberals voted against it. It seems as though the goal posts are shifting. Could the member clarify for the House what the Liberal standard is for engaging with provinces when trying to build up these national programs?

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Madam Speaker, this pandemic has really highlighted the need to support the most vulnerable, and many would argue, the most vulnerable in this pandemic have been young people and women. It was definitely time. People have been fighting for child care for many years, and I thank the member for his advocacy on this issue.

When things like this are highlighted during a pandemic or a time of crisis, I believe the federal government needs to work with the provinces in order to establish goals and come up with the right sorts of plans. Right now, the political will is there, and there is definitely a need, as we have all said, to support women and to make sure they are able to have equal access to the workforce.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to speak on the investments made in this budget for artificial intelligence, quantum technology, photonics and genomics. More importantly, I would also like to speak on investments made in the critical minerals required for batteries, which are needed for use in everything from electrical vehicles to energy storage.

The global economy is moving toward a knowledge-based economy. One of the three objectives for me when entering politics a few years back was to work to ensure that Canadian society and the economy remained robust and competitive in the global knowledge-based economy, thus securing prosperity for our children and grandchildren.

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Canada is prosperous today, and Canadians enjoy a very high standard of living due to the rich natural resources. We have oil. We have gas. We have minerals, and we have forestry products. All of which have provided for our prosperity so far. The natural advantage we have today may not be enough for us in a new global knowledge-based economy. To ensure that this prosperity is also available to our children and our grandchildren, we, as a country, need to be at the forefront of the new knowledge-based economy. Hence, investments in artificial intelligence, quantum technology, photonics, genomics, and the critical minerals required for batteries become very important.

Artificial intelligence is one of the greatest technological transformations of our age. It has already started making its impact. Many times we do not even know it is making an impact, but it is already there. Canada has communities of research, homegrown talent and a diverse ecosystem of start-ups and scale-ups.

I am glad that the budget would provide about \$440 million in support of a pan-Canadian artificial intelligence strategy. More importantly, it would provide \$185 million to support commercialization of artificial intelligence innovation and research in Canada. Investing in research, development and innovation is important, but for me, commercialization is also important. Both have to go hand in hand. We cannot continue to perpetually invest in research without all or part of that research being commercialized. Therefore, I am glad we are making investments in commercialization of artificial intelligence innovations.

Quantum technology is at the very leading edge of science and innovation today, and it has enormous potential for commercialization. This emerging field will transform how we develop and design everything from life-saving drugs to next-generation batteries. It also will provide a great deal of cybersecurity, which we hope to achieve and see soon. I am happy to state that this budget would provide about \$360 million to launch a national quantum strategy. I am sure we will hear more details of this in the coming months.

Canada is a world leader in photonics, the technology of generating and harnessing the power of light. This is the science behind fibre optics, advanced semiconductors and other cutting-edge technologies, areas in which Ottawa has also got a great number of companies involved. There is a strong history of Canadian companies bringing this expertise to the world. I am pleased that the budget would provide \$90 million to the National Research Council to retool and modernize the Canadian photonics fabrication centre.

Then, there is genomics. Genomics research is developing cutting-edge therapeutics and is helping Canada to track and fight COVID-19. Canada was an early mover in advancing genomic science and is now a global leader in this field.

• (1305)

I will give a cost comparison on how fast and how effective this particular technology is developing. The cost to sequence a genome has fallen by millions of dollars. I think in 2001, it cost us about \$100 million to sequence a genome. From that, it came down to \$1 million in 2008. It fell down to about \$10,000 in 2012, and today it just costs a few hundred dollars. We can see how quickly it is changing and how effective it has become. Soon we will have tailor-made medicines available for genetic diseases.

The budget provides \$400 million to support pan-Canadian genomic strategies. This includes support for mission-driven programming delivered by Genome Canada to kick-start the new strategy. In the new global knowledge-based economy, the world is flat. Canadians face equal competition from different parts of the world, and we do not have the advantages our natural resources used to give us.

The competition is coming from everywhere, especially for new technology professionals and new generations of Canadians in school today. The competition is from Sydney, Australia; Seoul, South Korea; Shanghai, China; Mumbai, India; and Frankfurt, Germany. All the world is flat, and we are facing a lot of competition from all over the world.

Immediately more important is the development of batteries. Many people may not recognize today, but this is also a national security issue. If we do not develop technologies, and if we do not develop batteries, one day we will be dependent on other countries for our energy security and transportation security. Things are changing very fast.

The trillion-dollar transportation market is quickly moving toward electrification. Major auto companies have already announced phasing out internal combustion engines and transitioning to battery-operated electric vehicles. Canada has rich reserves of the critical minerals needed for electric vehicle batteries and solar panels, along with the other low-carbon technology needed to reach net-zero.

Canada and the U.S. recently agreed to strengthen the Canada-U.S. joint action plan on critical minerals collaboration to target a net-zero industrial transformation, batteries for zero emissions vehicles and renewable energy storage. Investing in these critical resources is essential for our energy security and will ensure Canada is a vital producer in the supply chain of the future.

The budget provides funding to create a critical battery minerals centre of excellence at Natural Resources Canada. The centre would coordinate federal policy and programs on critical minerals and work with other partners too. The budget provides \$37 million to Natural Resources Canada for federal research and development to advance critical battery mineral processing and refining expertise.

It is not just enough for us to be part of this operation. We need to have end-to-end capability to be in the battery business. To give an example of how far the cost of batteries has fallen in the last 10 to 12 years, the cost of lithium-ion batteries has fallen from \$1,100 per kilowatt hour to just about \$100. Soon it will reach much less, which will make the cost of electrical vehicles comparable with that of gasoline vehicles today.

Things are changing fast. Things are approaching fast where we will all move to electrical vehicles in the very near future. The companies have already announced changes and we need to be there.

• (1310)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his intervention, but I do want to question one part of his speech where he mentioned that Canada has lost its competitive edge in our natural resource sector. I would have to agree with him, but I am agreeing with him because we have lost our advantage because of poor Liberal policies, which are focused on phasing out the oil sands.

As my colleague is talking about the centre of excellence to build electric batteries, what other components does he think will be necessary to build those batteries if we do not have a petrochemical industry? Where does he feel we are going to make up the shortfall of a lost \$678 billion a decade in revenue for every level of government from the oil and gas industry?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, just to clarify, what I meant to say is that the global economy is moving toward a knowledge-based economy and the transportation sector is moving toward electric vehicles. That is where Canada comes in. We have certain rare minerals that are required for the production of these batteries, and the investment we are making in Natural Resources Canada is to identify what minerals are required, how to develop them, how to refine them and how we can have a good, solid position in the supply chain that is required for the new generation of electric batteries.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with my colleague. The world centre right now for critical minerals is in my region: copper, cobalt, palladium and nickel. In terms of innovation, we had the deepest minds in the world at Laurentian University, in the mining engineering program. When Sudbury used to be a moonscape, we created and invested in environmental reclamation. The physics program had a Nobel Prize winner, yet this has been cut by the provincial government, completely hacked apart.

My hon. colleague is talking about innovation and investment. Will the government commit to working with us at Laurentian to maintain these programs of innovation and to build on this knowledge economy so that we can get these critical minerals into the new 21st century economy?

• (1315)

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, I fully agree with the need for the research and development of critical minerals all across Canada. We need to have a pan-Canadian approach. As the government has already stated, in certain advanced technologies, it is for-

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mulating pan-Canadian strategies to develop various important things that are needed for the knowledge-based economy.

As the centre of excellence for batteries is being set up, I am sure it will also develop a comprehensive strategy, to develop not just the mines and minerals, but also the technologies, and lead to the actual manufacturing of batteries in Canada. Even the U.S. has lagged behind. Today, there are about five major battery manufacturing projects in the U.S., each with over \$2 billion in investments. This is changing fast and we need to move very fast. We are going in that direction.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned a lot about electrification, about solar panels and the way we want a low-carbon economy. What is his opinion on nuclear energy? Does that actually pose as a distraction for the direction we should be heading, which is in that renewable sector, in that electrification he is talking about?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, I am not very knowledgeable on nuclear power generation, but what I am focusing on is the renewable power generation to help solar panels bring energy with the new energy storage system that is possible with the batteries today. All these renewable energy projects will become much more viable and contribute to the total power generation at a much greater scale than what it is today.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

Canadians have waited more than two years for the Liberals to finally table a budget, and I would have to argue that it certainly was not worth the wait. It may have been worth the wait if we were looking to build back bigger: bigger government, bigger spending, bigger programs, bigger deficit and bigger, unsustainable debt. When Canadians were looking for a budget that would outline a path to recovery, what we got was a budget focused on re-election, which is truly unfortunate for Canadians, because we are the ones who are going to be paying for the Liberals' re-election budget.

This was not a recovery budget that Canadians were waiting for. This is a budget that would put unsustainable and suffocating debt on Canadians for generations to come. I want to put it into perspective. By next year, the current Prime Minister will have racked up more debt than all prime ministers in Canadian history combined. Members can let that sink in. That is including the current Prime Minister's father, who had racked up a debt that took decades to try to get under control. This is a budget focused on announcements, photo ops and, more than likely, broken promises, because the Liberals are very good at marketing, but they are very bad at the reality of having to follow through on those promises and the reality of government.

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I want to start off the issues I am going to try to address in my speech with the child care announcement. I do not think there is any question that Canadians are interested in a child care program, especially with the changes we have experienced as a result of COVID-19. However, once again, the Liberals make their ninth or 10th promise on a national child care program, and I am going to guess this is their ninth or 10th promise waiting to be broken. This is the ninth time, let us say, the Liberals have promised a national child care program, but they forget to mention the fine print. The fine print is that it is a fifty-fifty split with the provinces and territories, so it is \$30 billion over five years, but it is contingent on the provinces and territories stepping up to split that cost.

I am not sure if the Liberals, who believe the budget will balance itself, have taken a look at the current financial situation of the provinces and territories, which have been absolutely devastated by this pandemic. Very few provinces are going to have the resources to kick in and pay their share of the made-in-Ottawa national child care program, not to mention that many provinces and territories will balk at having an Ottawa-knows-best child care program that does not work for their families. In fact, it does not work for most Canadian families who do shift work, work in rural and remote communities or would much prefer an aunt, a grandfather or a neighbour to look after their children.

Conservatives realized this way back in 2006, when we introduced the universal child care benefit, because we knew that hard-working Canadian families knew how to look after their family and their children much better than Ottawa bureaucrats. That is what Canadian families want to see. They do not want to see a government-regulated child care program that provinces and territories cannot afford and that does not meet their needs.

That is just one program the Liberals are going to be getting and hoping for all these great photo ops and headlines, but when it comes down to the fact of actually being able to deliver on this promise, it will be another promise broken.

It is clear that the Liberals are doing their regular wedge politics here, trying to pit provinces and territories against one another on which provinces and territories can afford this child care program, but I do have to admit I was surprised to see that the Liberals chose a very vulnerable part of our community and our society to also put in a wedge. The Liberals have chosen seniors to be the next wedge topic in this budget. This was a budget where they should have made hard choices, but what they did, especially when it came to seniors, was choose winners and losers, and seniors under 75 are the losers. This budget would create a two-tier system for seniors in Canada. There are those seniors who would get the 10% increase on their OAS and a \$500 bonus in August, not surprisingly maybe a few weeks before the Prime Minister drops the writ and calls an election.

• (1320)

How can we pick one group of seniors that is worthy of help and one that is not? We have a two-tiered system for seniors, and we know that seniors have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. They are exhausted, they are tired and, in many cases, they are scared as a result of isolation and being away from their loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, instead of

ensuring that all Canadians are vaccinated and that all provinces have the vaccines and personal protective equipment they need, the government decided to pick winners and losers when it came to Canadian seniors. I find that to be incredibly disrespectful to such an important part of our community.

The next area I want to touch on is, like seniors, very important in my riding of Foothills, and that is the agriculture industry. Once again, the Liberals have failed to show heartfelt support for an agriculture industry that has been hit hard, not just by COVID but certainly by issues outside of its control over the last couple of years. Let us look back: We had the harvest from hell, rail blockades, strikes and lost export markets in India and China, which had a serious impact on the industry.

Thankfully, in my riding of Foothills, we had a great harvest last year. There is a lot of optimism as we head into seeding this spring, and we are just wrapping calving. There was optimism, until April 1, April Fool's Day, when the Liberals announced yet another increase in their carbon tax.

Farmers operate on a very small margin. They need all of these variables to match up for them to make a profit and be able to keep operating the following season. Doubling the carbon tax, and now announcing that it is going to be up to \$170 a tonne in the next couple of years, is devastating to agriculture, which cannot pass on that cost anywhere else, because it is the end-user. Hessel Kielstra, who owns Mountain View Poultry in my riding, showed me his carbon tax bills, and this was before the increase. To heat his chicken barns in February was \$24,000 for the month. This is not chump change. Why, in this budget, did the Liberals not exempt farm fuels and agriculture from the carbon tax and give them a break?

There is no question that agriculture is going to play a critical role when we try to dig ourselves out of this massive fiscal abyss that the pandemic has brought upon us, which was certainly not assisted by the financial recklessness of the Liberal government even before the pandemic. There is no question that agriculture is a key backbone of our economy, and if agriculture is treated poorly, and it is wrong, then not much else can go right.

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I talked to many of my farmers and ranch families about this budget, and one of the other things they found frustrating was the lack of a real plan to ensure that every rural community has access to broadband. Certainly, this was a key issue in just about every rural riding in this country before the pandemic, but there is no question that the need to access broadband in every rural community is critical. We must start treating this like a utility. It is not a want; it is a must-have. We must start treating it like electricity or water, because if we want our rural communities to be able to compete on a level playing field with the rest of the world, they must have access to this critical infrastructure. Our farmers are competing in a global market; our small businesses are now going online, and kids are having to work from home. We cannot have these economic development opportunities in these communities if we do not have access to rural broadband.

In my one minute left, I want to touch on one thing that is obviously very important to Alberta, which is the fact that the energy sector is not mentioned once in this budget. I do not understand why the Liberals do not understand the important impact that our oil and gas sector has on this economy.

We are in a very difficult fiscal situation. According to the Canadian Energy Centre, between 2000 and 2018 the energy sector generated \$672 billion in revenue for every level of government. That is \$35 billion a year for municipalities, provinces and the federal government that cannot be replaced. In Alberta, we have felt the disdain for the energy sector, with 200,000 lost jobs. Now we are seeing it with Line 5 being in jeopardy because of the Prime Minister's virtue signalling. Unfortunately, Quebec and Ontario are going to start to feel the pain that Alberta has felt for a long time.

• (1325)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear the Conservatives talk about seniors because it was the Conservatives who not that long ago tried to make seniors work two years longer than what they expected to be their retirement, when the age of eligibility was changed for old age security and GIS to 67.

Can the member explain why he is so critical of the amount of debt this Prime Minister took on, in his words, when all that debt was taken on through unanimous consent motions in his House that he and his party supported? They supported that debt every step of the way.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, there was a lot in that question, but the member said we were forcing seniors to work another two years. What was important with that proposal and program was that we were giving seniors the option to work two years longer before they had to retire, and many seniors in my riding appreciated that opportunity. We are living longer and they wanted those opportunities.

What he does not want to mention here is that this budget makes a two-tiered seniors system. All of a sudden, seniors are now eligible for an increase in OAS and this amazing pre-election \$500 vote-buying scheme, but if they are under 75, the government is not really all that worried about them.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Madam Speaker, this budget implementation act is winding down the wage subsidy pro-

gram and reducing then eliminating the supports to individuals through the Canada recovery benefit, CRB, which is the successor to the CERB.

Does the member agree with the NDP that this move is premature and that there are plenty of small businesses across the country, including in the restaurant business and the tourism sector, that will need continued support to recover from the consequences and the economic consequences of this pandemic?

• (1330)

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for mentioning the importance of small businesses. That is why Conservatives, from the very beginning of this pandemic, worked with the Liberals and other parties in this House to try to design some of these assistance programs as best we could. In fact, it was the Conservatives who came out and said the initial wage subsidies the Liberal Party had set at 10% were much too low.

For sure, there are businesses that still need assistance and we want to see those programs still there for those businesses that need it, but this cannot be the new normal. This cannot go on in perpetuity. We have to see a clear path to an end to these lockdowns and restrictions and get Canadian businesses back open, but that will only happen if the Liberal government starts procuring and distributing vaccines as soon as possible.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals always tell us and accuse us now that we want to cut and cut in the budget, we did not support spending and all of these things.

With the debt we have and are going to be incurring over the next number of years, if rates go up even just a little bit, and we are approaching \$40 billion, can you explain to Canadians the impact that will have on some of the social structures we have in this country?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member he is to address questions and comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Foothills has less than a minute to respond.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I want to put that into perspective. The new debt the Liberal budget has put on is going to cost more than \$40 billion a year just to service that new debt at the current rates, so imagine if interest rates go up. That is two years of health transfer payments to the provinces. Health transfers to the provinces could be increased substantially, not to mention other very important social service programs, but unfortunately we will not be able to afford those things in the future. Imagine what \$45 billion a year could do if we were not having to spend that money servicing new Liberal debt.

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Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to put some thoughts on the record with respect to Bill C-30. I want to thank my colleague from Foothills for splitting his time with me.

In my riding of Chatham-Kent—Leamington, or CKL for short, agriculture, agri-food and agri-food processing is a bedrock element of our local economy, just like for the previous speaker.

I want to begin my comments here. Before proceeding, I would also note that as a father of four daughters, my desire is that they face no glass ceilings in their careers. I want to congratulate the finance minister on being the first female finance minister to deliver a budget. My youngest daughter Kiana just completed her masters in economics, and so maybe, one day, she, too, will deliver a budget, hopefully one based on solid economics rather than election politics.

Back to agriculture, the Canadian agriculture and agri-food system is a key driver of our economy and generates \$143 billion, accounts for 7.4% of our GDP, and provides for one in eight jobs, at least in 2018, and more than that this year.

This budget does include some provisions for up \$100 million for rebates from the carbon tax for on-farm natural gas and propane use. At the agriculture and agri-food committee, we are presently finishing a review of Bill C-206, sponsored by my colleague, the MP for Northumberland—Peterborough South, which proposes an exemption from the carbon tax for on-farm propane and natural gas.

No doubt the existence of this private member's bill influenced the government's decision to include this measure. We discussed, and continue to discuss, at committee the utility of a rebate versus an exemption system. Farmers in my riding and indeed farmers all across Canada can thank Conservatives for this initiative appearing in the budget. Nevertheless, it is good to see that this issue is acknowledged, and that is a positive.

I also want to acknowledge monies targeted to agriculture in the form of incentives as part of programming to address climate initiatives. Practically speaking, though, the costs alone of fossil fuels, of nitrogen fertilizers is enough to encourage their judicious use. Despite that, innovation and environmental responsibility have always been hallmarks of our ag sector.

As the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has acknowledged, present viable, scalable technologies that reduce agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions are presently lacking. Given that, incentives to encourage development and innovation are far better tools than punitive taxes, as many witnesses at the committee have testified.

However, if there is one measure that has the potential to move the needle in the adoption of technology in the ag sector, it is the expansion of high-speed broadband to rural and remote areas. The further adoption of precision agriculture, a key technology to build on ag's strong track record of environmental responsibility, is so often hindered by the lack of high-speed Internet access, and the previous speaker echoed these comments.

While the \$1 billion amount announced for the universal broadband fund pales in comparison to other funding promises, it is the increased use of this technology that does have the potential to lower ag greenhouse gas emissions.

Given all the attention that the deficit of connectivity in rural and remote areas has attracted over the years, all of the promises, all of the election pledges, even before COVID-19, should have led to the ag sector, and indeed all rural Canadians, using world-class broadband infrastructure by now.

To quote a recent Western Producer editorial, "They didn't and we don't." The parallels between promises of increased high-speed access and national child care programs are eerily similar, often announced and seldom delivered.

Specifically, I want to point out the situation in my riding of Pelee Island. While the most southerly inhabited point in Canada, it can be considered as remote as, if not more remote than, many parts of our north. There is no reliable 911 service. As it currently stands, Pelee Island has no broadband Internet available to the public. Internet speed on the island is either dial-up or slow cellular hubs for existing businesses, residents and visitors with huge costs associated for small amounts of data. Stormy weather disrupts this service. Pelee Island is the very definition of remote, with only boat and air access in summer, in good weather, and only air access in winter, again, in good weather.

My riding lies in southwestern Ontario, a region serviced by the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology, or SWIFT for short. Ten per cent of Canada's underserved broadband area resides in southwestern Ontario.

● (1335)

Therefore, under the government's previous connect to innovate, CTI, program, SWIFT's share of funding should have amounted to \$58.5 million, yet the amount received was zero, not a penny. Similar to the structure of the previous CTI program, the government has chosen to administer the present universal broadband fund with no pro rata share provisions for under-serviced areas. This budget contains spending measures of \$509 billion, over half a trillion dollars, but Canadians were looking for a budget with a plan for growth, for investment in infrastructure and a budget with a debt management plan to recover from the huge impacts of COVID.

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I recently surveyed my constituents on a host of issues. Specifically on the statement that small businesses are the key to economic rebound in Canada, and 87% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Only 13% agreed or strongly agreed that multinational corporations were the key to our economic recovery. My constituents and all Canadians were looking not for a government-led spending plan, but a budget investing in infrastructure and creating the climate for a business-led recovery. The small businesses that I relate to in Chatham and Leamington, Blenheim, Ridgetown and many other towns in Chatham-Kent—Leamington need the confidence that their government will manage the country's finances well, so that the climate into which they invest is stable and predictable.

While this budget talks about some small investments in infrastructure and necessary measures to support small businesses affected by government, what this budget does not contain is a plan to pay for all of the election promises. There are no tax reforms, no financial guardrails anchored to fixed thresholds, no targets and no path to balance. These are the kinds of measures that give small business the confidence to invest and lead our recovery, and that is this budget's greatest failure.

Is this the spending legacy that we want to leave to our children and grandchildren? Last June I had the pleasure of announcing in the House the birth of my first grandchild. I also stated at the time that it was estimated that her share of the federal interest-bearing debt would be over \$39,300 at fiscal year end. I was wrong. According to the budget just tabled, her share of the debt as of March 31 is over \$43,300 and the budget predicts that her share of the debt five years from now will grow to over \$50,700.

Here is what really scares me. Today's budget has assumed an average interest rate-carrying cost on our present debt of 1.2%. Yes, today's interest rates are low, but these budget assumptions assume that the average carrying cost will only rise to 1.9% five years from now. This assumption is inconsistent with how the government is funding its annual deficits. The government is printing money to finance its spending and every time in the past when governments have done this, the economy experiences inflation. In fact, we already are.

Asset inflation is here, as anyone who is trying to buy a house or a two-by-four already knows, and the Consumer Price Index is sure to follow. What follows inflation? It is higher interest rates as the government tries to rein in inflation and prop up its currency, so I have very little faith that interest rates will average 1.9% on the government debt five years from now.

Who does this hurt? People who have assets with low debt like this scenario, but for those working for a paycheque, their wages seldom keep up to rising costs. Everyday Canadians do not want this inflationary future, so this budget, with so much unfocused inflationary spending, cannot be supported. We will hear the usual refrains from government members that we Conservatives want to have our cake and eat it, too. Conservatives have supported and will continue to support measures to support Canadians and small business, but not the reckless, uncontrolled spending without a plan for our grandchildren.

• (1340)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for acknowledging the first woman finance minister in history presenting this amazing budget.

Earlier in the debate, it was said that within four days we provided huge liquidity to help small businesses and provide mortgage relief for people who needed it and I would ask if he agrees with that. I am glad he supported infrastructure because record amounts are flowing across the country and economists say that is the best way to inspire the economy.

The member made a point about the debt. I wonder what items he would not spend money on to reduce the debt that he talked about.

Mr. Dave Epp: Madam Speaker, with respect to debt, there are hard choices that have to be made. I am not averse to debt, but this budget does not contain a plan that inspires confidence to invest among our small and medium-sized business owners. What kinds of carrying costs are they going to be facing in the future on the basis of the unfocused spending? There are, by some counts, 270 measures of spending in this budget.

The member acknowledged my support for infrastructure spending. I agree with that. Let us take broadband, for instance, with \$1 billion spread over several years. One billion dollars for something so necessary, in a \$500 billion budget, is 0.2%. I am a numbers guy, and that helps me bring perspective to this. There are many, many spending measures and they are not prioritized properly.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for sharing some interesting information about his riding. One of the greatest things in this chamber is that we get to hear about the vast diversity in our country. I learned a lot about his riding, so I thank him for that.

The best expression of where we are fiscally in this country is that we are experiencing a K-shaped recovery. Obviously, many sectors have really been hit hard, but some sectors have made massive profits. In fact, some of the richest Canadians have made about \$78 billion during this last year, so my question for my hon. colleague is on the revenue side.

Eventually someone is going to have to pay the freight. Does the member agree with the NDP that it is time we bring in some fair taxation measures so that we tax wealth, go after tax havens and close tax loopholes to get a fairer balance, or does he think that working Canadians are the ones who should have to pay for this spending?

• (1345)

Mr. Dave Epp: Madam Speaker, in principle, going after tax loopholes and tax havens are efforts that I would support.

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The member mentioned the diversity in income and the diversity in how this pandemic has affected different sectors of our economy. That is what I referred to in my speech. I have great fears about inflation coming. Those members of our society who have assets and who have low debt will profit. They will continue to do well in this scenario where costs and asset returns outstrip wages. It is the members of our society who are working for wages, trying to buy their first houses and trying to get into this economy that I have the greatest fears for when inflation inevitably follows uncontrolled spending.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer published a report stating that Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio will be 49.2% at best, if I remember correctly.

What impact might this have on our finances in the event of a future crisis? Does my colleague think that we have the necessary flexibility if we have to confront another crisis?

[*English*]

Mr. Dave Epp: Madam Speaker, I will not answer with my own words, but I can reference the report yesterday from Yves Giroux, in which he cites that very concern: With this spending, we are not positioned to take on another crisis. As the previous speaker pointed out, our debt servicing costs top \$40 billion. That is almost 10% now of the highest budget in history, which was just announced. That is what is in our future unless we bring some balance and a plan for our financial outlook to this country.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my good friend and colleague, the member of Parliament for Davenport.

It is a pleasure to speak on Bill C-30, an act to implement certain provisions of budget 2021. As I stated during the budget debate, we as a government will continue to have the backs of Canadian workers and businesses as we continue the fight against COVID-19, but we will also take the next steps to position our economy for ongoing recovery and economic growth.

Simply, our ongoing focus is to strengthen Canada's middle class and help those who are working hard to join it. That has been our goal since Canadians, in the fall of 2015, entrusted us with moving Canada forward. As we fast forward to today, that is what we are laser focused on doing as a government. Strengthening a growing middle class, for me, equals a more inclusive and fair society.

It is a pleasure to represent the entrepreneurial and hard-working residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge. I wish to take a moment to encourage all residents who are eligible to receive a vaccine, to please make an appointment as soon as possible. My riding is home to a number of hot spots, and we need to ensure that all of our families and friends are safe and that life can get back to normal quickly. That can only occur through vaccinations.

I describe the budget as ambitious in attempting to answer the challenges we face not only today, but also tomorrow. Bill C-30 begins to implement this ambitious blueprint to build a resilient and more inclusive Canada.

In 2015, we promised Canadians that we would reduce taxes for millions of middle-class Canadians and raise them for the top 1%, and that is exactly what we did. In 2019, we again promised Canadians we would reduce their taxes by raising the amount of income they could earn without paying federal taxes. Bill C-30 implements that promise.

Bill C-30 will raise the basic personal exemption amount from \$12,298 to \$13,220 for the 2020 taxation year and, once fully implemented, to \$15,000 for the 2023 taxation period. This tax reduction means that hard-working Canadians, including those in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, will see savings at the onset of \$2.9 billion. Once fully implemented, it will result in \$5.6 billion in lower taxes for 2023-2024 and thereafter.

It is estimated that hard-working individuals will save just under \$300 per year, while middle-class Canadian families, on average, will save \$600 per year. That is \$600 for middle-class families to spend on groceries, kids' after-school sports or arts programs, or to put away as savings for their kids' education.

The increase is estimated to result in an additional 700,000 Canadians, including seniors and young people starting their careers, who will pay no federal tax at all. Just as important is that approximately 40,000 more Canadians will be lifted out of poverty by this measure. That is real progress and that is smart policy. That is how to build a stronger middle class and help those working hard to join the middle class.

Millions of hard-working Canadians will benefit from this tax reduction and hundreds of thousands will be lifted from the tax rolls. It is great to see that the implementation of the basic personal exemption increase will be done. It is an idea that I have long championed and one I put forth in the 2019 platform.

Bill C-30 will extend the current support programs through to September, and will continue to assist Canadian workers and businesses that remain impacted by COVID-19. The CEWS and the Canada emergency rent subsidy are programs that I know literally hundreds of businesses in my riding have used, and continue to use during this difficult third wave of the pandemic. Budget 2021 provides certainty and clarity to Canadian businesses on both of these key support programs. The city of Vaughan is home to over 12,000 small and medium-sized businesses and they know that our government continues to have their backs during COVID-19.

Government Orders

Our goal must not only be to recover the jobs lost because of the pandemic, but to once again create good, middle-class jobs for Canadians. Bill C-30 spurs job creation with a new Canada recovery hiring program that incentivizes the hiring of new workers as we emerge from the pandemic. To build a fairer and more inclusive economy that works for all Canadians, we need to ensure that our tax system is fair and inherently progressive, and that loopholes, unfair tax evasions and tax advantages are prudently closed.

• (1350)

In Bill C-30, our government will move forward to implement measures that will limit the benefit of employee stock option deductions for employees of large and well-established corporations. Stock options are valuable and important incentives for newly funded firms, such as tech firms or start-ups, to pay their employees as they grow the business while cash flow, or as it should be referred to free cash flow, is very low. I know how important entrepreneurs are, and how they create jobs and take on risk, and they should be rewarded. However, for well-established firms the tax advantages offered by stock options should be limited. I advocated for this differential treatment of stock options. It is a large measure for tax fairness, which I am very glad to see in Bill C-30.

In line with our allies such as France, Italy and the United Kingdom, we will move forward with the implementation of a digital tax. Bill C-30 proposes implementing a digital services tax, at a rate of 3%, on revenue from digital services that rely on data and content contributions from Canadian users. The measure would apply to large businesses with gross revenues of 750 million euros or more. It would come into effect by January 1, 2022, and is anticipated to raise approximately \$3.4 billion.

We will continue to provide tools and resources to the CRA as it combats tax evasion to ensure everyone pays their fair share.

Our government continues to strengthen the disability tax credit and related programs used by Canadians with special abilities. Bill C-30 proposes to remove the time limit for a registered disability savings plan to remain registered after the cessation of a beneficiary's eligibility for the disability tax credit, and to modify rent and bond repayment obligations. This again fulfills a promise of our government to the disability community. As noted in budget 2021, an expansion of the disability tax credit would take place to provide further support and expansion to the number of disabled Canadians eligible for the DTC.

Bill C-30 implements our budget promise with a major expansion to the Canada workers benefit of nearly \$9 billion over six years and \$1.7 billion annually. Approximately one million additional hard-working Canadians will benefit, and 100,000 are estimated to be lifted out of poverty with a strengthened CWB. We have a moral obligation to ensure that work allows individuals to live in dignity. We know how important the dignity of work is, but we need to ensure that individuals who are working hard are not falling behind. I have long favoured the Canada workers benefit as an effective income support measure. Along with prior enhancements to the program, namely in budget 2018, approximately three million Canadians will now benefit from this program. The CWB's effectiveness was strengthened with automatic enrolment for the

non-refundable credit via the Canada Revenue Agency, which ensures all Canadians who are entitled to the credit will receive it.

In conjunction with the CWB increase, it is great to see that the minimum wage for federally regulated workers will be set at \$15 per hour and adjusted upward annually on the basis of the consumer price index in Canada.

Bill C-30 implements a number of measures for seniors and students, both of whom we know have been impacted by COVID-19 in different ways. For students, Bill C-30 amends the Canada Student Loans Act and also the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act. These amendments will provide students with approximately \$3 billion in relief. In addition, no students will have to begin repaying their loans until they earn \$40,000 per year. Combined, these measures will support an additional 121,000 students.

I wish to end by discussing our seniors, including my parents Rocco and Vincenza. These people built our country. They sacrificed, worked hard and built the strong foundations we now rely on. We know that our seniors, including my parents, helped build our country and sacrificed so much. Their fiscal prudence, work ethic and ingenuity continue to inspire me today.

We will fulfill our promise to raise old age security by 10% for seniors 75 years of age and older effective June 2022. This measure will benefit 3.3 million seniors, and is a \$12 billion investment in our seniors over the next five years.

• (1355)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask the parliamentary secretary a question that directly relates to his area of responsibility.

This pandemic is global in scope, yet the budget missed an opportunity to reform onerous direction and control regulations. Direction and control regulations are unnecessary red tape that reduce the resources our critical international development organizations can bring to the front lines to help the world's most vulnerable.

Statements by Members

I asked the Minister of International Development about reforms to direction and control. She said it was not her primary responsibility. Because this would involve changes to Canada Revenue regulations, I would like to hear clearly from the parliamentary secretary why reforms to direction and control were not included in this budget. Does the government see the need for reform of direction and control regulations? What is the government's view on the Senate bill from independent Senator Omidvar, Bill S-222, which proposes one way of reforming those direction and control regulations?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, obviously any changes to the Income Tax Act in relation to what the hon. member is asking this afternoon flow through the Department of Finance. I encourage the hon. member to raise his concerns directly with the Department of Finance, on the CRA side, which is the implementation side. I would love to learn about this further. I somewhat understand the issue the hon. member is raising, and we can take it off-line to discuss it further.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

BOB HARTLEY

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last week, a Franco-Ontarian from Hawkesbury and a proud ambassador of hockey made international headlines.

Last week, Bob Hartley, coach of the Avangard hockey team, won the Gagarin Cup, which is presented to the winner of Russia's Continental Hockey League.

Bob Hartley has had a career that our region can be proud of, and it all started with a great local team, the Hawkesbury Hawks.

After taking home the President's Cup in 1993 with the Laval Titan, the American Hockey League's Calder Cup with the Hershey Bears, and the Stanley Cup in 2001 with the Colorado Avalanche, he went on to win the Jack Adams Award in 2014 with the Calgary Flames. Last week, he added the Gagarin Cup to his list of achievements.

Congratulations, Bob. We are all proud of you.

* * *

• (1400)

[*English*]

SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month, and with summer just around the corner, the Save Your Skin Foundation is focusing on increasing awareness and promoting treatment for skin cancer. My wife Kelly is a melanoma skin cancer survivor. While she was fortunate enough to beat it, many others have lost their battle to the stealthy disease, and many others continue fighting.

It was estimated that in 2020 approximately 8,000 Canadians would be diagnosed with melanoma and 1,300 would die from it. Sadly, these numbers rise every year. Skin cancer is caused by

overexposure to UV radiation, with the sun and artificial tanning beds being the main culprits. In the past, I tabled a private member's bill that prohibited youth under 18 from using tanning beds and strengthened warning labels on artificial tanning equipment as carcinogenic. This was enacted by our previous Conservative government.

The good news is that prevention is easy. This summer, I encourage all Canadians to enjoy the great outdoors and be skin safe: Wear sunscreen, cover up, seek shade, avoid tanning beds and, of course, have lots and lots of fun.

* * *

FREEDOM KITCHEN

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I rise in the house to congratulate Freedom Kitchen on its grand opening. This soup kitchen, located in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, officially opened its permanent building, located next to Knox United Church, on April 19.

Since the start of its pilot project in October 2019, the volunteers at Freedom Kitchen have served over 20,000 meals to the community, many of which were served during the pandemic. Now, with a permanent building, this tireless community organization can build capacity, provide shelter and even help more people in Lower Sackville and surrounding areas. The volunteers at Freedom Kitchen, like volunteers across Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, have shown the strength and selflessness of our community by stepping up during difficult times and donating their own time to help others.

I invite all members of the House to join me in congratulating the amazing volunteers at Freedom Kitchen on its grand opening.

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[*Translation*]

QUEBEC CULTURE

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Quebec Liberal Party moved a motion in the Quebec National Assembly to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Quebec's Department of Cultural Affairs.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to join the Quebec nation's legislature in paying tribute to the men and women who stood up for and promoted our culture.

From Georges-Émile Lapalme to Nathalie Roy, Clément Richard to Maka Kotto, Liza Frulla to Louise Beaudoin, and all the rest, all of these ministers were strong supporters of a bold, vibrant and living culture.

Statements by Members

I would like to remind members that in order for Quebec culture to continue to flourish and to be seen and heard both here and around the world, it is high time that Quebec repatriated its historical share of all the federal powers and funding for culture, so it can take control of the cultural development of the Quebec nation.

Long live Quebec culture.

* * *

[English]

ALLEN KING

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the phone would ring, I would answer and be greeted with, “John, what do you want to help with?” It could be anything from a fundraising dinner to a charity gala to a political event. I never knew what it was going to be when Mr. Allen King gave me a call, but I never said no. No one ever said no to Mr. King.

However, he also gave as good as he got. A political nerd, Mr. King always jumped at the chance to help me with any of my campaigns. He was also the first person everyone called when they needed help with a fundraising event, for a local charity or a project, especially if it had to do with health care or education.

Last week the community of Okotoks lost a special person, a champion, an incredible leader, a respected businessman, a mentor and a dear friend. My heart goes out to the entire community, his friends and, most importantly, his family and his boys. Mr. King will be greatly missed, especially by the ladies. Okotokans will know what I mean when I say “over and out”.

* * *

[Translation]

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic is still affecting people's mental health in a big way. It is burdening young people, workers and seniors. No one is immune. Mental Health Week runs until May 9, and this year's theme is “Get Real”.

Getting real means naming our emotions, even the ones we do not like. Getting real means recognizing our feelings. Getting real means accepting that we are human after all.

Organizations in my riding of Alfred-Pellan are doing an amazing job of supporting those who need help. ALPABEM, the Centre d'écoute de Laval and La Ressource ATP are always there to help people in our community.

Our mental health is important. Our loved ones' mental health is important. Let us take the time to get real about mental health.

* * *

• (1405)

[English]

FOUNDER OF FRUITICANA

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize an outstanding member of the Surrey community for his generosity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tony Singh, the founder and president of Fruiticana, recently donated 23,000 pounds of food in two 10-tonne trucks to the Surrey Food Bank, and last fall donated \$100,000 to the Surrey Hospitals Foundation to support the Children's Health Centre at the Surrey Memorial Hospital. Tony Singh, his family and Fruiticana have stepped up whenever called upon, whether it was to welcome Syrian refugees to Surrey, support local charities or help B.C. cancer patients during the pandemic.

We have seen so many incredible acts of generosity from across the country in the form of donations and volunteering during these challenging times. We thank Tony for his generosity and support to our community.

* * *

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is something we have always known, but the past year has really brought it into the spotlight: Health care professionals in this country are incredible, strong and brave people who keep our families and communities safe.

Next week is National Nursing Week, a chance for us all to thank the amazing nurses in our towns who provide truly compassionate care. There is a good chance the first person we see if we have an issue is a nurse.

Just a few days ago, a second team of health care heroes from Newfoundland and Labrador voluntarily headed to Ontario to help its overstressed health care system fight back against the third wave of COVID-19. That team of seven people included two registered nurses from my riding of Long Range Mountains, Rory and Alice. I thank Rory and Alice and every nurse across the country, who help keep us all safe.

If anyone sees a nurse or knows a nurse, please thank them for the work they do. If people truly want to show their appreciation and help make a nurse's difficult job a little easier, they should put up their arms and get their COVID-19 vaccine when it is their turn to do so.

*Statements by Members***ALBERTA**

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Premier Ralph Klein used to say that Alberta is a place where a person can make a million dollars or lose a million dollars. Albertans are team players. We have contributed to the success of Canada through equalization, transfers and the boom that was our energy sector. However, the Liberal government continues to abuse Albertans and pass legislation that alienates prairie Canadians and costs us jobs and our livelihoods. In 2018, the Liberals kicked us while we were down by extending an old equalization formula designed for a booming resource economy even though royalty revenues were structurally anemic.

Albertans are frustrated. They have a right to be. That is why I tabled the equalization and transfers fairness act as a first step in getting Albertans a fair deal in Confederation. Studies show that the future of equalization is the fiscal convergence of our fiscal capacity. We are all getting poorer thanks to bad Liberal policies.

Let us secure the future of Albertans, vote yes on my bill, Bill C-263, and get a fair deal for Albertans in Confederation.

* * *

LOVE OVER COVID INITIATIVE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, love is more contagious than COVID. Today I am honoured to stand and recognize a leader in my community, Ken Foster, the founder of the Love Over COVID initiative.

After seeing other community members helping those in need, whether by delivering groceries for seniors or simply checking in on neighbours, Ken was inspired to bring positivity and spread love. Love Over COVID sells tote bags and graphic T-shirts with its slogan “Love is more contagious than COVID”. The simple idea is that we can stay six feet apart and build bridges between the small distances that separate us. The best part about this initiative is that after each purchase, Ken chooses a local food bank in the city the purchase was ordered from and donates all the proceeds to it.

I encourage everyone to visit loveovercovid.com to purchase a T-shirt and wear one forward to their friends and family. I am proud to have such a caring individual in my riding of Kingston and the Islands. I thank Ken for all of his efforts in promoting Love Over COVID.

* * *

● (1410)

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after losing their majority and finishing second in popular vote in the last election, one would think the Liberals would have sought to govern for all Canadians.

Instead, the Prime Minister is using a pandemic as an opportunity to bypass Parliament. Let us not forget move one was the Liberals proposing legislation that would give themselves power to tax and spend with no parliamentary oversight for 21 months. Although that blatant attempt at a power grab failed, the disregard for responsible government has continued. They had no budget for 25

months, proroguing Parliament to avoid the WE scandal investigation, shutting down committees and continuous filibustering to impede evidence of corruption from becoming public. Finally, they introduced Bill C-10 that would allow them to police what Canadians post on their social media accounts.

It is time for a responsible, ethical government. The Conservative Party is ready, willing and able.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is mental health week and the government's failure to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to the provinces is having deep and lasting impacts on the mental health of Canadians, especially those living in rural areas.

I have heard countless stories from my constituents about the many families that have been split apart for well over a year due to COVID, with no promise of reunification happening any time soon.

Those who live near the U.S. border are watching their American neighbours quickly get vaccinated, and they are keenly aware that it is the government's inability to deliver vaccines that is keeping them from their loved ones.

Seniors are some of the hardest hit, and with lockdowns severely limiting the number of people they can interact with, feelings of depression, anxiety and loneliness have sadly become the status quo for many.

With the inconsistent messaging and vaccine shortages, the Prime Minister's third wave continues to ravage our population's physical and mental health.

The Conservatives know that securing our mental health is key to a pandemic recovery, and we will work tirelessly to clean up the mess left by the government.

* * *

SPORT FISHING

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last summer, Canadians headed outdoors with enthusiasm. Proof can be seen in increased sales for domestic fishing licences. This was in addition to growth in the angling through outreach from entities like the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters or the Ontario Women Anglers, which increase and celebrate diversity in sport fishing.

[Translation]

As in previous years, these fishers were essential to local economies. With the U.S. border still closed, many family businesses are counting on domestic demand this summer.

Restrictions have been relaxed, so I encourage fishers to consider visiting my riding, Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, which offers new fishing adventures around every corner.

[English]

From tiny streams to the productive bays of the Great Lakes, Huron and Superior, the region has no end of opportunity for anglers of all abilities and is ready to host them at exclusive American plan lodges, housekeeping cabins, campgrounds and much more.

Whether it is for the trip of a lifetime or a weekend getaway, once people give this part of Ontario a try, they will be hooked.

* * *

[Translation]

RÉGIS LABEAUME

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, an earthquake struck Quebec City yesterday, and it was felt throughout our nation. Régis Labeaume will be stepping down as mayor of Quebec City after 14 years in office. Mayor Labeaume is, first and foremost, an ambitious visionary, bursting with ideas for his city.

The rest of Quebec first noticed him because of his fiery personality. We later came to see him as a pioneer, who foresaw the new role that cities would take in Quebec politics, and who was determined to make the only French-speaking capital city in North America shine.

He was with us as we went through difficult times, like the massacre at the mosque, and he is with us as we enter an era of great pride, with our culture more vibrant than ever. Business is booming, and Quebec City has earned a place among North America's major cities, without losing its unique character.

Régis needs to spend time with his family, who were generous enough to share him with us. After taking such great care of our city and our capital, he deserves to focus on himself.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to thank you for everything, Régis, and I hope your term ends on a high note.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are looking ahead to rounding the corner on COVID-19, and our country is at a crossroads. Our country's future is at stake and Canadians must choose which path to recovery they can trust.

Our Conservative recovery plan will secure our future to help those who have struggled the most through this pandemic get back to work with a stable, good-paying job. Our plan will take immediate action to help the hardest hit sectors, helping those who have

Oral Questions

suffered the most, including women and young Canadians. We will enact a comprehensive jobs plan to get Canadians back to work across the country and recover the one million jobs lost during the pandemic. We will work to support small businesses and provide incentives to invest in, rebuild and start new businesses.

I believe it is time for a new path forward, one of security and certainty. That is exactly what Conservatives can and will deliver.

* * *

• (1415)

[Translation]

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to talk about the benefits of budget 2021 as it relates to one of the priorities of my riding of Sherbrooke, social housing.

With or without a pandemic, many families struggle to access affordable housing every year, and this is also true in Sherbrooke. The low vacancy rate of 1.3% is alarming, and many people are still waiting for subsidized housing.

The budget builds on the efforts our government has been making since 2015. We have helped more than one million Canadians find an affordable home. This budget invests \$2.5 billion and reallocates \$1.3 billion to build and renovate more than 35,000 affordable homes across Canada.

Earlier this week, we announced the creation and renovation of over 1,500 new affordable housing units in Quebec. These investments will not only create jobs, but also make life easier for thousands of families.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Globe and Mail called the minister's performance "amateur hour" on Bill C-10. OpenMedia said that the Prime Minister has lost the plot with this bill. Michael Geist said that this legislation is an attack on freedom of expression.

This bill is a threat to Canadians' freedom. When will the Liberal government scrap Bill C-10?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our artists and creators are among the Canadians who have been hit the hardest by the pandemic. They are suffering financially and mentally. Bill C-10 brought them the hope that things would get better soon, with the promise of forcing web giants to invest in stories and music from Quebec and Canada.

Oral Questions

Today, the Conservatives are stalling Bill C-10, siding with web giants against Canadian artists and creators who are deprived of hundreds of millions of dollars. The real question is why the Conservative Party is siding with Google, one of the wealthiest companies in the world, instead of our artists.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, maybe I better share the reviews on the minister's law before he pulls the comments off-line.

The Globe and Mail called the minister's performance "amateur hour" on Bill C-10. OpenMedia has said that the Prime Minister and that minister have lost the plot with this law. Michael Geist, the leading expert, said, "Bill C-10 represents an unconscionable attack on the free expression rights."

When is the government and that minister going to listen to Canadians and scrap Bill C-10?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our artists are among the Canadians who have been hit the hardest by the pandemic. They are suffering financially and mentally. Bill C-10 brought them the hope that things would get better soon, with the promise of forcing web giants to invest in our stories and music.

The Conservatives are stalling Bill C-10, siding with web giants against Canadian artists who are deprived of hundreds of millions of dollars. Why is the Conservative Party siding with Google, one of the wealthiest companies in the world, instead of Canadian musicians and artists?

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the minister does not even understand his own bill. If the CRTC can regulate what Canadians see on their YouTube or Instagram feed, it can control what Canadians see and what they learn about any given topic.

Last year, that minister mused about licensing media companies. Now he is giving the government the ability to dictate which videos Canadians can see online. This bill is a direct attack on free speech.

When will the minister drop his talking points, listen to Canadians and scrap Bill C-10?

• (1420)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe the Leader of the Opposition should actually read the bill. Section 2.1 of the bill states that individuals who upload content on social media platforms, such as Facebook or TikTok, are not considered broadcasters. This means, Mr. Speaker, that you and I cannot be regulated by the CRTC. We have kept that clause.

Again, maybe the Leader of the Opposition should actually read the bill before he starts making statements on it.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec government never asked for a moratorium on the processing of skilled workers' applications. Workers, including nurses, must wait 27 months before their applications are approved by the federal government. In the rest of Canada, this step takes approximately six months. Why is this government making Premier Legault and Quebec wait an extra two years for workers in the midst of a pandemic?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that immigration is one of the key factors in the economic recovery of Canada, including Quebec. That is why we are bringing in the skilled workers that Quebec needs. We have welcomed more than 7,000 people, or 54% more than last year. We are on track to reach Quebec's immigration targets.

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[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the last five months, the Conservatives have asked the government 47 different times to take action regarding the Line 5 pipeline.

Thousands of Canadian jobs are on the line, from Alberta to Ontario to Quebec. The government is once again missing in action, and now the Michigan governor is calling the project a "ticking time bomb."

For the 48th time, when are Canadians going to see the government finally stand up for Canadian workers and for our natural resources sector?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people will not be left out in the cold. The heating of Canadian homes or the flying of Canadian jets or the operation of Canadian refineries are non-negotiable.

Line 5 is not just vital to Canada, it is also vital to the United States. Therefore, it is vital to all of North America. Shutting it down would have profound consequences. There are 5,000 direct jobs in Sarnia, 23,000 indirect jobs in the region, thousands of jobs at refineries in Montreal and Lévis, but also in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan, and that is the case we are making. Line 5 is essential for North American energy security.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claims that he was not aware of allegations of sexual misconduct against the chief of the defence staff. He claims he was never briefed about them by the Minister of National Defence.

He now knows that his Minister of National Defence received a report from the Canadian Armed Forces ombudsman a good three years ago. He knows that the minister did nothing and that, in addition, he kept him in the dark.

My question is simple: Does the Prime Minister think it is acceptable that his Minister of National Defence decided to withhold these allegations of sexual misconduct against the chief of the defence staff from him?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that when the information was brought forward, it was immediately passed on to non-partisan public servants at the Privy Council Office who are in charge of Governor in Council appointments and they followed up the next day. No politician should ever be involved in any type of investigation.

Nonetheless, we are going to stay focused on creating that culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces to make sure we have a harassment-free workplace in the Canadian Armed Forces. That is our goal.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, when asked why he was appointing a gender-balanced cabinet, the Prime Minister replied that it was because it was 2015.

Now it is 2021, and the Minister of National Defence has deliberately turned a blind eye to sexual misconduct complaints. It is 2021, and the Minister of National Defence has failed to apply Justice Deschamps' recommendations.

Because it is 2021, does the Prime Minister not think it is time to put an end to the culture of silence in the Canadian Armed Forces by replacing the Minister of National Defence and, while he is at it, by appointing a female minister of national defence who will take care of implementing Justice Deschamps' recommendations?

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that I absolutely disagree with the member's assertions. Any time any complaint was ever brought forward, it was immediately acted upon, just like this one. When Mr. Walbourne brought information forward, it was immediately acted upon and it was followed up the very next day. For the member to assert otherwise is absolutely false.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are in a global pandemic. We need to vaccinate all Canadians, of course, but we also have a responsibility to help people around the world. Poorer countries need the COVID-19 vaccine patents to be waived.

Oral Questions

Will the Prime Minister commit to supporting a waiver on COVID-19 vaccine patents, instead of protecting the profits of big pharmaceutical companies?

[English]

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has always been, and will always be, a strong advocate for equitable access to affordable, safe and life-saving COVID-19 vaccines around the world. We will actively participate in negotiations to waive intellectual property protection particular to COVID-19 vaccines under the WTO Agreement on TRIPS. This pandemic is not over until it is over everywhere and we will continue to work toward a just and speedy recovery.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the United States has already made a clear commitment that it will be supporting the suspension of patent protection. My question is very clear. We are in a global pandemic and we need concrete steps. Poorer countries are asking for a patent waiver so that they can produce vaccines and save lives in their countries.

Instead of protecting the profits of big pharmaceutical companies, will the Prime Minister support the patent waiver so that poorer countries can produce the vaccine and save lives?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me repeat my response. Canada will actively participate in negotiations to waive intellectual property protection particular to COVID-19 vaccines under the WTO Agreement on TRIPS. We have been a leader in the global effort to ensure there is equitable access to successful vaccines and critical medical supplies around the world and we are determined to continue our hard work with WTO members to reach an agreement and to find solutions that will accelerate the production and equitable distribution of vaccines.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer debunked the Liberal myth that the recent budget was about growth. In his report, Yves Giroux said the minister had overstated how much her avalanche of spending would boost economic growth. The minister claimed that her budget would create over 300,000 jobs, yet Mr. Giroux confirmed that only one-quarter of that number would materialize. This budget had nothing to do with growth, and everything to do with fighting the next election. Why did the minister mislead Canadians?

Oral Questions

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, it is that member who is misleading the House with his very question. The PBO report that he refers to examined only a portion of Canada's pandemic recovery strategy, and left out over \$30 billion in emergency supports to ensure households and businesses would be bridged through this pandemic so they can contribute to the recovery on the back end. Canadians can rest assured that, unlike the Conservatives, our government is going to be there for households and businesses in our communities, as long as it takes and no matter what it takes.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member completely missed my point.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer reported that this so-called growth budget would not grow the economy as promised. He said the minister had overstated revenues, understated deficits, and that much of her spending had nothing to do with stimulating the economy. Clearly, the minister exaggerated how much growth the budget would produce. What is clear is that this is not a growth budget, it is a budget that misled Canadians. In fact, the government used the pandemic to recklessly spend on its own political survival. Why?

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, the hon. member is wrong as a matter of fact and as a matter of principle.

On the facts, his partisan argument contradicts the evidence of the IMF, private-sector forecasts outlined in the budget, and major credit-rating agencies that have reaffirmed Canada's AAA rating.

As a matter of principle, his solution to the false problem that he depicts is to yank supports for households and businesses at a time when they need it most. Our strategy from the beginning has to be to extend a life raft to those households and businesses to prevent economic scarring, because we know that the economic recovery depends on everyone's participation when COVID-19 is a thing of the past.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only did the government take far too long to put out a budget, but it is also overestimating how much this budget will stimulate our economy. Its growth projections were twice as high as those independently calculated by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Some of its employment projections were even eight times higher.

As usual, the Liberals are posturing. What are they hiding from Canadians? Why are they artificially boosting their numbers?

[*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, the hon. member ought to appreciate that the economic growth projections included in the budget are the result

of the private sector forecasts, on average, by the major economists at Canadian banks. This is not something that the government has done for partisan reasons; it is designed to ensure objectivity.

One of those particular banks, Scotiabank, actually pointed to the growth agenda outlined in this budget, when it stated that, "Overall, measures seem well targeted to raise potential output by focusing on economic inclusion, the green transition and measures to encourage business investment." We know that to bust out of this recession, we need to invest in measures that will include growth, and that is precisely what budget 2021 is doing.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has no regard for the well-being of women in the Canadian Armed Forces. Not only did General Vance continue to serve for three years after allegations were made against him, but his replacement is also facing allegations of sexual misconduct.

In the meantime, the women who suffered because of these men will have to live with the ramifications of these experiences for many years to come. What is the Minister of National Defence's excuse this time for abandoning the brave women serving in our armed forces?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that measures that we have already put in place have not gone far enough and we need to move faster and we will.

That is why in budget 2021, we are committing \$236 million to eliminate sexual misconduct and gender-based violence in the Canadian Armed Forces. We are expanding the reach of the sexual misconduct response centre and we listened to our survivors and we are going to be adding online peer-to-peer support as well. All options to create a safer future for women who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces are going to be considered, to change the culture.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the media has been unrelenting in its criticisms of the defence minister and the Liberal government for their cover-up of the sexual misconduct allegations in the forces. The Toronto Star editorial board said, "[T]he fact remains that [the Liberals] betrayed its own feminist principles. Most of all, it let down the women who serve in Canada's military." And "what a failure." Through this minister, the Liberal "government abandoned the woman who brought forward the allegation against Vance three years ago."

Will the defence minister accept responsibility for his failure on this file and this unmitigated disaster?

Oral Questions

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member opposite to put the hyperpartisan politics aside and work together as parliamentarians so we can create the culture change that is needed for the Canadian Armed Forces. I look forward to the recommendations of the committee. As we stated, all options are currently on the table to make sure that we can take a much bolder step, because yes, we do owe it to our women in the Canadian Armed Forces to have an absolute harassment-free workplace in the Canadian Armed Forces, something we are absolutely committed to doing.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the correct answer would have been yes, he is responsible. The Toronto Star went on to say, “The Liberals would have done themselves a favour by rotating [the defence minister] into another position some time ago. But it's too late for that now.” It also said that the minister's “credibility has been so thoroughly shredded by the sexual misconduct scandals paralyzing the Canadian forces that calling for his resignation seems rather beside the point.”

The minister only has himself to blame. Will the Minister of National Defence admit he is the architect of his own demise?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will let the member opposite continue down the mud-slinging partisan politics and I will always remain committed to the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces, something that I have been committed to from day one. When it came to our defence policy adding the funding that is absolutely needed, we made sure that we had a gender-based analysis plus conducted in everything that we do. Absolutely, we have a lot more work to do. We have not been able to go far enough to support the survivors, but we absolutely will and we will get this done.

* * *

• (1435)

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, fraud victims should not have to pay the price for being defrauded, but that is exactly what the Minister of National Revenue is doing to victims of fraud involving the Canada emergency response benefit, or CERB. The minister is making them pay taxes on money they did not request or receive.

The Minister of National Revenue is telling them to pay now, that she will investigate and, if the victims are innocent, then she will pay them back someday. It seems to me that it should be the complete opposite. Can the Minister of National Revenue clearly tell victims to hang onto that money until the investigation is complete?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Bloc Québécois likes to stir up trouble and frighten Quebecers. I would invite them to stick to the following facts: Canadians who receive a T4A for CERB payments that they did not request should contact the Canada Revenue—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Manicouagan on a point of order.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to point out that the Minister of National Revenue did not have her microphone in place and it was hard to hear her, but I think she realized it at the same time.

The Speaker: I would like to remind all members to put their microphones in front of their mouths so everyone can hear them. We are all interested in what they have to say.

I invite the hon. Minister of National Revenue to repeat her answer.

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Bloc likes to stir up trouble and frighten Quebecers. I would invite them to stick to the following facts: Canadians who receive a T4A for CERB payments that they did not request should contact the Canada Revenue Agency as soon as possible. Victims of identity fraud will not be held responsible for any money paid out to scammers.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable. Why is the Minister of National Revenue unable to simply tell victims of fraud to hang onto their money until the investigation is complete? Why is it so hard for her to tell them not to pay taxes on income they did not receive and to wait for the outcome of the investigation?

Right now, the Minister of National Revenue's unclear messages are not being well received on the ground, nor by the victims, obviously. The minister must realize this. She knows that victims need to hear what she has to say, and she has to say it quickly and clearly.

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Bloc Québécois suffers from Pinocchio syndrome.

Victims of identity fraud will not be held responsible for any money paid out to scammers. I encourage those who received a T4A slip to call the Canada Revenue Agency.

We will do everything we can to support them.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is very difficult to get someone on the line. Furthermore, this fraud is causing a second major problem that the Liberals do not seem to have seen coming.

People will lose government assistance because fraud increases their annual income in the eyes of the federal government. In this case, they could lose their child benefit payments or their GST credit, for instance. They are being doubly penalized. Ottawa is charging them too much tax and cutting their financial assistance. Once again, these people are paying the price for being defrauded.

What is the minister doing to ensure that no one loses their benefits because their income has been artificially inflated by fraud?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the third time, I would like to say that victims of identity fraud will not be held responsible for any money paid out to scammers, and they will not have to reimburse the Canada Revenue Agency.

Oral Questions

I would like my colleague to encourage people to file their tax returns so that they receive the benefits and credits they are entitled to. That is important for the people who need it and for the most vulnerable.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Sarah and her husband had been trying to have a baby for 15 years, and their first little one finally arrived in January. Carrie is expecting her first children, twins, in August. Samantha has two little ones at home and a third on the way. What do these women all have in common? Well, they all lost their jobs due to COVID.

Most are on EI now, but all will have their first year with their babies cut short because the Liberal government is forcing them back to work, some of them only four weeks after giving birth. Why is the Minister of Employment cutting maternity benefits short for Canadian women?

• (1440)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since day one we have worked hard to improve and modernize the EI system. We have continued those efforts through budget 2021. We have introduced flexibilities into the EI system for last year and for another year, so women exactly like those referred to by the member can have easier access to maternity and parental leaves, as can all parents.

We know that there is more to be done on the EI file, and I look forward to working with my colleague on this effort, so every Canadian worker has access to better and more comprehensive supports.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the minister's remarks, this is not the first time the Liberal government has done this. We know that in March 2020, they barred pregnant women from receiving CERB, forcing them onto EI months earlier than planned and cutting short their maternity leave, yet here we are again.

The Liberal government, we know, is really showering money on everyone at unprecedented levels except, it would seem, on pregnant women. These pregnant women are really being left behind, and there is nothing they can do about it except reach out to their MPs and pray for a solution.

Mother's Day is coming up this weekend. Will the minister support pregnant mothers and restore their full maternity leave?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question, and I wish all mothers and caregivers across the country a very happy Mother's Day this Sunday.

We have been working to modernize and make EI more equitable since the beginning. This includes giving parents the choice of taking either 12 or 18 months for parental leave. We have also supported parents who face unique challenges from the COVID pandemic by providing them a one-time credit, enlarging our flexibilities and

extending them for another year, and setting a minimum benefit rate of \$500 a week for claims after September 27, 2020.

Of course, there is more to do, and we will keep working so that EI will be there for all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has repeatedly said that he will not let anyone down during this pandemic.

Unfortunately, he is letting down young mothers who cannot access the Canada recovery caregiving benefit, the CRCB, because they were unable to enrol their baby in day care between the second and third waves of COVID-19 so they could return to work. Creating a national child care system in 2022 will not solve this one-time problem.

Why is the Prime Minister, a so-called feminist, stopping moms from accessing the CRCB?

[English]

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that our EI system and the temporary recovery benefits support and include as many Canadian workers as possible and, in particular, women. As we know, they have been hit the hardest with this pandemic. We have introduced flexibilities, which mean that a person will need fewer hours to qualify for both regular and special benefits. We have extended these flexibilities for a year. We have a minimum benefit rate of \$500 per week for claims established after September 27, 2020.

We are there for all Canadian workers, women in particular, and we are committed to modernizing our EI system to be even more there for them.

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean on a point of order.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, during the exchange between the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles and the member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, I was hearing noise in the background. Unfortunately, it was hard to understand what was being said.

From what I see on the screen, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood's mike is not muted.

The Speaker: Our technicians are telling me that the member's microphone is now muted.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Oral Questions

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was absolutely delighted yesterday to hear that the U.S. government has recognized the extraordinary realities of COVID-19 and has committed to waiving intellectual property rights, putting the lives of millions of people ahead of big profits for pharmaceutical companies, yet we have heard nothing but platitudes, half promises and deflection from the Liberals. I am proud of Joe Biden and the United States government for its decision to support the TRIPS waiver.

When will Canadians be able to be proud of our government? When will the Liberals put people ahead of profits?

• (1445)

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government continues to be a leader in the global effort to ensure that there is equitable access to successful vaccines and critical medical supplies around the world. We will actively participate in negotiations to waive intellectual property protection, particularly to COVID-19 vaccines under the WTO agreement on TRIPS.

We agree that the pandemic is not over anywhere until it is over everywhere. We will continue to work with our international partners toward a speedy and just recovery.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has clearly failed to control the spread of COVID through our borders. The Liberals were slow to act. Measures have huge loopholes, and enforcement is weak. They apply hotel quarantine rules only to travellers arriving by air, leading thousands to simply cross at U.S. border points. Now we see that the Liberals are allowing two of the four Canadian airports that receive international passengers to fail at enforcing hotel quarantine rules at all.

Why is the government allowing travellers in Alberta and Quebec to ignore federal quarantine rules, leaving all Canadians vulnerable to variants of concern?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member that we have some of the strongest international travel measures in the world. In fact, all travellers who are travelling for non-essential reasons must submit to a pre-departure test, a post-arrival test, three days in a GAA after travelling by air, 14-day quarantine for all and a day eight test.

We will work with our provincial and municipal partners to ensure the Quarantine Act is enforced.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, this government has been championing the rights of official lan-

guage minority communities from coast to coast to coast, especially the Franco-Ontarian community.

As students at Laurentian face an uncertain future, they know this government will support them. Would the Minister of Official Languages tell the House what she is doing to ensure that Franco-Ontarians have access to post-secondary education in northern Ontario?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent work and his excellent question.

Those of us on this side of the House have always stepped up to protect francophones in minority communities, and we always will.

Post-secondary institutions are key to the vitality of our linguistic minority communities. I am worried, and our government is worried, about the Laurentian University situation. That is why we are working on solutions. We will work with the province and make sure there is a post-secondary institution for francophones in northern Ontario.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the award for letting the cat out of the bag goes to two Liberal members: the member for Kingston and the Islands and the member for Whitby. They admitted, here in the House, that if their government had done its job in procuring vaccines for Canadians on time, we would not be in this mess.

Canada is now in a third wave. The Prime Minister keeps making announcements about more vaccine deliveries, but Canadians are still waiting. Canadians and our small businesses are suffering needlessly.

Can the Prime Minister be just as honest as his two MPs and admit that we would not be here if he had acted on time?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to say that over 17.4 million vaccines have been shipped to provinces and territories to date, and as of today, 14.5 million doses have been administered across Canada.

Oral Questions

We are making tremendous progress, and it is really in partnership with all the provinces and territories, which are administering vaccines to people who are vulnerable to COVID, and in partnership with corporations, communities and unions. All across this country Canadians are getting vaccinated, and I encourage everyone to take get vaccinated when it is their turn.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals keep saying that Canadians should follow the advice of scientists. We agree.

However, this Liberal government has totally ignored the recommendations of the scientists who developed the vaccines. Scientists are saying that the second dose of the vaccine should be taken three months after the first and the Liberals maintain that it should be four months. Worse yet, a Liberal senator says that we should consider mixing and matching doses because of the security of supply.

Why are the Liberals playing with the health of Canadians to hide their incompetence?

• (1450)

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, those kinds of assertions are not what Canadians want to hear. What they want to hear is encouragement to continue on the path we are on because vaccinations are saving lives and stopping the spread.

Just recently, Public Health Ontario reported that, out of the 3.5 million Ontarians who have been vaccinated to date, only 0.06% have since become infected, and there were no deaths in any of those cases. In fact, the majority of the cases of infections happened before the 14 days. We will continue to work with provinces and territories to make sure that everyone can get vaccinated when it is their turn.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, given the need for clear, transparent and effective communications on advice regarding vaccine efficacy and safety, what concrete action has the Minister of Health undertaken this week to correct deficiencies and better coordinate public communications between NACI, PHAC, Health Canada, her office and cabinet?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we have been extremely clear throughout this vaccination process that vaccines do indeed save lives and stop the spread. I want to thank Public Health Ontario for its recent reporting, which demonstrated exactly that. I will continue to say that in this House. Certainly, public health leaders are saying that.

We know Canadians are stepping up to the plate. They are getting vaccinated. We will continue to deliver the vaccines to the provinces and territories. We will continue to be partners in getting those vaccines into arms. We can see the finish line, and we need to get there together.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no, the advice on vaccines from the federal government this week has not been clear. The confusing communications regarding vaccines the federal government has presided over cannot

be allowed to continue, and the person who has the responsibility to make sure this happens is the Minister of Health.

Can she acknowledge there is a problem and tell us what action she has taken, or will be taking, to correct deficiencies and better coordinate public communications between NACI, PHAC, Health Canada, her and her office, and cabinet?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be perfectly clear. Vaccines are indeed saving lives and stopping the spread of COVID-19. That is the goal that I think every member in this House would agree is an important one and that we are all striving for.

I will repeat this again: It is important that Canadians accept the first vaccine that is offered to them. If Canadians are questioning if vaccination is right for them, the best place to get credible information is from their health care provider or from a government website at the provincial, federal or municipal level. There are many players working to vaccinate Canadians. I would encourage all members in this House to get vaccinated when it is their turn and to encourage their constituents to do so as well.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulo, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for years now, the Bloc Québécois has been calling for the Davie shipyard to be awarded a polar icebreaker contract. Today's announcement is not bad news, but Davie still has not been named the third partner under the national shipbuilding strategy. No contract has been signed, there is no start date for building and no timeline.

Can the government tell us when we will get those dates? Otherwise, the announcement is nothing but electioneering.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is as grouchy as ever, I see. Before, they would say that there was no contract for Davie. Now they say that there is one. They come off as a bunch of grouchy Smurfs.

The Bloc cannot do anything for the Davie shipyard. The Conservatives never wanted to help the Davie shipyard. We are keeping our promises to Davie.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulo, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues will understand why I am talking about an election. The government had one contract for a polar icebreaker to award to either Davie Shipyard or its rival in British Columbia, Seaspan. In a surprise move, the government just announced a contract for a second icebreaker, this one going to Seaspan. However, that shipyard had an identical contract withdrawn in 2019 because it was unable to start building.

Essentially, the government is saying yes to everyone with no regard for Seaspan's construction capacity, timelines or costs. Are the contracts announced today meant to be election promises?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only party talking about an election right now is the Bloc Québécois. No one on this side has uttered the word “election”, that is for sure.

Today we are announcing excellent news for the people of Lévis, for the Davie shipyard and for the entire supply chain. It means thousands of jobs in hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses across Quebec. I would expect the Bloc to be happy about this.

What is clear is that the Conservatives never wanted to help Davie, the Bloc cannot help Davie, but we are keeping our promises to Davie.

* * *

• (1455)

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite signing an international agreement and giving companies five years to comply, the Liberal government has handed out major exemptions to its friends in big business to rules limiting HFC emissions. In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency sends such requests packing, as HFCs are a far more damaging greenhouse gas than carbon, while the Liberals said yes to these high-priced lobbyists.

Why is the Liberal government not forcing these polluters to invest in domestic facilities, like the United States does, instead of giving big exemptions to their highly connected favourites?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has committed to an 85% reduction in HFCs by 2036 through the Kigali Amendment, and we are fully committed to meeting our international obligations. The temporary permits that the hon. member references are given based on technical criteria and are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

We will continue to work with all industry stakeholders to ensure that we meet our international obligations to phase down HFCs and protect our environment.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I recently sent the Minister of Immigration a letter to once again condemn the endless delays in the processing of temporary foreign worker applications. Last year, I shared my concerns with him in a letter and also with the House. I also signed an open letter with 14 businesses from the region.

Nothing has changed. Businesses in Beauce are waiting impatiently for their workers. Millions of dollars in contracts are at stake. Will the minister continue to sit on his hands until the elec-

tion or will he finally take action on this file? The situation is wholly unacceptable.

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, temporary foreign workers are essential for our businesses, farms and health institutions. That is why we facilitated the arrival of temporary foreign workers throughout the pandemic. Last year, we welcomed more than 85% of the agricultural workers we were expecting. I will remain in contact with my colleague to move forward on this file.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 certainly is a convenient excuse for a lot of things. Did this government take advantage of the pandemic to hand out contracts and millions of dollars to its friends? Businesses in the Quebec region that have been operating for years and are accredited by Health Canada were ignored in the procurement of PPE.

Can this Liberal government, which was involved in the sponsorship scandal, assure us that this time patronage was not a factor when contracts were awarded during the pandemic?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout the pandemic we have provided billions of pieces of PPE, with billions supplied by Canadian manufacturers and suppliers. We thank them. We will continue to ensure we have the supplies we need to protect all Canadians throughout the pandemic.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mrs. Lyne Bessette (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, young people are the future of Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. Their ideas contribute to building a strong and innovative sector that is ready to meet the changing needs of tomorrow. For them to consider a career in the agriculture sector, it is important that they have contact with our farmers.

Can the minister tell us how our government will support jobs for young people in the agriculture sector?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that the youth employment and skills program in agriculture is now open.

This year, about 2,000 young people aged 15 to 30 will be able to benefit from the program. I invite employers in the agriculture sector, from the farm to the laboratory, to offer an opportunity for work experience and be inspired by the energy and vision of our young people.

The program offers support for 50% of wages to a maximum of \$14,000, plus \$5,000 for travel and accommodation costs if necessary.

Oral Questions

[English]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 1960, former prime minister John Diefenbaker's Canadian Bill of Rights has entrenched fundamental freedoms for Canadians, including the freedom of speech. Over 60 years later, the Liberal Party aims to muzzle Canadians' freedom of expression on the new public square that is the Internet. Technology evolves, but freedoms must stand.

Why in 2021 did the Liberals want to limit Canadians' freedom of speech? I have read the bill and I know the difference between a person and content.

• (1500)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, who is on the heritage committee, should know that proposed subsection 2(2.1) of the bill says that individuals who upload content from social media platforms are not considered broadcasters. He also knows that subsection 2(3) of the act states:

(3) This Act shall be construed and applied in a manner that is consistent with the freedom of expression and journalistic, creative and programming independence enjoyed by broadcasting undertakings.

He knows that full well and is trying to mislead Canadians.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently I asked the government how much debt interest costs when rates rise by 2%, which is the same stress test that new homebuyers are faced with. The Bank of Canada has announced that interest rates will be rising, so with \$40 billion a year being spent on interest, the government has already put critical infrastructure systems at risk.

Why does the minister not have a credible plan to manage debt and ensure that things like infrastructure, security and safety, clean drinking water and our health care systems are sustainable for the long term?

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 direct the hon. member to annex 3 of the budget, which lays out in specific detail the debt management strategy of the government. I point in particular to the fact that by fiscal year 2022-23, we anticipate that the raw debt servicing charges for Canada will be \$1.6 billion less than was projected in the fall economic statement of 2019, before the pandemic. The reality is that our AAA credit rating has recently been reaffirmed, specifically because of the measures we put in place to support households and businesses and prevent economic scarring.

The outlook for Canada is positive according to any economist with credibility in this conversation. I would invite further conversations with the member if he would like to dig into greater detail.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands accidentally told the truth last night when he said, "When the Conservatives come in here, they are only talking about vaccines. Yes, there is a lot we could have done...better...[in] making sure we were prepared." He went on to say, "Absolutely, if vaccines came sooner we probably would not be standing in this place right now".

Does the Minister of Health agree with her colleague that if we had been better prepared and she had secured vaccines for more Canadians, we could have avoided the Liberal third wave? I certainly do.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased that we have continued to advance the supply of vaccines into this country. In fact, over 28 million vaccines have been moved earlier than was initially planned, and we have vaccinated over 14 million Canadians to date. We will have enough vaccines to supply 48 million to 50 million doses between now and the end of June, and that is putting us at the very top of the G20.

We are going to continue our work to get vaccines into this country and to vaccinate Canadians as quickly as possible.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of vibrant small and medium-sized businesses in my riding of Richmond Hill, some of which have been hit the hardest during the pandemic. Two weeks ago, the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade had a productive meeting with the Richmond Hill SME community council.

Can the minister highlight some of the measures in this budget that are dedicated to entrepreneurship and growing small and medium-sized businesses in our communities?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure to be there with him.

Budget 2021 is the most small business friendly budget in Canadian history. From decisive action to lowering credit card fees to historic support for digital and technology adoption, we are making ambitious and targeted investments to accelerate job and business growth, driving a strong, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery.

Our small businesses and main streets are the heart of our communities and the backbone of the economy. I want small businesses to know that we have their backs.

JUSTICE

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Chuck Rifici, the former CFO of the Liberal Party of Canada, made a fortune when the Attorney General changed the pot laws. Now it is rumoured that Rifici is going to buy the troubled porn empire MindGeek/Pornhub. It is a company at the centre of international allegations of hosting child abuse and non-consensual sexual assault videos, yet the Attorney General has given it a complete free pass on its mandatory reporting obligations.

Why is the government ignoring its obligation to make these sites safe for survivors, rather than just a safe investment for its powerful Liberal cronies?

• (1505)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have taken significant steps with respect to the issue of exploitation of a sexual nature online. With respect to Pornhub, we have strong and comprehensive laws in place to ensure that those who exploit children face punishment to the fullest extent of the law. While the overwhelming majority of prosecutions of child pornography are conducted by the provinces, we know that in 2017-18, 3,380 charges were laid for child pornography offences, resulting in 674 prosecutions.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am beyond disappointed by the opposition members' fearmongering on freedom of speech, especially when they know they are spreading misinformation to Canadians. It is shameful. They are holding the Canadian cultural sector hostage for cheap political gain and are siding with web giants.

Can the minister please tell us about and clarify the importance of Bill C-10?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the bill is about making web giants pay their fair share, not about individual content. The committee decided to include social media companies to ensure that they pay their fair share to Canadian artists and musicians. Think of YouTube making millions of dollars on the work of Canadian artists.

Tonight at committee, I urge Conservative Party members to let the Canadian heritage committee continue its important work and not delay this bill any further.

[Translation]

The Speaker: The member for Lac-Saint-Jean on a point of order.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That the House salute and support the decision of the President of the United States to support the resolution presented to the World Trade Organization to temporarily waive COVID-19 vaccine patents for developing countries; and that the House ask the Government of Canada to also support this initiative.

Business of the House

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

An hon. member: Nay.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe if you seek it, I hope you will find unanimous consent of the House to adopt the following motion: That the House welcome and support the announcement of the President of the United States to waive the intellectual property, particular to COVID-19 vaccines, under the World Trade Organization provisions. and that the House ask the Government of Canada to agree to join the proposed negotiations.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

An hon. member: Nay.

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POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

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, in my response to the member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, I had a small slip-up. I referred to our debt management strategy being in annex 3 of the budget. It is in fact in annex 2 where the member will find the government's debt management strategy, including the reaffirmation of our AAA credit rating and the fact that Canada currently has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as you know, this being Thursday, it is time for an update on our parliamentary agenda. I would also like to remind the House that next week will be the fifth consecutive week of parliamentary work in the House and that we continue to work in our ridings seven days a week.

I would like my ministerial colleague, the Quebec lieutenant and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, to inform the House of the work that will take place in the coming days, since we are not lazy Smurfs.

• (1510)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend.

Government Orders

This gives me an opportunity to share with the House what we have planned for the coming days.

This afternoon, we will continue debate on Bill C-30, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures.

On Friday morning, we will begin by debating Bill C-19, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act, COVID-19 response, and then resume debate on the budget bill.

On Monday of next week, we will continue second reading debate of Bill C-19. In the evening, we will resume the concurrence debate on the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

[*English*]

On Tuesday, we will continue with second reading debate of Bill C-30, the budget legislation.

On Wednesday, we will deal with report stage and third reading of Bill C-15, an act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, next Thursday shall be an opposition day.

[*Translation*]

I thank my colleague for his question.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue has three minutes remaining for questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

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, many progressive measures are within the budget. One that is really quite encouraging is the support for child care throughout Canada. This would add so much value, not only to our economy but to individual families.

Could my colleague comment on that issue?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a national child care plan will quickly become a foundational pillar of our social safety net, of our social infrastructure. It will, of course, result in a higher participation rate for women, as many of them choose to re-enter the labour force on a quicker basis. It will result in families

saving money. In the riding I represent, in the York Region and in the GTA, it will represent a saving of literally thousands of dollars for Canadian families. Obviously that is very beneficial. It will also result in children receiving excellent care from ECEs across the country.

I wish to thank the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for bringing forth this initiative for Canadian families from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is constantly doing the right thing in listening to medical health officials. We would like it to do everything they recommend with respect to protocols around COVID-19. However, when it comes to the opioid crisis, the government fails to do the same thing.

Medical health officers across the country have said that the government needs to decriminalize the use of opioids to end the stigma against those who suffer with a health issue, not a criminal issue. We not only have one crisis, the opioid crisis, we have two. We have a political crisis that is killing people. It is standing in the way of doing the right thing and implementing health policy as recommended by medical health officers.

Will my colleague speak to why the government is not decriminalizing the use of opioids, end the stigma against those struggling with addiction and give them the help they need?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, the opioid crisis is a crisis in every sense. We have seen way too many lives taken from their families, especially young people in their 20s and 30s who have unfortunately passed due to this crisis. Our government has put in place literally tens of millions of dollars and has partnered with the provinces to try to stop this crisis. It is a very unfortunate crisis and we must do better, not only as a government but as a society.

• (1515)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-30, the budget implementation act, on behalf of the residents in my riding of Davenport. The last time I spoke on the budget, I ran out of time and so I will do my very best to be far more succinct today.

The truth is that this is a historic budget with a huge number of measures that will make a big difference in the lives of Canadians. In fact, in 10 minutes, it is virtually impossible to touch on all the reasons we need to pass the budget implementation act and to relay all the things that matter to Davenport, never mind all the important measures it contains for people right across the country. Instead, I will focus on a few key measures that may have been talked about a little less in the House. I will talk about the federal \$15 minimum wage, some of the additional measures and funding for immigration, and the huge increase in funding for a new national action plan to end gender-based violence.

However, before I get to those measures, there are two huge game-changing segments of budget 2021 about I am super excited. I truly believe that they are once-in-a generation investments in our future and that they will be key to our future economic prosperity and jobs.

The first is that we are building a national child care program, which aims to bring child care fees down to \$10 a day, will be key to the future economic prosperity and jobs in Canada. We are modelling the program on what Quebec currently does. This is a huge announcement for Davenport residents and families in my riding. We are located in the downtown west Toronto where child care costs are among the highest in the country, so I know they are really happy with this announcement.

Christine Lagarde, managing director of the IMF, spoke to our Prime Minister in July 2016. She said that to boost growth, we needed to employ more women. She indicated at the time that the participation rate for women was 82% in 2015, which was well below the 92% level for men. She also indicated that more women received university degrees than men, but their labour participation rate was 7% lower than men. Thus, there is a lot of room to tap into the underutilized female labour force to anchor strong economic growth. I am delighted that national child care will absolutely enable that. It is good for women, it is good for our economy and it is absolutely critical for Canada's success in the future.

The second game-changing element in budget 2021 is a green restart to our economy. Of all the letters and telephone calls that came into my riding of Davenport, if we exclude anything related to COVID, a green recovery and a green restart is top of the list. I am delighted that budget 2021 confirms a green recovery will be a core part of our strategy to create one million jobs.

In addition to the \$60 billion that we have already invested in climate action and clean growth since 2015, we have committed an additional \$18 billion in budget 2021. These new dollars will be allocated for more investment in renewables, carbon capture and to protect 25% of our land and water. This is in addition to the plan we announced in December 2020, which is outlined in a report entitled, "A Healthy Environment and Healthy Economy". For the first time in Canadian history, we included a very specific, transparent, costed plan on how we would reach our emissions reduction targets by 2030. I would note that we have become ambitious since that report came out in mid-December. On Earth Day last month, we announced that we would further reduce our emissions targets to 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030.

For years, Davenport environmentalists have been asking for a clear plan, and that has been delivered. I really want to thank the amazing leadership of the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change for ensuring that we are moving urgently and aggressively to net zero by 2050.

Beyond these measures, I would like to speak about a number of others things.

The first is that we are establishing a federal minimum wage of \$15 per hours, rising with inflation. There are provisions to ensure that where provincial or territorial minimum wages are higher,

Government Orders

those wages will prevail. This \$15 federal minimum wage will directly benefit over 26,000 workers who currently make less than \$15 an hour in federally regulated private sectors.

● (1520)

It is no secret that the wages of most workers have not been keeping up with the cost of living and that many Canadians are struggling. We know that the \$15 hourly federal minimum wage would be very welcomed by many across this country, and there is a lot of support for it from groups across the country.

The budget would make much-needed improvements to our immigration system. I believe that immigration is essential to Canada's economic future and positive economic growth. With our declining birth rates and increasing retirement rates, good immigration policy and funding will be fundamental to Canada's success moving forward.

I am the daughter of immigrants. My parents worked really hard to build a new life here and to contribute to a country that gave them a home and a safe place to raise their children. Indeed, 43% of my riding of Davenport are the first generation of their families in Canada. They were born in other countries, they specifically chose Canada to be their home and they contribute here. My office is a very popular spot for many immigration matters.

What improvements would budget 2021 make? Budget 2021 proposes to invest almost \$430 million to deliver a new digital platform that would replace the outdated legacy global case management system. It also proposes \$74 million to enhance capacity and service standards within the client support centre of the IRCC to ensure timely support by phone and email for inquiries related to services offered by the department. It also offers \$29 million to be shared between IRCC and the Canada Border Services Agency to maintain and enhance processing capacity for temporary resident applications. I pulled out these three examples, but there are a number of other items.

This investment is huge. It is a game-changer, and it is key to ensuring efficient processing of new Canadians and immigrants. Many of our offices are very much offshoots of IRCC. The better the systems are that we have in place to provide the most timely information to new Canadians and new immigrants trying to come to this country, the better it is for everyone, and the faster we will be able to get them here and contributing to our economy.

Government Orders

We are also proposing a number of other measures to support temporary workers who come to Canada. Among these are more dollars to support migrant-worker-centric programs and services, to increase inspections of the sites that employ temporary foreign workers, and to improve the service delivery of open work permits for vulnerable workers, helping migrant workers in situations of abuse to find new jobs. This is important to point out, because we are determined to treat our migrant workers right. They do so much for us, from our agricultural sector to our food processing and health care sectors.

The final thing I want to point out is that we are providing additional legal aid support, which I know is very important to West Toronto Community Legal Services in my riding. It is to make sure that we provide the support that is needed from a legal perspective to refugees and immigrants who might need it.

I am going to use the last minute and a half to talk about another thing I am really excited about, which is our commitment to gender equality. We truly believe in gender equality and have done so much over the last five years, from installing a gender-balanced cabinet, enacting proactive pay legislation and contributing over \$100 million to feminist and women's organizations, to tackling gender-based violence. I was delighted that we put in a historic amount of money, over \$600 million, to enact a national action plan to end gender-based violence. For us to truly achieve gender equality in Canada, it is absolutely critical that we tackle gender-based violence. I am delighted that we are making this commitment in this budget and putting real resources behind it to make sure that we put a plan in place to have a dedicated secretariat.

In closing, there are so many elements of this budget that are game-changing. It would not only lead to economic growth, more jobs, a green recovery and more equitable and fuller participation in our workforce, it would also support our low-income earners and offer a better immigration system and a real plan to end violence against women. These measures set Canada up to become a more prosperous, more compassionate and more just society. I encourage all my colleagues to support this bill.

• (1525)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member's speech. I am curious as to her thoughts about an increasing challenge to Canadian society, which is inflation. When inflation takes place, generally the only people who benefit are those who are wealthier and who own assets. Regular Canadians, especially those who are middle- and lower-income, are those who most often face the most significant consequences from inflation.

Does the member opposite share those concerns about the circumstances that would see growth in the inflation rate in our country?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I think the cost of everything is top of mind for everyone. It is definitely top of mind for those who live in my riding. I know the Governor of the Bank of Canada is very much keeping an eye on that. It is important to know that we have leaders keeping an eye out on that.

The other thing I would add is that all the measures we have put in place to support Canadians through this pandemic have helped

those on the lower end and our most vulnerable Canadians. They have helped give them a sustained quality of life and helped to ensure that they can afford to put food on the table and pay rent. We have been successful in doing so through all the emergency supports that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech, which I enjoyed. I have a very specific question for her.

It is about something that comes up a lot in my riding. I heard her say something about a fairer and more equitable budget. In the economic update last December, young families heard that the Canada child benefit would be increased.

I assume it was mentioned in the budget as well, but the benefit was supposed to be increased in January, then again in April and July, yet these families have seen no change in their benefits. It is a question that comes up a lot.

When will families see this increase in their child benefit?

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, we are very proud of introducing the Canada child benefit. It has provided wonderful support to families right across the country. My understanding is that it was through Bill C-14, the passage of elements of the fall economic statement, that the Canada child benefit increased. If it has not happened already, my understanding is that it should be happening very shortly.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, members are well aware that over 16,000 Canadians have died as a result of the opioid crisis. In fact, in British Columbia more people have died from overdoses due to fentanyl-poisoned drugs than from COVID-19. We have heard from Moms Stop the Harm, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Dr. Bonnie Henry in British Columbia and many medical health officers right across the country that the keys to tackling the opioid crisis are ending the stigma and decriminalizing them.

The Liberal government states that it listens to medical health professionals when it comes to the COVID-19 crisis. Why is it not listening to the medical health officers and all of these groups? We can save lives by decriminalizing opioids and ending the stigma for a health issue, instead of continuing to take the approach that it is a criminal issue. Why is the government not taking action? Why is it not listening to its own medical health officers?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for being so passionate about this issue. I completely share his passion on this. I know that Canada suffered a 74% increase in opioid-related deaths in the first six months of the pandemic. Budget 2021 proposes an additional \$160 million over two years to address the issue. We are working very closely with provinces and territories to not only look at safe supply, but to truly address this issue. On a personal note, I very much believe in treating opioid use as a health issue and not a criminal issue.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would first like to say that I will be sharing my time with my neighbour from the next riding over, the hon. member for Drummond.

This is the second time that I have been given the honour of speaking on behalf of the Bloc Qu b cois about the 2021 budget, the first in two years. This time, I am speaking to Bill C-30, which will implement some of the budget's provisions. First of all, I will reiterate that my party will vote in favour of this bill to implement certain measures in the 2021 budget.

We voted against the 2021 budget itself because the federal government did not fulfill our two main requests, namely adequate, recurrent health funding, which was the only formal request made by the Quebec government and echoed by the Canadian provinces, and an increase in old age security for seniors aged 65 and over.

As the Bloc Qu b cois critic for seniors, I fully support these two requests because they are vital concerns for seniors. Their anger is not going away. I am not the only one saying this. Many seniors' groups, including the R seau FADOQ, agree. Seniors aged 65 to 74, seniors aged 75 and over, and children and grandchildren under 65 are all feeling frustrated and bewildered. This is happening not only in Quebec, but in Canada as well, since I am also receiving emails in English and comments from anglophones outside Quebec who know that the Bloc Qu b cois is the party that stands up for all seniors.

I will therefore discuss three aspects of Bill C-30 that relate to my three main roles, namely critic for seniors, critic for women, and the one I am proudest of, member for Shefford. I will also address the extension of certain economic measures, with which we agree.

By refusing to increase health transfers from 22% to 35% in Bill C-30, the federal government is once again ignoring the request made by Quebec, the provinces, the Quebec National Assembly and the House of Commons, which adopted a Bloc Qu b cois motion on this subject in December, to significantly and permanently increase federal health transfers.

Government Orders

Bill C-30 offers only a one-time increase in health transfers, announced last March. This is certainly not enough to make up for the shortfall that existed well before the pandemic and was exacerbated by the crisis and by population aging. As we have said countless times, we are in a health crisis right now, so now is when we should be taking action, instead of waiting for the crisis to be over.

It is worth noting that the deficit announced in the 2021 budget is lower than anticipated. It is \$354 billion instead of the \$382 billion announced in the 2020 fall economic statement. By purest chance, the resulting margin happens to be exactly \$28 billion, the same amount that Quebec and the provinces are asking for.

By refusing to provide that money even as it gears up for a colossal spending spree, the government is not making a budgetary choice, but a political choice at the expense of everyone's health. After seniors waited so long, Bill C-30 finally includes the increase to old age security that the Liberals' promised during the 2019 election campaign. However, the increase will only start in 2022, will only apply to seniors aged 75 and over, and will only amount to \$766 per year, or \$63.80 a month. This increase is insufficient for seniors and for the Bloc Qu b cois. It totally ignores seniors aged 65 to 74, who account for practically half of all seniors currently receiving old age security.

The Bloc Qu b cois will continue to demand a substantial increase, namely \$110 more a month, for all seniors aged 65 and over. We do not accept the Liberals' argument that financial insecurity begins at age 75. However, we will not oppose the decision to give some seniors the assistance included in Bill C-30, which they need and deserve.

Seniors aged 75 and over will receive a one-time payment of \$500 in August 2021, which is consistent with what was announced in the budget. It is merely an election ploy, and seniors know it.

The bill also implements the 10% increase promised to seniors 75 and over. As of the quarter starting July 1, 2022, the full monthly old age security benefit will increase by 10% during the period when a senior turns 75. It is strange that the increase does not start until 2022. Is this another election promise?

• (1535)

The government is not doing as we asked, which is what seniors themselves asked it to do. It is creating two classes of seniors. Why increase old age security only once people turn 75? That is age discrimination, it is ageism. It is not true that only seniors 75 and older are vulnerable.

Government Orders

Once again, we are asking for an additional \$110 per month for all seniors 65 and up. Financial insecurity, poverty and rising prices do not wait until people turn 75 to kick in. Old age security is a universal program designed to compensate for loss of income after retirement. The Liberals seem to think that vulnerable people over the age of 65 do not deserve their attention. They seem to think that financial insecurity does not affect people until they turn 75. To top it off, all it would have cost is about \$4 billion. As my colleague from Joliette said yesterday, and as economics reporter Gérard Fillion wrote in an article, Canada's record on supporting retirees, compared to other OECD countries, is dismal. We are in 32nd place.

Second, as the Bloc Québécois critic for the status of women and gender equality, I note that the bill provides for a one-time payment of just over \$130 million to the Government of Quebec to harmonize the Quebec parental insurance plan, since the eligibility criteria and benefit period for EI have been temporarily modified and increased. Quebec has the right to opt out with financial compensation with respect to the maternity and parental benefits program.

Thus, if the government invests in improving its program, it must pay for the Quebec government to make a matching investment, the same way the government is giving itself the right to compensate any province that wishes to opt out of the federal early learning and child care program. This is a file we have talked about a lot at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. However, the spending authority for this child care program seems to be valid only for the next fiscal year, from April 2021 to March 2022, for a maximum transfer of \$3 billion to each province and to Quebec.

The budget document, as opposed to Bill C-30, mentions different program objectives and the possibility of an asymmetrical bilateral agreement with Quebec. There are two things we must watch out for. First, does the fact that Bill C-30 only deals with the 2021–22 fiscal year mean the government is covering the costs of establishing and improving the child care program until asymmetrical agreements are signed?

I should point out that “asymmetrical” does not necessarily mean “unconditional”. It is not the same thing, and it is important to be careful. The budget rightly mentions and praises the Quebec child care system several times, which it claims to be inspired by. The announcement that there will be an asymmetrical agreement with Quebec is a positive sign, but only if this agreement comes with, I repeat, full and unconditional compensation for the total costs and for the program's measures. This is also what the Quebec National Assembly is calling for. The expertise is in Quebec.

Overall, beyond the measures themselves, a new Canada-wide child care program provides another opportunity for federal interference. Family policies and all the associated programs come under the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. This is another example of a government that is getting into the habit of sticking its nose where it does not belong, as it is doing with many other measures, such as the national framework for women's health, the national framework for reproductive health, and so on.

Why create these unnecessary conflicts with Quebec and the provinces? Why does the federal government not mind its own business? For a government that claims to be feminist, it is time to stop playing “father knows best”.

As a final point, I really want to commend the resilience of our businesses and the strong entrepreneurial spirit that defines Shefford. They have been hit hard during the crisis, which is why we are asking that the income stabilization programs be maintained as long as necessary. It is clear that many sectors, including tourism and cultural and artistic events, will not resume normal operations until well after November 2021. These sectors are so important to the economic life of my riding, and they need to know that they can count on assistance as long as they need it. They have talked about the importance of predictability and flexibility. The Canada emergency wage subsidy, which has been used by many companies, including some in Granby's industrial park in my riding, will be extended to September 25, 2021, and that is great.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that our vote in favour of Bill C-30, which implements certain provisions of the budget, does not mean that we are giving the government a blank cheque. We will be watching closely to see how certain programs are implemented, especially for the hardest-hit sectors, including culture and media, which I am sure my dashing colleague from Drummond will talk about more fully in his speech.

As the member for Beloeil—Chambly often says, the devil is in the details, and there are certainly plenty of details in this budget. However, out of respect for everyone's health, and out of respect for our elders, who have the right to age with dignity by enjoying life, not merely surviving, we must act now.

• (1540)

[English]

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to talk about my colleague from the Bloc's comments on day care and how the federal government continues to intrude into areas of provincial jurisdiction. This Ottawa-knows-best approach that the federal government seems to have is something that I think should be concerning. I think we can all acknowledge the fact that there is an issue with the availability of spaces and the cost of day care. However, the idea that provinces cannot have their own models and compete against other provinces in terms of improving their services, improving their costs and improving whatever is next, I think, shows conformity rather than competition within the provinces.

Can the member comment on that and other issues she has with the Ottawa-knows-best approach being proposed by the government?

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks.

Government Orders

In the budget, the federal government's attempts to interfere are clear. This is the mistake the government has made in reacting to a crisis. It really wants to intrude in our jurisdictions and interfere in everything.

My colleague gave the example of day care. I repeat that it was Quebec that developed this expertise. It does not need Ottawa trying to play the wise old grandfather or father and offering advice, because Quebec knows what to do. In my opinion, the important thing is to have the ability to opt out and do what we have to do based on our needs.

I will repeat that the provincial governments and the Quebec government are in the best position to set their own priorities, especially with respect to education and day care.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for mentioning the situation about continuing shortfalls and health funding transfers. That is something that the Bloc and the NDP agree on.

While Canadians are struggling with the health and economic impacts of the pandemic, big companies can continue to hide their profits in offshore tax havens. Could the member talk about how unfair that is, how those who profited from this pandemic just are not paying their fair share?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I have to give a nod to my colleague from Joliette, because I know he would answer that there is still far too much tax evasion and tax avoidance going on and that we should be doing more about it.

Of course, that is where we could find some money, just as we could get money by taxing the web giants. We could also look for money elsewhere. Some major corporations are evading and avoiding taxes by illegal and sometimes even unethical means. We must recover this money and reinvest it, perhaps in health, where it is desperately needed.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivi re-des-Mille- les, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, who is always passionate and eloquent.

My colleague is right. The fact that the government does not want to improve the old age pension is causing a lot of frustration. Everyone agrees on that. We owe seniors so much more than this.

We have seen a rather odd phenomenon playing out at our constituency offices over the past few weeks, ever since the budget was brought down. It is not necessarily the people concerned, in other words seniors, who are getting in touch to express their dissatisfaction. The surprising thing is that it is their children and grandchildren.

How does my colleague explain the fact that the Liberal government is refusing to give even a tiny amount of money to seniors? The bottom line is that we are talking about 1% of the deficit. Can my colleague elaborate on this?

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and for his hard work. I know that he works

hard for the seniors in his riding, as do all of the other Bloc Qu b cois members.

I do not think there is any question that seniors have been in a precarious financial situation for a long time now. This was an issue before the crisis, and this crisis has only exacerbated the problem. Seniors are not the only ones feeling it. Their grandchildren can see it as well. One young man wrote to me about presenting a petition out of respect for his grandparents, because he thought the situation was unacceptable.

I even hear from seniors who are 76 years old and who say that they do not have more expenses than before and that their financial situation is not necessarily worse than that of their 73- or 74-year-old neighbour. They are insulted. They could not care less about the \$500 cheque if their 73-year-old neighbour is not getting it as well. They think that is unfair. The youngest and the oldest citizens recognize that it is unfair to leave out seniors aged 65 to 74.

• (1545)

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague from Shefford for her brilliant speech and for her work on behalf of seniors. Her work can be felt in my own riding, Drummond, which neighbours hers. The work she is doing for seniors is so brilliant and so serious that seniors in my riding recognize that the hon. member for Shefford is doing an outstanding job. I want to commend her.

I am very pleased to speak today to Bill C-30, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget. As my colleague said a little earlier, the Bloc welcomes this bill. Needless to say, it contains urgent measures; we all agree on that.

I would like to commend the government for its initiative to remove certain technical barriers that have limited access to media assistance. These include deductions for subscription fees for individuals and the wage subsidy for media outlets. This will be well received by our print media, although there is no telling when the Liberals will realize how much our regional media, especially our weeklies, need legislation to solve the problems of the GAFAM. Even today, the GAFAM makes millions of dollars in profits on the backs of the content of our media and cultural creators.

Division 17 of part 4 of the bill amends the Telecommunications Act, in particular by facilitating the exchange of information between levels of government. This will better coordinate Quebec's efforts to provide access to telecommunications services in remote areas. We very much welcome the fact that the government is taking away the right to review CRTC decisions in funding matters for underserved regions. This adds a layer of protection against the government's often ill-advised decisions related to high-speed Internet in the regions. Everyone agrees that the government has clearly shown that this is not its great strength. We have come to expect the Liberals to promise nice things without delivering on them. That is their signature.

Government Orders

Take, for example, the measures announced in the budget for tourism and culture. When the budget was introduced a few weeks ago, the cultural industry's spontaneous reaction was very positive. I had the same type of reaction.

The government announced approximately \$1.3 billion in assistance over three years, including \$400 million for large and small festivals; \$300 million over two years to create a recovery fund for arts, culture, heritage and sports sectors; \$500 million for a tourism relief fund; \$70 million over three years for the Canada music fund; \$105 million over three years for Telefilm Canada; and \$39.3 million over two years to support the book industry.

These provisions proved that the government recognized and understood the importance of helping the cultural industry. Many sectors of the industry were in a precarious situation before the pandemic for various reasons, one of which was the fact that the Department of Canadian Heritage's budget had not been increased since 2008. For 10 years, there were no investments in culture. The Liberals can lay some of the blame for that on the Conservatives because they undermined our industry by making \$45 million in cuts in 2008.

I would like to quote the Prime Minister, the chief expert in empty rhetoric. Yesterday in the House of Commons, he said, "when it comes to culture, Canadians are certainly not going to believe the Conservatives. That is for sure. As a government, we have always been there for creators".

As the philosopher Plato would say, that is an absurdity. The government has always been there in word. That is true. However, in practice, the Department of Canadian Heritage's budget did not increase from 2015 to early 2020. Why did the Liberals turn a deaf ear to the industry's repeated requests? The industry has been calling for an increase in funding for a long time.

I will not spend time talking about what the Liberals have not done because I only have 10 minutes. As an eternal optimist, I will focus on the future and tell myself that a little pressure and good collaboration might convince the Liberals to reconsider.

I was happy about all those measures I just listed, all those measures to help the tourism and cultural sectors, but I was deeply disappointed that the government opted not to include those measures in Bill C-30.

Festival season is coming, but the crowds will not be as big as they were two years ago because now we have public health rules to follow. Organizers are already busy preparing for this summer. As I said, they are happy with the funding set aside to help them. They now know that money will show up at some point, but they do not know when.

Arts and entertainment, festivals and tourism need predictability to survive, so I do not understand why the Liberals chose not to act fast to help the creators and artists they claim to stand up for.

Unfortunately, there are other flaws. Let us talk about the so-called digital services tax, or DST, which is a strange name, in my opinion. The chapter of the budget on the digital services tax starts off by saying, "The government is committed to ensuring that corporations in all sectors, including digital corporations, pay their fair

share of tax on the money they earn by doing business in Canada." It is there in black and white. However, this tax will not apply to companies like Spotify, Amazon Prime, Disney Plus, Apple Music and Netflix, who draw their income from user subscription fees.

● (1550)

This tax, nicknamed the "Netflix tax", will not apply to Netflix. This week in the House, I asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage questions about this digital services tax. To summarize, I asked why the government continued to give multinational web giants a free ride. The minister replied that I had it all wrong. He then declared that web giants would be taxed.

I know that the minister has a lot on his plate these days with all the questions about the environment. I will be happy to help him understand culture and communications a little better. The tax the Minister of Canadian Heritage was talking about was the GST, which is paid by consumers, not companies. Companies collect it and hand it over to the government.

Page 733 of the budget says that the digital services tax would not apply to companies that stream digital audiovisual content. The Bloc Québécois wants the digital services tax to apply to companies that stream this kind of content. The idea is that this money would be given to our cultural and media industries as compensation, as they have unfairly suffered from the arrival of the Web giants. The government, however, would rather put that money in the consolidated revenue fund than use it to help those that urgently need it.

Netflix streams audiovisual content, and Netflix and the others have a significant impact on our cultural sector, so Netflix is not subject to the Netflix tax. That speaks volumes about the government's understanding of the issues. The government does not need to thank me for my insights; if it has any more questions, it knows where to find me. Seriously, though, I am astounded that the Liberals do not appear to have a concept of fairness. The government seriously lacks courage in dealing with foreign companies.

I now want to talk about a topic that my colleague from Shefford raised earlier. This topic affects us all and considerably affects my constituents in Drummond. With Bill C-30, the Liberal government is finally getting to its 2019 election promise to increase old age security, but only as of the age of 75 and only by \$766 a year. As members know, this increase will not even happen until 2022. I think the House is well aware of the Bloc Québécois's position on this subject, but I want to give a voice to those who have been forgotten and who are affected by this.

This week, Mr. Bibeau called my office to share his disappointment with my team. He did not understand why the government made this choice to increase OAS at 75 only. He said, "I am retired. I receive the old age pension too and I think it is unfair that I am not getting that increase. My needs are no different from those 75 and older. I have to buy groceries and I have bills and rent to pay, just like them. I am not saying that I am jealous. I am happy that they are getting that money, but I do not understand this choice by the Liberals. I do not know if I am still going to be here when I am 75. I want to fully enjoy my retirement, spoil myself a bit and it seems that it would be a show of respect for the government to give this increase starting at 65 for all the years I worked and contributed, right?"

I understand and I share Mr. Bibeau's dissatisfaction, concerns and dismay. There are others like him: Mrs. Gaudreault, Mrs. Tellier, Mr. Paradis, Mrs. Guérin. Many people share Mr. Bibeau's point of view.

In Quebec, 19% of the population is over 65. In Canada, two million people are between the ages of 65 and 74, or two million people have been ignored by a government that made the choice to increase the pension at 75 as though the pandemic and the cost of living did not affect people 65 to 74. I think this deserves some serious thought.

I would now be happy to answer my colleague's questions.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there has been a lot of talk, in particular from the Bloc, about the age of 65 versus the age of 75, and the increase that is being proposed in this budget. There is data out there to suggest and to support that the older people get, the more they burn through their retirement savings, the more health costs they incur and, generally speaking, the more expensive life becomes, compared to what they have as they get older.

Is it the Bloc's preference that, rather than giving more to those over 75, less is given to everybody over 65? That is another option. We could take that amount that we were going to give to those who really need it, those who are over 75, and spread it out between everybody over 65. Is that the preference of the Bloc?

• (1555)

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I find it peculiar that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands would suggest that the opposition should have to make the tough decisions. What a ridiculous thing to say.

People have paid into their pension plans for their entire careers and their whole lives, knowing that they would retire at 65. That is often the choice people make when starting their careers, or at least it was a few years ago. They are entitled to their pensions. They have the same expenses, the same needs and the same cost of living increases to deal with. Health care costs may be higher or more of a burden at age 75 and above, but that does not make it any more equitable to allocate these increases only to those aged 75 and older.

Government Orders

If the member would bother to listen to his own constituents, he might see that this is not just a suggestion from the Bloc Québécois, but a concern of all seniors across Canada.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was going to ask about telecom, but I will carry on with this discussion. It is interesting that the parliamentary secretary's first response was to cut people back, whereas we know that people aged 65 and over are entering into or staying in the workforce longer because their pensions do not make—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe I was the one speaking, not a parliamentary secretary.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has a point. He is not a parliamentary secretary.

The hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, apparently things here are extremely sensitive, so I apologize and retract that part of my discussion.

The problem with people having to get jobs and work longer is that it squeezes out young people. I would ask my colleague how he feels about that. The response from the government is to cut back more people versus providing better supports, and that has a consequence for young people. Seniors or people wanting to retire cannot because they cannot afford it, so there are fewer jobs for youth.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and comments.

First, I believe that our colleague from Kingston and the Islands should have appreciated the impromptu promotion he was just offered.

I want to say that I find it quite odd to hear the government speak of making cuts so that the increases are fair, rather than just making the increases fair, especially when it has spent billions of dollars—quite recklessly, some might say—to help just about everyone and every business. The government likes to brag about that, and perhaps it just has a hard time treating all seniors 65 and up fairly.

It is not a matter of making cuts. They just need to treat our seniors fairly.

[English]

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to continue with what my friend was talking about, which is how the budget is created and why the Liberals continue to structure endless amounts of deficit spending around the COVID pandemic.

Government Orders

The member spoke to programs that are now being created. Even though the government is continuing to fail on a number of files, including clean water for first nations, veterans and the list goes on, it is entering provincial jurisdictions with structural deficits that will continue well into the future, whereas it should be encouraging provinces to have competition within themselves, rather than conformity with an “Ottawa knows best” approach. I would like the member's thoughts on that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I believe that my colleague knows full well what we think of federal interference in provincial jurisdictions.

I also believe that money should not be doled out left, right and centre as an election promise. I believe that the money that was promised for programs to help businesses and sectors that urgently need it should not be promises that will be kicked down the road. I was speaking about tourism and culture. I could continue in that vein by talking about health transfers, which once more are non-existent.

• (1600)

[*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, it is always a pleasure to be able to address the House of Commons, and this is a special time in that we are once again debating very important legislation. I am feeling very positive and encouraged because we presented, for the very first time in Canada by a female Minister of Finance, plan of action that would have a profoundly positive impact in every region of our country.

It is with pleasure that I encourage my colleagues across the way to recognize the true value in this legislation. As I suspect there is a chance a good number of opposition members will be supporting the legislation, we need to try to get it through the House of Commons in an appropriate and timely fashion, and not go through the same process we did with Bill C-14, given the very nature of the limited time frame we have to get government agenda items through the House of Commons. I encourage the House to deal with the legislation accordingly.

It is an exciting budget, therefore it is a solid and exciting budget implementation bill. Before I comment on that, I wanted to give a bit of a personal update on why I think Canadians should be feeling more positive and have a sense of hope. In the news in recent days and weeks, we have heard a lot about the coronavirus and how it is affecting our country, particularly some of those hard-hit areas, in this third wave. I am thinking of the province of Ontario and many of my Ontario colleagues, who are very strong advocates and who are expressing their concerns to make sure the Prime Minister and the House of Commons understand the severity of what is taking place in the province.

Last night we held an emergency debate regarding the hardships and impacts of the third wave in Alberta. No matter the area or region of the country, the Government of Canada, headed by the Prime Minister, is doing everything it can to ensure we minimize

the negative impacts of the coronavirus. As I have said on many occasions in the past, we have been there since day one on this issue.

The Winnipeg Free Press ran a wonderful story that reads something to the effect that bookings for the second dose of the vaccine could begin as early May 22. Vaccines are a major part of the recovery, and I am feeling very optimistic because of the numbers. Not only have we been able to, as a national government, secure the vaccine doses so critically important for our recovery, but we have also exceeded the numbers we told the provinces they would be receiving.

For example, for the first quarter, we said to Canadians before December that we were looking at getting six million doses. I think it was closer to nine million. Recently, we heard very good news about the total number of vaccines we will have before the end of June. We anticipate receiving somewhere in the range of 48 million to 50 million doses before the end of June. Keep in mind that we have a population base of 37.5 million.

We are on track and the numbers show that. Today's headlines regarding the number of doses in the province of Manitoba and the second dose reinforce that. For example, today we have had more than 14.5 million vaccine doses administered in Canada. We have actually received over 16.8 million doses, which have been circulated to provinces and territories. I believe we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

• (1605)

Contrary to what many of my Conservative friends would try to leave with Canadians, misinformation is not what we want. What we want to do is send a very simple message to Canadians today on ways they could continue to help and make a difference in fighting this pandemic.

The first and most important thing is to get the vaccine. When the opportunity is there to get the vaccine, Canadians should take advantage of it and get the shot. People ask which vaccine is the best one. As the Prime Minister, the Minister of Health and a litany of other leaders throughout this country have said, the best shot is the first available shot. I believe the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health got the AstraZeneca shot, because that was the first shot available to them.

Another thing that everyone could do is encourage others to get vaccinated. We have to appreciate that there are people who have concerns. For those who have concerns, we need to talk to them and explain in the best way we can how their concerns could be dealt with and how important it is that people get vaccinated, including those individuals who have concerns.

We need to listen to what our health experts are saying and what science is telling us. The best way, the healthiest way for Canada to recover and build back better is to build confidence in our communities, get people vaccinated and ensure that we continue to do whatever else we can. For example, in the meantime, we still need to maintain physical distancing. We need to continue to wash our hands and wear masks. All of these things are important, and every one of us could practise that, along with the promotion of getting vaccinated.

Government Orders

I believe that if Canadians look at the budget document being debated today, they will see that it fits with what the Prime Minister indicated 12-plus months ago. The first priority is indeed the coronavirus, and being there for Canadians in that very real and tangible way. I will get into that shortly. That was the first priority, and we need to remain focused on that. The second is not to forget all the other responsibilities that we have as legislators, cabinet and others who are feeding into the decisions, and the importance of dealing with all other aspects of governance at the national level.

I am very proud of the fact that this budget reflects those types of priorities. It takes into consideration the extension of programs that have been absolutely essential to support Canadians through this very difficult time over the last number of months. It does that by ensuring that there are extensions. The legislation we are debating today is going to be there to support those types of extensions of critical programs: the Canada emergency wage program, the Canada emergency rent support program, and the recovery benefits program, which is a takeoff from the CERB program.

• (1610)

When we go back to the origins of the programs, we find that the direct payments to individual Canadians have been an overwhelming success. Yes, there may have been some problems here and there that crept in, but the overriding concern of getting money into the pockets of Canadians was achieved by these programs. We are talking about just under nine million people. Members should think about that. Out of 37.5 million people, nine million were affected directly through a program of that nature. We can think about the jobs and the wage subsidy program, and how this legislation would enable the extension of that program. Do members know how many people it kept in the workforce during this very difficult time for companies? Tens of thousands, going into millions, of jobs were allowed to continue in good part because of this program.

I remember when the Prime Minister held a virtual meeting with some of the ethnic diversity of the province of Manitoba. The Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg was one of them. The council talked about the importance of the wage subsidy program and how it has allowed it to keep its doors open. The impact of the Folk Arts Council for the city of Winnipeg is tremendous. We need the folk arts. That is Folklorama, where we can talk about the arts and celebrate diversity. That is what Folklorama is all about. Not only did the wage subsidy program help employees in manufacturing and many other jobs, but it also helped in the area of arts and culture and non-profit organizations. We have many non-profit organizations that stepped up to the plate to support Canadians throughout the many different regions and communities within Canada.

The pandemic is not over. We need to ensure that those programs, at least in some fashion, continue on, and we see a government that, through this legislation and the budget, maintains that commitment. How many businesses are receiving the rent support program? Some businesses would say that had it not been for the rent subsidy program, it is questionable whether or not they would be able to open their doors.

Here is the problem with the Conservative approach to the last 12 months. The first couple of months, the Conservatives wanted to be part of team Canada, but toward the end of June of last year they

forgot that and put on the political partisanship hat. I do not care what any of them say; that is the reality. The Conservatives are more concerned about getting a political advantage than they are about contributing in a healthy way. I can demonstrate many examples of that.

I found it interesting listening to the Conservatives today. What are they talking about? They are talking about the debt, how much money we are spending, and how it is so much money. How many times did they support us unanimously in order for us to spend some of the money they are criticizing us for spending today? On the one hand, they talk about deficits, but I think they have some hard-right Conservatives in there. We have to look at the background of the Conservatives. There is a very strong reform element to the Conservative Party. It is not the same Progressive Conservative Party of the 1980s. There are a lot of hard-right personalities, going back to Stephen Harper himself. It is funny that they talk about caring for seniors. What did they do for the CPP? They did nothing. One of Stephen Harper's goals in life was to suggest the dismantling of the CPP.

• (1615)

The far-right Conservatives and their reform mentality are no friends to progressive policies that are helping Canadians today and will continue to help them into the future. Hobbes means a lot to them, the whole dog-eat-dog world type of thing. I do not believe for a moment that they would develop the same types of programs that we have put forward. There is a certain element within the Conservative rank and file that seems to be dominating the debates recently, which is on the far right with that reform mentality.

I believe, at the end of the day, that we needed to be able to borrow the monies to support Canadians. The Conservatives would have rather seen more bankruptcies, more personal debts. Where would the support have come from if people could not pay their mortgage or buy the groceries for their family? What would have happened because they could not work? That is why it was critical that we develop these programs. There is a progressive element within the Conservative Party that I believe recognizes that, but it seems to be a little more quiet nowadays and we rather tend to hear the others.

We see that in terms of the Conservatives' approach to the coronavirus. It is truly amazing. We can just look at some of the debate that took place last night about Alberta. All the Conservative speakers could do is think about how to blame Ottawa. This is all about blaming Ottawa.

Ottawa has been working with provinces, territories, indigenous leaders, stakeholders and so many others throughout this process, including many of those comments incorporated into the budget itself. When the Prime Minister said that we can learn from this experience and we can build back better, that is exactly what is taking place in this budget.

We can think of child care. Quebec has, over the years, developed a wonderful child care program. We are looking at ways in which we can expand that. Not only does the individual family benefit, but so does the economy. We know that. Economists tell us that if we can expand the economy by increasing the workforce, the contribution to the GDP will be enhanced. It is a progressive policy.

Government Orders

We could talk about other initiatives. We recognize that there were serious problems, for example, with long-term care facilities, so the Government of Canada listened to what Canadians in all regions of our country were saying about long-term care and the concerns they had, especially in the first six months or so of the pandemic, when there were some serious problems, to the degree that we had to bring in the Canadian Forces and the Red Cross to assist in our care home facilities. One thing that has come out of it is that we needed to ensure that there are some national standards dealing with long-term care.

My Bloc friends are really offended by that. I would tell them that even people in Quebec recognize the value of national standards for long-term care. That is something we need to see and, as a government, we are committed. Every Liberal member wants to see our seniors being taken care of properly and recognizes that Ottawa does have a role to play—

• (1620)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): On those words, we will go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of my friends said that was probably the longest 20 minutes they have ever spent, but I thank the member for bringing that forward.

I want to ask a question for this member specifically, because I know he thoroughly knows what is going on in this debate. One thing that is really missing in this is anything that is for new business owners. I have a list of new businesses that started operating, a lot of them at the end of 2019, that are folding right now. The owners have not been able to find any supports at the provincial, federal or municipal governments because everything is not taking into consideration prior to the COVID pandemic.

What is the government going to do to help all of those flailing business owners who just do not have the eligibility requirements that the current government has put forward?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I know and I can appreciate that there is a genuine interest from all sides of the House in regard to small businesses. I have witnessed that in listening to a lot of the debate. We recognize from a government perspective that small businesses are a backbone to our economy.

In fact, about a week ago, the Minister of Finance met with some of my constituents who were business women of Filipino heritage. One of the businesses was Jeepney's, a beautiful little restaurant that started up back in January last year. We are listening to what business owners have to say. There are going to be some opportunities for us to look at ways in which we can improve and support business owners.

I cannot think of the name, but I know the Minister of Finance cited the specific program and I will try to get the name of the program that might be of assistance to the small business owners that the member might be referencing.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech; as the previous speaker mentioned, it did seem fairly long.

I would like to hear what he thinks about the speech that my colleague from Drummond gave about the non-existent Netflix tax and the income opportunities that the government is depriving itself of. I am thinking of regional media, such as Le Canada Français, which is distributed in my riding and which is about to celebrate its 160th anniversary. There are no real support measures for that newspaper in the budget.

What does my colleague think about the importance of supporting regional media that provide good local media coverage?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member and other Bloc members continue to talk about the issue of the government supporting seniors. The Government of Canada, during the pandemic, gave one-time payment increases to people on GIS and OAS. We also gave a substantial permanent increase to GIS shortly after getting elected back in 2015. There are many other initiatives that we have taken.

In regard to the 75-plus, that was an election promise. In the 2019 election, we made a promise. We said that we would give a 10% increase to seniors aged 75 and older, and that is exactly what we have done. We have given an—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I note that the hon. member for Winnipeg North said the government members feel that they have done everything they could possibly do. I just want to let him know that the people in the tourism sector in my riding, particularly sport and recreational fisheries, just do not believe that is true.

The minister of fisheries has been sitting on a proposal for over a month that would have allowed limited openings for salmon fishing for April, and notice we are not in April anymore, and May, which would have helped the industry recover at least a bit of its business. Now that we are going to miss that limited opening, which would have had limited or no impact salmon stocks, this bill would allow the beginning of phasing out the CERB, cutting the CERB back, phasing out aid to small business owners, and phasing out the wage subsidy. How does this member respond to those people in tourism, and in particular sport and recreational fisheries, that this is everything the government could possibly do?

• (1625)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I only got to about point three on my speech and I probably had a dozen or so points to get to. One of the points that I wanted to highlight was that the NDP members want a home for everyone, universal child care, a more comprehensive health care system, a guaranteed annual income, no pipelines, billions more on infrastructure and they are going to get it by taxing the ultrarich. I think the NDP members at times do not live in the real world.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, unlike the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, I thought that the speech went extremely fast. By far the worst part of it was when you cut him off at the end.

In any event, I thought I heard the member for Windsor West earlier say that seniors were taking away jobs from younger people. I do not think that is the case at all. If anything, seniors are being asked to stay on for a couple of years longer. Certainly when my mother was a teacher, she was asked if she wanted to stay on. A lot of seniors are looking for opportunities to go back in their retirement to do part-time jobs quite often.

Would the member agree with the member for Windsor West that seniors would be taking away jobs from younger Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments and the question is excellent. I love our seniors, as we all do. Pre-pandemic, I used to go to the local McDonald's every Saturday and a few seniors worked there. The owner said to me, "how much I appreciate them, I cannot enough young people and I love having seniors work for me".

At the end of the day, I cannot ever see myself retiring per se. I think there are a lot of seniors who want to continue to work and I do not think we should be telling seniors that they have to retire. We have an economy that is healthy, that we will build back better and that there will be enough jobs for those who want—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have to agree with my friend from London and disagree with my friend from Kingston. That was a pretty long speech and I am glad you did step in.

However, I want to talk about the conversation around anything that actually disagrees with the Liberal narrative and of course, the member opposite was making comments that if we disagree with the Liberals, they are all right and list went on.

However, let us talk about what the Liberals did. The first thing they did after the start of the pandemic, they shut this place down for a number of weeks. The next thing they did was brought in legislation to neuter the opposition of its powers into 2022, giving the government absolute power to tax and spend wherever and whenever they felt like it. The next thing they did was the WE Charity scandal. After that, they prorogued Parliament. The list went on. Now we are seeing allegations of what is going on in the military that we have to look into.

All this stuff is happening and meanwhile the Liberals tabled this budget that structurally includes a deficit well into the future. When the member talks about day care, those kids who may, probably not, see this national day care program, they will be paying for that bill well into the future, but the services will not be there unless there are cuts or massive tax increases to pay for it.

Is the member opposite not concerned that they are setting future generations up for failure on this spending plan?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the short answer is no, I am not concerned because we are building a country. We are mak-

ing a healthier nation because of the investments that we are making today.

The member talked about last summer's prorogation and things of this nature. Tell me when the government sat in the summer prior to last summer? It is well over 30 years ago.

Tell me when it is that the government made itself available for thousands of questions to be asked of it over a summer period in a format sitting inside the House of Commons. I would have loved to have had that opportunity in my 20 years in opposition.

This is a government that believes in accountability and transparency. It is a government that believes in investing in Canada and Canadians.

• (1630)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my friend, the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

It took the government two years to table a budget, this in the midst of a social, health and economic crisis that this country has not experienced in generations. In the face of that, one would have expected the government to put forward a comprehensive economic plan to get Canada out of this crisis and on the road to recovery.

This budget is a long budget. It is a 739-page budget. Despite its length, when it comes to the fundamentals of getting Canada's economy back on track, it is, to put it generously, wanting. This budget has no plan to get Canadians vaccinated, no plan to get Canada's economy safely reopened and no plan to encourage innovation. There is no plan to address Canada's lagging competitiveness or attract investment to Canada. Simply put, when it comes to growing Canada's economy, when it comes to getting Canadians back to work and when it comes to sending a message to the rest of the world that yes, indeed, Canada is once again open for business, this budget misses the mark.

What this budget does do is usher in a sea of red ink, the likes of which this country has never seen. This budget provides for, last year, a deficit of \$354 billion. To put that in some context, the deficit for last year is three and a half times the size of the total debt that the government accumulated of \$100 billion prior to COVID.

It is hardly as though the government had a record of being good fiscal stewards prior to COVID. Indeed, the government left the cupboard bare during the good times, leaving Canada in a fiscally vulnerable position to weather the COVID storm. That is why, within months of COVID after the first tranche of COVID-related spending, Canada's credit rating was downgraded by Fitch and S&P threatened to do the same unless the government reversed course and got back on track with a fiscally responsible approach.

This budget does not provide any confidence in that regard. This budget will result in the national debt rising to \$1.4 trillion by the end of this year, which is double the national debt from a little more than a year ago. That is truly staggering.

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This budget will put the Prime Minister in the history books, but for all the wrong reasons. The Prime Minister will go down in history as the Prime Minister who accumulated more debt in the span of seven years than all Canadian prime ministers combined going back to Canada's founding in 1867. Again, that is hardly a record to be proud of.

In the face of all of this red ink, it is no surprise that there was no plan to get Canada's fiscal house in order and no plan to eventually see a return to a balanced budget, which the government inherited from the previous Conservative government under Stephen Harper, and completely missing from the budget was any meaningful fiscal anchor.

• (1635)

The only plan this budget provided is for spending, spending and more spending, burdening future generations like never before, with no end to deficits. This budget lays the framework for forever deficits.

The government likes to say that as we are in a pandemic, we have no choice and these are unprecedented times. That is true, and the COVID pandemic has necessitated some significant spending to help Canadians and businesses get through it, because Canadians are out of work and businesses are unable to operate in the way they were prior to COVID. At every step of the way, we in the official opposition have tried to work constructively with the government to see that there is targeted support and that it is delivered in a timely way to Canadians and Canadian businesses that need help. However, the government's excuse that all of its spending, deficit and debt are attributable to COVID can only go so far.

Under this budget, total program spending for the fiscal year 2021-22 is projected to be \$475.6 billion. Of that \$475.6 billion, only about 12% is related to COVID. In other words, 88% or so of the government's total program spending is unrelated to COVID. When we consider the \$475.6 billion in program spending, that is an increase of a staggering 40.5% from 2019-20 levels.

What this budget contains is massive spending, including billions and billions of dollars of new permanent program spending, despite the fact that the Prime Minister's mandate letter to the Minister of Finance called on the minister not to include any new permanent spending. It turns out that the Prime Minister's mandate letter to the minister was not worth the paper it was written on.

The government hangs its hat on and touts the \$101.4 billion in so-called stimulus spending. However, the Parliamentary Budget Officer notes that only \$36.8 billion of that so-called stimulus spending is related to COVID, leaving \$69.2 billion in so-called stimulus spending. The catch, however, is that, of the \$69.2 billion in so-called stimulus spending, some \$52.1 billion does not go out the door until 2022 and all the way to 2024. In other words, it will have no immediate impact, which is the very purpose of stimulus spending. It is no wonder that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has said, with respect to the government's so-called stimulus spending, that the government has "miscalibrated".

With all of the spending, massive deficits and debt, where are Canadians as a result of the government's approach? Canada has among the slowest economic growth rates in the G7; one of the

highest unemployment rates in the G7, a full 25% above the G7 average; and the highest level of debt, save for Japan. On top of that—

• (1640)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's speech, although I disagree with some of the facts that he has presented.

The Conservatives often make the remark in the House that Canada has the highest debt. However, what they do not tell Canadians is that they factor in provincial debt as well. In fact, Canada has a much lower debt-to-GDP ratio than the U.K., France, Italy, Japan and the U.S. It is just a fact.

I have a question about a theme that has been developing on our side. The Conservatives continue to say that Canada is spending too much. Will they, for once, identify just one area where they would cut?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, as a starting point, the government should abolish the wasteful Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which is very helpful to the Chinese Communist regime but very unhelpful to Canadians.

As for all of this spending, this budget projects \$40 billion in interest payments on the debt by 2026, which is significantly more than the government spends on EI and the Canada child benefit. There is a very real cost to all of this government spending.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He clearly indicated how the Liberal budget overestimates the impact of stimulus spending on the economy. That is what the Parliamentary Budget Officer thinks. He said that there is only \$69 billion in economic stimulus.

In my colleague's opinion, could the government have limited itself to that \$69 billion or could it have invested the \$100 billion that it invested but in a different way? That way, the government could have dedicated \$28 billion to health, as per the request of the provinces and Quebec. Which of the two options would my colleague choose?

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, with respect to the member's latter point about health, it is disappointing that we have seen zero dollars in the way of new transfers to the provinces for health, despite the fact that all 10 provinces have been begging and pleading with the government. I note that under the Harper government, health transfers increased by 6% annually.

With respect to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's findings, the Parliamentary Budget Officer projects, as the hon. member noted, that growth from the government's so-called stimulus will be half of what the government projects in its budget. As for new jobs, the PBO estimates only 74,000 new jobs, compared with the 344,000 projected in the budget. Without more, the government's so-called stimulus is a total flop.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that millions of people are worried about losing their jobs. At the same time, Canada's richest people have gotten richer. We have seen excess profits for large corporations that have benefited from the pandemic.

The NDP has gone to the PBO and costed out an excess-profits tax. It would get \$8 billion from the companies that profited from the pandemic. We would get \$9 billion from a 1% wealth tax on people with over \$20 million. We could close tax havens, which would generate tens of billions of dollars in taxes.

Does my colleague believe that we should be charging the super-wealthy and those who have made a profit on the pandemic, instead of leaving this on the backs of everyday Canadians? We know that paying down the enormous deficits that have been incurred will mean either a tax increase to the middle class or cuts in services. Does my colleague support ensuring that those who can afford to pay for it should pay their share?

• (1645)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives believe in lifting up all Canadians by reducing taxes, getting Canadians back to work, attracting investment and making Canada more competitive.

When it comes to everyday Canadians, life is becoming less and less affordable, in part because the government is printing money and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton gave us so much information, and I think we have all learned from it. If I add what I heard from him to what I have to say, we will have a fulsome speech, because like him, I want to talk about individuals. I will get to that.

I am giving my speech from the riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, and to begin, I want to talk about families, individuals and businesses. We know they are all going through a very difficult time, and I do not think there is a member of Parliament who has not heard the challenges. We have all heard extraordinarily heart-wrenching stories, and we want to make Canada a better place.

I am going to start with some of the positives. I have heard a lot of people say that we are being negative about this, but let us be honest: Last year, if it were not for the opposition parties, there would not have been a wage subsidy to keep businesses afloat. The initial wage subsidy program was 10%, and it was increased later on after pressure from a lot of people on my side, my Conservative colleagues who were small business owners and accountants, and

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from other colleagues who sit in the other opposition benches. The wage subsidy program is something I can support in this budget.

We know people are continuing to struggle to keep their businesses open. We are hearing a lot of information on this from the CFIB, the St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce, in my area, and a variety of other sources. They are indicating the difficulties that many businesses are having. In my local economy, 17% of businesses did better during COVID; however, we have to look at those that did worse. I therefore support the wage subsidy, as having this bridge so we can continue to work out of this crisis is absolutely what we need to do.

The same thing goes for the rent extension. It is another program that had to be tweaked and changed. Again, opposition parties, in particular the official opposition, worked to ensure this it was a good program. I want the government to know that when it comes forward with something, it is not the only one to have great ideas. I can say that all colleagues have brought forward some very good ideas that were adopted by the government in the early days of the pandemic.

There is also the Canada recovery caregiving benefit. Unfortunately, I see that some of my neighbours are still having—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are having issues with the member's connection and the interpretation is not working.

We can now hear the interpretation well, so the hon. member may resume.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Unfortunately Ontario continues to see lockdowns, and people are pointing fingers. I will be honest, if we knew there were vaccines, if we knew it was safe for Canadians to get back to work and for children to go back to school, if we knew things would recover at a quicker pace, then I think we would have a lot more faith. That is why the Canada recovery benefit is very important. I do appreciate the extension of it.

This is where I want to get into CEBA loans. This where I want to change where we are going. I had recently asked the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader about these types of things. The government improved the Canada emergency business account. It went from \$40,000 to \$60,000, allowing business owners to keep up to \$20,000. There have been some changes to that, such as repayment of loans and a variety of things.

My concern today is for those entrepreneurs who have been working to start new businesses. In my riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, a number of businesses have remained on the line of whether they will fail or make it through is incredible challenge. It is an extremely difficult for them. When they call my office, I refer them to the Elgin Business Resource Centre, or the Enterprise Centre, or their banks. I suggest a variety of different things. However, when they are not eligible for these programs, the answer remains no.

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We know that a lot of these programs have a list of restrictions. I did get a message back from the office of the minister for small business minister to inform me they had an appeal process for CE-BA. It was supposed to be rolled out for people who were denied that assistance, but there still is no appeals process. Shortly, the government will have something so if people want to know why their applications were denied, they might be able to find out.

Those are some of the issues that I continue to have. I have to wonder why the government would not have put something like that in there, knowing that small mistakes could be made. One of my constituents was denied the assistance because there was a reversal on his business account number. He had to reapply and he continued to be denied. To me, that is a very simple slip-up.

However, when people are feeling choked out because of we are going through COVID-19 and the fact that they have to revert to some of these restrictions, something as simple as a transit number on banking information could get transposed, something that we could all switch so quickly and the government does not have a mechanism to deal with that. It is very concerning.

I will talk about a few more businesses.

In the community of Dutton, Margaret Perry opened up a place called the Daily Grind Cafe and Gift Emporium. Unfortunately Margaret opened her business in December 2019, and did not qualify for any of the COVID relief programs.

We have Angela Player, and Angela will do sensationally one day, I have had what she has to offer. She has a business called From the Vines. She is unable to show an up to 20% decrease in her revenues. Angela has invested over \$60,000 into her business, but her business has never had that normal period for comparison purposes. I know Angela's business, From the Vines, will make it, but the COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest barrier for her and there are no programs to assist her. Nobody is there to help her. Her hands are tied. When I referred her to some of these smaller organizations that did get the federal funding, because of the eligibility requirements, they would not assist her.

I think of someone like Craig Voakes. Craig owns what is called the Squad Box in St. Thomas. It is a business built around providing pre and post-game nutrition, hydration and recovery products to hockey, soccer and baseball teams.

As a parent, I am one of those crazy moms. I am on the sidelines, cheering along. I think Craig sees people like me as a perfect person to make a business around. A lot of us will give to our children. We want to ensure they have great opportunities, but our children are not playing hockey, soccer or any of these indoor sports right now. For somebody like Craig, whose entire business is built around that, he does not have the opportunity. As well, Craig started his business in December 2020.

Then there is Purely Wicked. If people come into the city of St. Thomas, I tell them to go to Purely Wicked. It is a fun place and it has so many great little things.

• (1650)

Kim, who owns Purely Wicked, now employs two people. It started it in 2019. She had nothing to which she could compare her

information. It is exactly same thing for Shawn Devrie at Given Shop. Some of the six or seven different businesses I am talking about are within half a kilometre, so we are looking at storefront after storefront that may have to close because there just have not been any opportunities.

Finally, I want to end with Karen Nixon. She has worked extremely hard. Before she had her children, she was working three jobs in the physical health field. When I saw that, I knew she would make it. Years ago, she and her husband made a business plan. They worked with F45 Training, which has a way of building its business case. However, what happened to Karen was similar to everyone else. Karen had started her business and would run it while she continued to work. She was laid off because she was in physical health field and there was no business for her.

Last summer, at seven o'clock, each and every, in the morning, people would work out in our backyard because she needed to run her business. That was a year ago. She still cannot open her business today. Therefore, I think of people like Karen and Gary, who I know have given their entire lives and all their savings to their businesses and they have been left without.

I have so much more to add to this, but my biggest concern with this budget is it seems to touch on so many things. It is unfocused and just throws money everywhere, but it does not give direct money for programs to help entrepreneurs and small business owners, the people who create jobs and are the engine of our economy.

• (1655)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London for bringing up all the programs that have helped Canadians and businesses get through these difficult times. I thank her for hinting that the government brought in largely NDP programs.

While the Conservatives support these programs that have helped the country survive over the last year, they are constantly asking who will pay for them. The NDP members think that it should be the super-wealthy who pay, the people who have made billions and billions of dollars over the last year through this pandemic.

Therefore, I would ask her again. Who do the Conservatives think should pay for this? I would ask the member not to say that she will rely on trickle-down economics.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, people do look at who will pay for this? Honestly, it is called tax reform. We need to look at the whole taxation system. I know that some great people are looking at this. There are inequalities across the board. I will not disagree with the member on that. However, what we are seeing are bits and pieces. We know there are so many loopholes and we need to look at those. We need to look at the bigger picture.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Elgin—Middlesex—London. It was an honour to work with her at the Standing Committee on Status of Women last session. I know she will take a keen interest in women's issues and, of course, a she-covery.

She spoke at length about support programs. Many women-owned businesses are smaller. They are very small businesses that have a hard time meeting the eligibility criteria for the various programs. Many of these businesses are in sectors that might take longer to recover from the crisis. We see lots of women in the cultural sector, in tourism and even in the restaurant industry.

Does my colleague agree that supporting these women during the recovery is important and that the programs should be extended, at least for them, until the crisis is over?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I really have enjoyed working with my colleague from Shefford over the last number of years. There has been a huge economic impact to women especially through COVID, but it is just on the economics. As a mother, a daughter and a grandmother, I look at not just the economics but the mental side to this and the supports that are needed.

I have said many times that many people are being crushed right now. As a mom, as a daughter, I am trying to ensure my parents are taken care of as well as my children and that is very difficult. Right now, we need those social supports to ensure our mental health is taken care of. On the economics side, we need to ensure there is the flexibility. Flexibility is extremely important. We need to find a balance between work and children and parents. We need to reinvest in that.

• (1700)

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, the member's speech covered a lot of ground and a lot of programs that we need to help people. I appreciate hearing her talk about the social programs we need to help people at this time. I know a lot of small businesses in my community are having a hard time. They are disappointed with the amount of money that came in for tourism dollars, because a lot of small businesses rely on tourism.

One of my concerns again is about the profiteering that has happened during this pandemic. We now know some 47 billionaires have a quarter of a trillion dollars of the Canadian wealth. They have gained \$78 billion during this pandemic and they need to pay their fair share. Does the hon. member think they should pay their fair share as well?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, at the end of the day, if people make more, they pay more. That is very common. We already see that in the grading system of the tax system, but it should still continue to be reviewed.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is great to see some of my colleagues having a good laugh, some good discourse and a level of levity, despite the challenging circumstances.

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I am very pleased to have the chance to speak to Bill C-30, which is the budget implementation act. I had the chance a couple weeks ago to speak to the budget writ large, and I am going to use my time here today to highlight some investments that may not be the headlines, but which I think are extremely important to what the budget represents in terms of major proposed programs.

I will start with the continuation of the emergency measures. Nova Scotia was not under lockdown two weeks ago. We had not suffered from the third wave that other jurisdictions in the country had. Right now we have over 1,000 cases in the province, which seems relatively small, but per capita it is quite significant.

These measures really matter. The government, by continuing the emergency wage subsidy, the rent subsidy and the Canada response benefit, the suite of programs, until September, with the ability to extend it under the legislation, illustrates that this is extremely important. I think I would be remiss if I did not start from that basis. Our government is committed to getting Canadians, individuals and businesses through the pandemic, and that is extremely important.

I want to talk about biomanufacturing investments. The budget would allocate \$2.2 billion toward these types of initiatives. We know that coming into the pandemic. I think all parliamentarians, and indeed all Canadians and countries around the world, on the other side of the pandemic, are going to be asking themselves what the key industries we will need to make sure we have domestic capacity. Whether it is for an event like COVID or some other type of event, the country needs to have that capacity.

For me, one industry would be agriculture, but of course, biomanufacturing is important. Our government has made investments throughout the pandemic. We are committing to making sure this does not happen again.

I look at companies in my own riding. For example, in Windsor, Nova Scotia, there is BioVectra, which has its base in Prince Edward Island, but which also has a presence in my riding of Kings—Hants. I think of BioMedica. These are the companies we can build, and we can continue to nurture that local expertise to make sure we have the capacity in our country in the days ahead.

Long-term health care was something I heard a lot about during the height of the pandemic, particularly when the reports from the Canadian Armed Forces were presented on the conditions in Quebec and Ontario. We need to be able to create national standards. We need to do better in this domain.

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Yes, it is the domain and the jurisdiction of the provinces, but the federal government has shown leadership on health care initiatives, and it is really important that there is \$3 billion in the budget to help support those standards. This is on top of the fall economic statement, which had a billion dollars allocated directly to the provinces. Of course, my colleagues and others have talked at great length about the programs that have been put in place, such as the safe restart program, to help support provinces. I wanted to highlight that for Canadians who might be watching here today and, indeed, for my own constituents.

We know that the cost of the pandemic has been significant, and our government, from day one, has said we will be there with individuals and small businesses. The deficit is about \$355 billion this year alone because of that support, which we determined as a government was a better path than the economic scarring that would come of not intervening in a positive way.

It is important that this budget helps create and drive economic growth to make the spending we have taken on during the pandemic sustainable over time, so I want to take an opportunity, and hopefully my colleagues will listen with intent, to talk about some of the important measures in the budget that I think need to be highlighted.

I wrote in September 2020 about regulatory modernization and regulatory reform. This is an important element for small business and businesses across the board. I tip my cap to my predecessor, Scott Brison, who was president of the Treasury Board during the last Parliament. He served with great honour and respect in Kings—Hants for 22 years, and I consider him a mentor and a friend.

He took a great leadership role in the last Parliament on regulatory reform, and we are committing to build on that success in this budget with \$6.1 million dollars allocated to continue efforts on that front at the federal level. I think that is extremely important.

Regarding interprovincial barriers to trade, estimates suggest that we could be losing somewhere between \$50 billion and \$130 billion to our economy every year because of internal barriers to trade. We would be allocating \$21 million over the next three years toward trying to reduce those barriers and have co-operation between provinces and territories on harmonization of standards. We have a lot to gain in efficiencies and economic outcomes by working within Canada, and of course this is building on the success our government has already had in the last Parliament.

• (1705)

I talk about this a lot, but it bears repeating. We have an emerging wine sector in Kings—Hants. We have world-class wines. We know that the excise exemption that was created under the late Jim Flaherty in 2007 when he was the finance minister has been important to the success of our 100% Canadian wine industry. I am very pleased to see our government has committed \$101 million over the next two years to help support the industry.

Of course, that is on the heels of the existing excise exemption being deemed not trade compliant. I look forward to working with the Minister of Agriculture and my colleagues to help keep driving those initiatives to support the sector in the days ahead. The ability

to create interprovincial trade would allow small businesses in my riding of Kings—Hants to take advantage of that.

It is very difficult for consumers in Ontario or Quebec to enjoy some of our wines. I would encourage my colleagues to look at some of the many vineyards we have in the area. I am happy to provide recommendations. We need to be able to break down those barriers. I am proud our federal government got rid of any type of barriers at the federal level. I hope my provincial or territorial colleagues who might be watching can also take some leadership in easing and facilitating trade across provincial and territorial boundaries.

I do not think the Canada Small Business Financing Act has warranted a lot of conversation in this House, but I want to highlight some of the elements that are there. We know, particularly in rural communities, the importance of small businesses and what they mean with respect to providing jobs and opportunities for people in our communities. We are committing to expanding the loan eligibility under the Small Business Financing Act and increasing the maximum loan amount to \$500,000 for non-real property loans.

We are also opening up opportunities for non-profits and charities. I have spoken at great length about the important role our volunteer sector plays, particularly in rural Canada. I am very pleased to see it will have access to financing under this mechanism as well, and a new line of credit option.

We will help reduce credit card merchant fees. How many of us are paying cash right now? Not a whole lot of people. I am the type who still likes to have a bit of cash in my wallet, but more and more people are using credit or debit cards. Our government is committed to help reduce the merchant fees associated with online or credit card transactions. I see this as a very positive step. I know there are restaurants and many different retail businesses that will welcome this type of thinking.

I also want to talk about the \$1.9 billion for what is the national trade corridors fund. I sit on the agriculture committee, and I consider myself an advocate in this House for agriculture-related issues. This national corridors trade fund is crucial to helping make sure we have important links to get our many wonderful Canadian agriculture products to export markets. I am very pleased to see this.

Also, there is additional money, over \$500 million, for the borders to improve trade and travel. I think about the chicken producers who talk about spent fowl at the border. This money could go to support those types of mechanisms to protect our supply-managed industry, which I know is so important to so many members in this House and, indeed, to many Canadians.

I will finish with three quick points.

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One is around significant investments in the aerospace industry. In Kings—Hants, Halifax Stanfield International Airport is just outside my riding boundary, but we have thousands of jobs in my riding that are tied to the aviation industry writ large. I am very pleased to see those types of investments in the budget.

I often talk about my riding in the context of agriculture, but in the same sense we are a coastal community. We are home to the highest tides in the world. The \$300 million over the next two years for small craft harbours is extremely important.

Finally, there are historic investments for indigenous communities. I have three indigenous communities in my riding I am proud to represent. I am also proud that our government is continuing on its legacy and good work around reconciliation.

• (1710)

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am curious to know what my colleague's take is on the amount of debt and deficit that would occur with this budget, not only in this current year, but in the couple years to follow.

If we are paying \$40 billion or more a year just on interest to service our debt, that will have a negative impact on the sustainability of some of our social structures and programs moving forward and on maintaining them in the years to come. I would appreciate his opinion on that.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I think any conversation about fiscal prudence in government is an important conversation. However, what I would say to my hon. colleague is that when we look at the budget annex, the debt-to-GDP ratio over the next five to six years is expected to decline. When we look at the cost to service the debt right now, despite the fact that we have taken on a lot of debt, of course, important debt to support Canadians, it is actually lower than what it was pre-pandemic.

I look at this plan and, yes, there is a significant amount of spending, but it is focused on jobs and on the creation of opportunities for Canadians. Ultimately, it is a fiscally prudent plan, and one that I look forward to supporting and talking to my constituents about in the days ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I just want to remind our colleague that, even though the budget was positive, we voted against it. However, we will be supporting this Bill C-30.

We voted against the budget for two reasons. First, the health funding it contains is not enough. We want recurrent funding, and we want it to go up from 22% to 35%. Second, as my colleagues mentioned earlier in their speeches, we want the government to increase old age pensions.

I have a question for my colleague. We are all familiar with page 733 of this brick of a budget, which says that Netflix is not subject to the Netflix act. Would the member please share his thoughts on that?

[*English*]

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I would say to my hon. colleague that I am quite disappointed that the Bloc will not be sup-

porting the budget. There are a lot of very important investments that matter to Quebec and, of course, to his constituents as well. Although it does not come as a surprise, it does come as a disappointment.

The member referenced the brick, which I call an important document that has many great ideas for Canadians. Of course, if we are going to put out a vision that matters for the days ahead and for the future, it has to be comprehensive, and that is why it is quite substantive.

The member had a question that referenced page 833, but I was lost in the interpretation. I am happy to follow up with the member about Netflix and digital giants. I know that our government is focused on closing the gap in that regard, but perhaps I can follow up with my colleague offline to get to his question.

• (1715)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Kings—Hants for his speech, and I would like to let him know that two of my best friends have just decided to retire to his riding. However, it may not be altogether good news for him, because they are not only personal friends, they are political friends and terrific organizers.

My question has to do with tourism. I heard the member talk about all the great things in the budget, but in the bill, we see we would start phasing-out support for small businesses, and phasing-out and cutting back on the CERB.

In my riding, we are about to lose our second season for international tourism, and it seems way too early to cut those supports, which people need to survive in the tourism industry. I wonder if the member finds the same thing in his riding, and that the phasing-out of the tourism support is coming just a bit too early.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I will have to connect with the member offline to see who those political friends are. I will watch with interest, and maybe I will try to swing them into my camp, no matter how hard that could be.

The member raises an important question around tourism. I talked about the highest tides in the world in the area that is Kings—Hants. Many people from around the world want to come here.

There are a couple things that I would point the hon. colleague to. First, there is \$500 million specifically for regional development agencies to support tourism operators. Also, the member's question was around the emergency supports, and yes, there is a declining amount starting in July, but the intention is to carry them on until September. At the end of the day, our government's approach, since day one, has been to adopt them as the health information comes out.

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We do not know where we are going to be in September. Certainly, the vaccinations are on a good track. My hope is that by September we can be opening up and starting to relax some of the regulations that we have in place. All this to say that we have the flexibility in the legislation to be able to meet the needs of businesses, and we will do just that.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-30.

Before I start, I want to acknowledge and thank the voters for putting together a minority Parliament. I came here during the majority government in 2002. I have experienced majority governments for the Liberals and the Conservatives, as well as minority governments. I have found that this Parliament, at least, has been much more flexible and cooperative in many respects than the previous government, which had a large majority. At that time we heard that a lot of the things being proposed in this budget were unattainable for Canadians, such as child care and increases to employment insurance.

I am proud of the member for New Westminster—Burnaby and others at the finance committee. With all of the presentations that have taken place, they have consistently come forward, arguing for better programs, investments and choices than we currently have. I became a New Democrat a little bit before Jack Layton, but when we got with Jack, we were more into proposition than opposition.

We are proud to have influenced this economic situation and challenges for Canadians, in bringing the Liberals to some action on items that we had been told could never be done. We were told there were not the finances for them or that they were bad for the economy and all sorts of different things.

During the majority government we had before, very little got done. A lot of things were put off. I think now we see much more activism in the base of Parliament. At times there is high drama, but definitely, as a minority Parliament, we have gotten more accomplished than we did in the previous government where getting any of these things done was often mocked. I point to the increased supports for small businesses, the wage subsidy and the CERB, all of which were basically left out of the initial response to the pandemic, including student debt. I could not say how many times I have stood in this chamber and argued that interest should not be applied to student debt because it is an investment. Interest would bring on further debt. Debt also delays family experiences because people have to put off life decisions. As opposed to paying down the interest on loans from the banks, that money could be going to investments for people's futures and also to our communities.

The problem that we have with some of the issues in this budget is that they do not get rid of the problems for the future, but just kick them down the road a little bit. The increased benefits for seniors are a good example: They are divided between people who are 65 and people who are 75, and division is not what we need now with COVID-19.

I look at what this arbitrary age division would mean for my constituency in Windsor, Tecumseh, Essex, and all the regions around us, as we have a significant senior population. We have a lot of people with health issues. The ecosystem that we are a part of includes the pollutants drifting from the United States as well as from our

own industrial base, and means that the risks to people's health are much higher than elsewhere. We have scientific evidence of this. One of the reasons I got involved in politics at the federal level was the Gilbertson and Brophy report, in which the Chrétien government at that time tried to hide a government study showing higher rates of cancer, thyroid issues, respiratory issues and all kinds of issues for infants. All of those different things came to light.

What I am suggesting is that the age factor for seniors really makes no difference. The risk factors are almost the same. The government is dividing those people. I do not know why, when what we are having to invest is pennies in the overall scheme of things. That money, for the most part, goes to paying for rent and food. It goes into the local economy. It allows people to live with dignity. It often goes for medications. We still do not see a pharmacare element to this bill, which is unfortunate. When we look at the investments we also do not see dental care, which is really crucial.

That is why New Democrats are continuing to present the government with options they can look at. The U.S. administration under President Biden brought in a wealth tax. Many other countries have done that as well. There are, quite frankly, winners and losers under COVID-19 for a lot of different reasons. Part of that is public policy.

• (1720)

For good reasons different businesses have had to close or amend their business practices. It has been very challenging for them, through no fault of their own or anybody else, but to prevent the spread of COVID they have lost their regular income. That is why these employment subsidies are important. Other businesses have emerged from this and have really done quite well. We do not hear about insurance companies having problems because business is very lucrative right now.

We can see from the work done at the industry committee that the telco giants have done exceptionally well during this time. I will give some credit to them: There have been improved incentives for consumers, but the volume of products that have gone out has risen exponentially, as have their profits and their responsibility to help offset some things right now.

There is no petroleum monitoring agency in this budget. Gas pricing, the hosing of consumers and the lack of accountability are still significant problems in Canada because we do not publish the rack pricing the United States gets. There is less accountability for that in Canada. A petroleum monitoring agency was supposed to be brought in by the Paul Martin regime, but it was never fulfilled. A motion passed in the House of Commons that it was supposed to be established. It was created, then it was defunded, and then when the Conservatives took power it was off the books. It languished and was in the works for a long time. It took us years to even try to get it. That was an oversight of a basic thing. As a result, people pay more out of pocket.

There are still significant public subsidies for the oil and gas industry. In one of my first speeches on this issue, about a decade ago, I listed 17 different ways an oil and gas company could get a subsidy from the federal government at the time. Some of that has been reduced a little, but it is still not anywhere near where it should be. It is interesting that the U.S. taxes worldwide profits and Canada does not. The current administration in the U.S. is going to be introducing higher corporate taxes. If we do more subsidization, the profit margins will be higher here, so we will be sending dollars to Washington, so to speak.

We have to look at these things. There is no doubt about tax havens, as we have seen in the news again today. How ridiculous is this? How many times do people have to suffer through the inappropriate taxation policies we have now? People who can afford accountants and lawyers, and who squirrel money away, are seen as clever and capable. They get away with it, whereas in Windsor and Essex region the working class cannot afford those types of services to hide money and to pay less than other people. That is where there should be a significant improvement in this budget.

New Democrats have called for not only an investment in people, but also in green transportation infrastructure. In my area, the auto sector is significant and we fail to see much improvement in this budget. There are some vague references, but no measures to get results. There is still no Canadian national auto strategy. Last week, Ford Motor Company announced more funding for battery and electric vehicle production in Detroit and the surrounding area, which has eclipsed my area and the entire country. Detroit and the surrounding region have almost tripled or quadrupled all of Canada's investments in green auto infrastructure and strategies for battery and electric vehicle manufacturing and production. This is important, because a transition is taking place. If we look at jobs in the production of parts and all of the different components, we are losing more of that market share. What is unfortunate about that is we are also losing out on the growth of the industry beyond the auto sector by having that innovation take place.

Canadians are also worried about the passing on of debt, and how to finance it. That is why New Democrats have provided some solutions, such as a significant luxury tax, not just for boats and cars but for other things as well. Right now, real estate speculators for foreign investors are sitting on empty land and are getting away with using our tax haven system. That is a problem. As we look at this budget implementation act part one, keeping in mind that part two has to be done in the fall, Canadians can count on New Democrats to try to make things work here in this chamber.

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• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, which I greatly appreciated. It reminded me of a headline I read yesterday in *Le Devoir* that said Ottawa sees the offshore oil industry as a net-zero partner.

Reading that, I felt my eyebrows go up, because I often say in the House that I see the environment and the economy as being complementary. This headline would have us believe that net-zero emissions and the oil industry could be complementary, which is an opinion I do not share. When I think of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the oil industry is not the first thing that comes to mind.

Does my colleague think that what the budget promises, especially in terms of funding, is enough to meet our greenhouse gas emission reduction targets?

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is enough, and I do not think that we are pushing our budget parts and pieces to the levels they need to be. I mentioned the auto sector, for example. Without a national auto policy, we do not target the growth of the industry enough, versus the decline of it. I look at old plant areas like Sainte-Thérèse in Quebec, where there was amazing production and an amazing skilled work force. There still is some work going on in that area, but it is not what it used to be and it is a lost opportunity. They have to have some measurable items in there.

For the oil and gas industry, let us have accountability for pricing. Let consumers have that accountability.

The Deputy Speaker: There will be three minutes remaining for questions and comments for my hon. friend for Windsor West when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

● (1730)

*[Translation]***CANADA LABOUR CODE**

The House resumed from April 13 consideration of the motion that Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (be-reusement leave), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be the first to speak tonight.

First of all, I would like to note that International Workers Day was celebrated last week. In light of that, I take great interest in Bill C-220, which we are debating today, because it is part of the labour movement's long-standing struggle for the right to take leave to care for a sick family member.

To give a little background, this is an issue that concerns me for two reasons. First, when I was working in the—

The Deputy Speaker: I will just interrupt the hon. member briefly to ask him to check something. I do not think the microphone on his headset is on. I think he is using the microphone on his computer.

Now that he has fixed the problem, I will ask him to continue.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: This is an issue that concerns me for two reasons. First, when I was working in the film industry, I was very active in the union movement as a representative of the Association québécoise des techniciens et des techniciennes de l'image et du son and as an elected member of its board of directors.

Second, in my immediate family, we had to care for a sick loved one. I know the reality of families who are struggling to get by because they want to provide quality of life for their sick or dying loved ones. This Parliament has a duty to act for workers.

I just want to take a moment to thank the hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend. Going against some of his colleagues took some courage. I support the spirit of this bill, which I understand is intended to give caregivers more time before they have to return to work after the death of a family member. This would be done by amending the Canada Labour Code to allow people who take compassionate care leave to postpone their return to work by a few days after the death of a family member. The additional days would be provided based on the period between the start of the leave and the death of the family member.

The Bloc Québécois believes that it makes sense to let workers have a healthy employment relationship and not to have to choose between two bad situations. Taking care of a sick family member is already extremely hard. When that person dies, the caregiver may be torn between relief, guilt and sadness. It should never be acceptable in a country like Canada to be forced to choose between one's job and caring for a loved one who is ill.

This bill applies directly to caregivers providing end-of-life care for a loved one. The Bloc Québécois has always believed family

caregivers play a central role both in the lives of the people they support and for society as a whole. Many groups are calling on the government to recognize the importance of their role. One of those groups is Quebec's L'Appui, which believes as we do that recognition of family caregivers results in better access to resources and improved quality of life.

In Quebec, more than a quarter of caregivers work and are therefore especially vulnerable because they have to make sure to bring in at least some income while caring for their loved one. According to a survey by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Canadians, and I would add Quebecers, who help care for a loved one spend an average of \$430 per month performing caregiving responsibilities. Three-quarters say they have no choice but to make financial sacrifices. According to the Regroupement des aidants naturels du Québec, caregivers spend an average of \$7,600 per year on the person they care for, regardless of their initial income level, and 20% of caregivers are financially insecure.

According to L'Appui, in Quebec alone, 1.5 million people reported providing at least one hour of care a week, and 2.2 million people provided care or emotional support for a loved one or helped them go to medical appointments, shop for groceries, get around or fill out paperwork.

One of the main problems is that about one-third of caregivers who provide at least one hour of care a week do not recognize themselves as caregivers. The same is true for 20% of caregivers who provide more than 10 hours of care a week. Most Quebecers and Canadians are not aware of the resources available to them. They are easing the burden on the health care system without even realizing it. It is only right that we take action to recognize that reality.

My colleagues will find all my figures a little annoying, but they are important, so here are some more. According to the Regroupement des aidants naturels du Québec, no less than 85% of elder care is provided by family caregivers. This means that if a person needs 22 hours of care, the family caregiver will work 16.5 of those hours. Our neighbours, friends and constituents who give so much of themselves for their loved ones have to contend with a lack of resources for in-home services, wait times for residential spaces and fragmented care.

As a quick aside, I would like to point out that the only reason this problem exists in social services in Quebec and the provinces is the lack of resources. The lack of resources exists because one of the two levels of government responsible for the well-being of our constituents is not doing enough. No one will be surprised to learn that the problem is right here, in this very Parliament.

Right now, there is nothing more important than supporting the health care system. For the federal government, this means increasing health transfers. We are grappling with a health crisis, and the government must collaborate, as the House called on it to do in a motion moved by the Bloc Québécois last December. Health transfers also help provide effective and adequately funded services to improve the health and life expectancy of people who are ill, and to support the invaluable work of family caregivers.

I actually have some more figures to support that. To cover the hours worked by family caregivers would cost between \$4 billion and \$10 billion, and 1.2 million full-time professionals would have to be hired. Basically, these dedicated people are saving the health care systems of Quebec and the provinces astronomical amounts of money. That is the end of my little aside.

• (1735)

Getting back to the bill, I have noticed that, rather than improving the employment insurance program, federal governments prefer to lower premiums, which just diminishes any leeway that would have allowed for improvements.

These lower premiums do more good for big companies than for small businesses and workers. Should Bill C-220 pass, we will have to monitor how it affects the fund. While generous social programs are always welcome, we as parliamentarians have a duty to future generations to ensure that these generous programs are sustainable. I am sure that the government will be able to make sure of this in due course.

I want to share a quote from a speech I made this past fall:

Millions of people expect us to do our utmost for them. They want us to do our job better than ever, and they do not expect us to give lessons to anyone. Doing our job means reforming EI to fix the flaws we have been criticizing for so long. Doing our job means encouraging people to go back to work while reassuring them about their financial future, giving seniors what they need to make ends meet, providing the promised aid to farmers, and giving Quebec and the provinces the health care money that is rightfully theirs. Doing our job means respecting the democracy that has brought us here and providing enough time to do our work.

I think this still rings true today.

As my time is almost up, I want to come back to one last point. It is the question I always come back to. The question we must ask ourselves is: Who do we work for?

That is what really matters. We work for the people who put their trust in us to represent them and to manage their hard-earned money. As members of Parliament, we must ensure that the treatment of vulnerable people and their caregivers constantly improves. That is part of the reason many people in the House went into politics.

I commend the sincere commitment of my colleague from Edmonton Riverbend, who, as we know, has been fighting this battle for many years. To all the caregivers, I hope that the House will make the right decision and move forward with the bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise tonight in this virtual Parliament to talk about Bill C-220 on addressing the issue of compassionate care, which is a huge issue. In 2014, I pushed a national palliative care strategy and spoke with people across the country on its impor-

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tance. We had all-party support. We are still waiting to see the Liberals actually follow through on some of these key promises.

We are talking about the most vulnerable part in the lives of any Canadian family, and the death of a loved one is a life-changer for those who are left behind. It can be traumatic or it can be healing. It can be a real moment of tenderness and it can also tear families apart. I have seen families in my office completely stressed out, almost broken, over economic insecurity. Then when I start to ask them questions, I realize it is because the woman has had to leave her job to look after a dying mother or sister and the stress on family is incredible.

There have been changes to the Canada Labour Code that allow Canadians to take job-protected leave of up to 28 weeks, but the way the code is written, if a person someone is looking after dies then the leave period ends on the last day of the week in which the death occurs. It means if a loved one, a husband or a child dies on a Friday, a person is expected to report back on Monday. That is not good enough because we know some of the real trauma after a death is having to make arrangements and dealing with the finances. It is enormous for whoever has to take that on.

This bill would give up to one or two extra weeks, and we support that as New Democrats. The failing of this bill, though, is that it would fall then to people who can afford to take unpaid time off. We believe we have to change the EI provisions so people can be compensated if they have to take time off to look after a loved one.

I think of my sister Kathleen. The table at a restaurant where the laughter was the loudest is where Kathleen was. When we knew it was really time to go home, Kathleen would be asking for one more song to be sung or say that we should have more drink or tell one more story. Kathleen had a fire for life, but I have never seen someone thrown over the cliff of death so many times. She crawled back determined and faced death down with the determination that would have made Doc Holliday weep. She never blinked, and she had it really rough.

Kathleen, as tough as she was, needed people there with her at key times. I tried to be a good brother over the years, but I did know Kathleen would not call me when she needed someone to go to the hospital with her. She called her sister, Mary, and Mary would drive over 500 kilometres to be there at those meetings with the doctors because these issues cannot be heard alone, especially when one is facing stage IV cancer. Someone needs to be there to help make sense of it.

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My younger sister Mary missed an enormous amount of work. When Kathleen was dying, we had a big enough family that all of us took time and all of us were there. My brother came off the subways to be with her. I took time. We were at the hospital around the clock with her.

A lot of families cannot afford that. In my work, I have seen the stress it causes and often it is stress on the women caregivers. I will just say it, men just do not seem to be quite as comfortable and women take on this work. Women are the ones who are somehow expected also to give up their work time to do this because it is a family obligation.

We need to find ways to make it possible for people to look after their loved ones and be there in that stressful moment. Watching someone who is dying is so emotionally intense that there is almost a strange silence, a shock. A person is actually in shock but does not realize it at the time. It is just a feeling one has after having gone through something so intense. Coming out of that shock sometimes takes a lot of time.

• (1740)

The idea that someone's loved one could die on a Friday and yet the person is back at work on Monday is really problematic, especially if this is the person in the family who has to start making the arrangements, trying to figure things out, calling relatives, dealing with the funeral home. There are all manner of issues in terms of the funeral, the finances, dealing with the banks and all the forms. Someone has to take on that work. It falls very hard on the person whose responsibility it is.

Bill C-220 is a good bill. It is a good start. We need to look at making sure that people can be compensated through changes to the employment insurance compassionate care benefits so that they can actually step out of their work life to take on this responsibility and not suffer financial penalties. I have seen families that simply could not afford to do both and it had enormous negative impacts on them.

The issue of dealing with end-of-life care is something we really need to look at. We saw how quickly the Liberal government was ready to move on the assisted dying bill. We have a bill where people have the right to die in Canada, the right to die for all manner of reasons. The government has allowed the Senate to change those rules. However, people need to have the fundamental right to live out their dying days in dignity. That means a national palliative care strategy. We have to start talking about letting people live out their life in dignity, with the proper supports, the proper home care, with a home care vision that allows people to be looked after and not feel they are a burden on their family. It is a horrific thing for people who are suffering and who know the financial stresses on their family or their loved ones.

We need to make sure that we have palliative care available. In many provinces in this country, it is simply not there when it is needed. Some areas have incredible palliative care programs. I have seen them in action. They are really transformative. They make it possible for a family to heal. However, where people do not have access to palliative care, it can be a terrible, stressful time.

This is something that is above partisan politics, because death is something that comes to us all. All of our families have gone through this. We all know what the issues are. I am not speaking to people who have not experienced it. People of our age, here in Parliament, have probably seen a loved one pass. It can be a healing thing or a very traumatic thing.

Bill C-220 is a step in that direction. I think it is a good step. We do need to look at the employment insurance compassionate care benefits. However, we need to talk about the larger issue of a proper palliative care strategy, especially with the really disturbing changes that have come through MAID, which are being pushed through the unelected and unaccountable Senate. The fact that it could actually hijack legislation of such importance and put its imprimatur on it without public input is really letting us down.

We need to reassure the Canadian people that we want families to be able to have those final moments in healing and with support, and all the rights they are entitled to as citizens of this country. That would mean a proper palliative care strategy, available to every single family across this country, whether in a rural or urban area, whether new Canadians or indigenous. We are all facing the same thing in those moments, and we need to have a holistic approach to give families and the people who are dying the support they need.

I appreciate having the chance to speak.

• (1745)

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today virtually to speak to Bill C-220 to amend the Canada Labour Code regarding bereavement leave.

This bill reflects the important work that we can all do on issues that are important to so many Canadians. I would like to personally thank the member for Edmonton Riverbend. He should be recognized and commended for his work on this bill. What piqued my interest in this bill was the member's heartfelt interest in the struggles of families as they deal with the care of their loved ones and the grief after they pass.

This bill has received the support of all parties, which highlights that no matter where we stand on an issue, issues like this are important to all. This bill addresses the difficulty and the tragedy that people go through when they lose a loved one and the caregiving they experience leading up to that time.

One thing I learned from my short time in the House, and something I would like to commend the Speaker for, is that he has told us from time to time to speak from the heart. That is what I will do today, because this is a very personal bill for me.

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My family lost a loved one. I lost my son two months ago. He lived his life, a very full life, with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. My wife was the principal caregiver. She was not the principal caregiver for days or months, but for years. I cannot explain enough how difficult that is for a family, a parent, to look after a child who has declining health. We are just one example of the many families out there.

Good friends of mine have a mother now in the late stages of MS. The family are collectively looking after this person. They have caregivers who come and go, but the one thing I tell people is that when these families have a caregiver helping them, they are always waiting for the knock on the door when someone will come and tell them their help is needed because something has gone wrong. That is something these families live with when they are trying to give this compassionate care.

I can tell members from personal experience that one can put everything into the care of a child and when that child passes, it does not end. This bill goes a small way toward trying to give some relief to those families. It is an extra week. I can say that it has been two months for me and not a day goes by that I do not think about my son. I know it is the same for many families out there, and it does not matter what the illness is or what someone has been treating. That is a fact of life. When we lose someone, it does not expire in two weeks. It does not expire in three days.

Many have spoken about the impact this has on families. That is why I commend the work of the member for Edmonton Riverbend, taking on this task and pushing a private member's bill forward to make sure this is an issue that we take seriously. It is a very small thing that we can do as parliamentarians to try to help the people out there who are suffering with this level of grief.

I can assure members that I have heard from all kinds of groups that have been trying to counsel and help parents dealing with the loss of a child or the caregiving leading up to that point in time. They would tell us unequivocally that this is a good piece of legislation and it deserves our support. It has my full support. I appreciate that the members who are here today and who are listening have shown their support as well, because this is important for families.

There are improvements we can make and there is more we can do, but this is a valuable first step. I do believe this would be appreciated by so many people, and I hope we are able to get this private member's bill through. It definitely deserves our attention.

• (1750)

My family would have appreciated something like this. In my case, I deal with grief by launching back into my work. That is how I deal with it, but that is not the same for everybody. Many families need the time. They need that time to heal, and at the very least they need that time to be able to get affairs in order and carry on with their lives.

Many employers are very giving when situations like this arise, and if they are good employers they certainly try to help their employees through these difficult times. However, this is an opportunity for those people who fit under the umbrella of this act, so they at least know that they would have a bit of support to be able to support their families.

I will close with this. This is difficult for families. It is incredibly difficult. They lead up into something, they lose someone and they need some time. All this bill is doing is asking for a bit of time. I hope everybody who is here listening today will recognize that and give this bill full support.

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 a pleasure to be able to add a few thoughts in regard to Bill C-220. It is interesting to do the contrast. If we take a look at the debate we had earlier, for example, there was a great deal of politics, and it was hard to see a consensus forming from different political parties in certain areas of the debate on the budget implementation legislation. We fast-forward to what we are talking about right now. Here we have a private member who has brought forward a progressive and positive piece of legislation that would have a positive impact. I have now listened to three different members from three different political parties, all of whom were expressing support and sharing with members of the House some very personal and touching thoughts as to why Bill C-220 is an important piece of legislation. That is one of the things I do enjoy about being a parliamentarian and listening to the debates, because this evening, with what we are talking about, we see politicians of all political stripes coming together and recognizing the need for some sort of an action. We have something before us that enables us to take action.

When I think of some of the comments, one of the things that comes to my mind is that people do grieve in different ways, and circumstances are so wide and they vary. As a parliamentarian, and I am sure my colleagues would concur, chances are we are a bit more familiar with the issue than most, because of the people we know, the types of places we visit and the company we keep.

I go to quite a few funerals every year. Over the last 30 years, members have gotten to know a lot of people, and we are often asked to share some thoughts at funerals or to provide some sort of support where our office is contacted. We have people trying in different ways to do the things that are necessary so that their loved one is properly put to rest. I have been in my constituency office on a number of occasions where I have someone sitting in tears, because they have a parent who has passed away, and now they want to be able to get a family member from another country to be able to come and pay their respects and to try to bring the family back together. They are very emotional times.

Both my parents have passed. My father had the issue of palliative care and the manner in which he ultimately passed. Fortunately, for me and other members of my family, we had some flexibility to ensure he was able to get the type of care that we were comfortable with, knowing that our father was being properly cared for, which included family members. Not everyone is in that sort of a situation, and I respect the fact that we have some incredible health care workers who really step up to the plate. In particular, there are people in palliative care, hospice care or even in tragic unexpected accidents or with a health condition that causes them to pass relatively quickly and unexpectedly.

Private Members' Business

• (1755)

It is often the health care worker who is there to show love and kindness and make the connection with the family member. It is very difficult when people have a family member who wants to be with a loved one. I must say it is compounded because of the pandemic, but generally speaking, loved ones who want to be with someone who is passing and because of their work and requirements to support their family, or the employer does not necessarily provide that kind of time off, those people often have to settle at the time of passing. Members have referenced those who have had a brother pass away on a Friday having to go through a rapid grieving process, which does not end in two days, and then be back at work on the Monday. I would like to think in most situations, I don't know for a fact, that employers understand the impact that someone passing away would have on their employees and would provide the support necessary in many cases, including paying them while they are not at work or letting them make up for lost time. What is nice about Bill C-220 is that it provides for, as some have said this evening, a step in the right direction, where individuals would be afforded additional time off work with pay in order to be able to grieve. I see that as a very strong, positive thing for us to be doing as members of the House.

I know the parliamentary secretary for labour and the Minister of Labour have had the opportunity to express themselves and have done exceptionally well with respect to indicating their support and the need for changes. One of the speakers earlier talked about EI and the potential role it could play. I like to believe that we in government recognize that experiencing the loss of a loved one can cause shock and grief in addition to having one's well-being and effectiveness at work impacted in a real and tangible way. That is why we have seen the government take some steps to ensure that when workers do experience such tragic events in their life there are supports in place. That does not mean that there is not more we can do.

For example, we brought in a number of leave and other protections for employees in federally regulated workplaces who have experienced the death of a family member, including extending bereavement leave to five days and introducing five days of personal leave. There have been efforts, together with recent changes, to provide the right to request flexible work arrangements, as well as the existing 17 weeks of unpaid medical leave, which demonstrate our commitment to protecting Canadian workers when they experience tragedy.

We know there is always room to do more. We see Bill C-220 as a positive step forward.

I look forward to the ongoing discussion, but suffice it to say I support Bill C-220.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise during the debate at second reading of Bill C-220, sponsored by our colleague from Edmonton Riverbend, and I am doing so right here in the House of Commons, which is a rare thing in these COVID times.

I want to applaud the merits of his private member's bill and his compassion in seeking to alleviate the pain and the burden of caring for a loved one at the end of life. It is commendable, and I congratulate him.

As such, I want to assure my colleague that the Bloc Québécois and I support his bill in principle. I sincerely hope that, once we have debated the bill, all political parties in the House will do the same. The spirit of this bill is in line with the principles underpinning the Bloc Québécois's overall vision for standing up for workers.

This particular bill is a tangible expression of that vision because it means that an employee who has to face the heartbreaking challenge of caring for a loved one at the end of life will not lose their job.

We are well aware of the range of emotions that family caregivers go through as the disease progresses and the patient inexorably dies. Considering the altruism, courage, sacrifice and selflessness that these people show in the face of this immense challenge, we should feel compelled to compensate them for the financial burden that will inevitably arise, insofar as care and support require a full-time personal investment. Legislated provisions already exist to compensate for the wages lost by a family caregiver. In this context, the bill introduced by our colleague from Edmonton Riverbend will improve this financial support by providing additional respite when the inevitable happens.

Taking care of a sick loved one is difficult enough, but when that person dies, emotions can run high. One might feel a whole range of emotions, including relief, some guilt and, of course, sadness. No one, under any circumstances, should ever have to choose between caring for a sick loved one and the uncertainty of keeping one's job.

It is with that in mind that Bill C-220 becomes more interesting in that it would add a certain number of days of leave, some extra time to provide a bit of respite at the end of a particularly painful and trying experience, one that comes with its share of emotions and inner turmoil. It becomes imperative to have time alone to deal with your emotions after such an ordeal.

Our colleague's proposal, which is steeped in sympathy and compassion, seeks to fill this gap in the current legislation. Accordingly, the bill is quite simple. We need only slightly change the Canada Labour Code to allow people who are on compassionate care leave to postpone returning to work by a few days after the death of the loved one they were caring for. It is as simple as that.

In the meantime, what seems obvious to us is actually a legislative void that we have the chance to fill today. From a more technical standpoint, in order to convince our colleagues who might unfortunately be opposed to the proposal, it is important to mention that the number of extra days will be prorated to the length of the leave based on when it started and when the loved one, who benefited from the generosity of their caregiver, passed away.

Private Members' Business

I think it is also important to highlight that our colleague who is sponsoring the bill used to sit in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, where he successfully spearheaded a similar initiative that is now an integral part of Alberta's worker protections. There is therefore a precedent that can inspire us all and that will ultimately allow us to improve the federal legislation to help those who choose to devote themselves to the intrinsically human act of supporting a loved one in their final moments.

I can already see dissenting opinions about the benefits of such a measure looming on the horizon. Honestly, certain colleagues will be viewing this kind of bill from a financial perspective.

• (1805)

Obviously, such an initiative requires some financial intervention. However, taking the same analytical perspective as the critics, we must remember that a cost-benefit approach, however outrageous, will stand up to a simple calculation based on the financial burden taken off our health care systems.

We must not limit ourselves to seeing the bill as compensation for caregivers. I do not want to talk about economies of scale or fiscal discipline in developing this policy. That would be unseemly in the face of the noble gesture we are trying to honour, in a context where the sick person's personal pain has an immeasurable impact on the caregiver's own mental and physical health.

In addition, we must not approach this measure as compensation or a reward for altruism and self-abnegation, but rather as the collective recognition of a gesture made out of the goodness of the caregiver's heart, which simple logic dictates deserves respect and recognition.

At the end of this journey fraught with highs and lows, raw emotions and memories buried so deep that only such a moving experience can make them resurface, I find it logical and highly appropriate to provide a period of additional respite to prepare for the future with greater serenity. As it is such an emotionally charged experience for a caregiver to prolong the life of the person inescapably moving towards their death, I believe that a moment of intimate and personal internal peace is necessary to deal with this wave of heartache which, otherwise, could affect the caregiver in a most deleterious manner.

Before I conclude my speech, I wish to commend the noble-mindedness of my colleague from Edmonton Riverbend in preparing his bill, and I hope that my modest contribution to this debate, which is of the utmost importance in my mind, will be echoed in the reflection that will guide the decisions of all our colleagues in the House.

I reiterate the Bloc Québécois's support for this legislation, and I urge those who may doubt its merits to consider that, if we adopt it at second reading, we will have ample opportunity to debate all of the related enforcement and regulatory issues.

Let us be open-minded for the time being, set aside partisan and political beliefs, and be guided by the pure and solemn selflessness of the caregivers who are devoted to a loved one as they support them at the end of life, which is dignified and imbued with love and serenity.

• (1810)

[English]

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-220, which has been brought forward by my colleague from Edmonton Riverbend. The member and I go way back. In fact, we served together in the Alberta legislature. Now we share the same privilege of serving together in the House.

As an Alberta MLA, I brought forward legislation that created the Alberta organ and tissue donation registry, and my colleague from Edmonton Riverbend strongly supported my efforts then. He then brought forward the Alberta compassionate care leave legislation, which I, in turn, was happy to be a strong supporter of. Both pieces of legislation passed successfully in Alberta, and now we are both here in Ottawa and continue our work.

When we came here, I introduced legislation that would improve our national organ and tissue donation rates by adding the question to our income tax form. In fact, it comes up tomorrow for a final hour of debate at third reading. Now the member for Edmonton Riverbend's federal compassionate care leave bill is before us today, in its final hour of debate, so we are both on the cusp of seeing our legislation pass in the House this week. I find it very fitting that we find ourselves here today, given our shared history with provincial and federal legislation.

We have shown that sensible, compassionate legislation is something that all parties can support. Bill C-220 originally proposed to extend the compassionate care leave program, which federally regulated employees can use to take up to 26 weeks off work to take care of a terminally ill loved one. The bill was later amended at committee to allow for federally regulated private sector Canadian employees to take a leave of absence from their job for up to 10 days following the death of a family member. The 10 days can be taken within six weeks of the funeral of a deceased family member.

I believe that these changes would benefit working Canadians by giving them extra time when they face a very difficult period. They would also allow them the flexibility to take the time when they can. I hope that this is just the first of many ways the government examines how it can make the grieving process easier for families. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how critical it is that people are supported in the loss of a loved one.

Private Members' Business

I am really pleased that we are recognizing the importance of compassionate care leave, as it is something that I am all too familiar with. I lost my wife Heather to breast cancer a number of years ago, and I was fortunate to have had the ability to take time off from work to support my wife before she died and, just as importantly, to support my three young daughters after her death. I cannot imagine for a second what this would have been like if I did not have the support I did at the time.

I was a member of the Alberta legislature at that time, and I cannot thank Premier Ed Stelmach and my colleagues enough for their support. The premier went out of his way to make it as easy as possible for me to focus on my family, and I will forever be grateful for it. He even rearranged cabinet to allow me to stay closer to home. My colleagues picked up some of my workload, and the member for Edmonton Riverbend was one of them. I will never forget that.

I want to take a moment to thank our registered home care nurse, Donna Dryer, who played a critical role in supporting my family and my wife. Donna helped us with our needs and, most importantly, made Heather comfortable in her final days. We thank her to this day, and I only hope those who must go through what we did are lucky enough to have someone like Donna assigned to them.

Grief is something we all experience differently, and it is almost impossible to put an appropriate mourning or grief period into legislation. However, we have to find a reasonable balance between need and resources. I think that the bill is an excellent first step, but I would like to see the legislation reviewed after a few years to ensure that it is meeting its goals.

• (1815)

I recall that a few months after I lost my wife, I met a guy at an event. He was a firefighter who, coincidentally, had lost his wife around the same time I did. Tragically, she had died suddenly in a car accident en route to the grocery store.

I chatted with him for a bit, and I will never forget him saying to me that at least I was lucky enough to be able to say goodbye to my wife. That really resonated with me. It was true. I was able to say goodbye to my wife, and I was lucky enough to say goodbye. He did not have that opportunity; he was not able to say goodbye. I cannot imagine how difficult that would be. It made me realize that the grief we were both experiencing at the time was very much different.

There are many factors that can affect the depth and the length of the grieving process. Was the death foreseeable, or completely sudden and unexpected? Did the family have the opportunity to say goodbye? Does the person's death dramatically alter the financial situation of the family? These are all factors, but the biggest determination in how people grieve is the level of support they get from family and friends. Bill C-220 would ensure that people have at least some level of support from the government, and that is a really good thing.

Death is something that we all have to deal with at some point in time. We all lose a loved one or a close friend. Sadly, as we get older it becomes more and more frequent, although this does not make things any easier. As the Willie Nelson song goes:

It's not somethin' you get over
But it's somethin' you get through

For those who are struggling with grief, there is help available. It is important that they reach out and ask for it. They can Google "mental health hotline Canada" and call the 1-800 number, which is 1-833-456-4566. Youth can call the Kids Help Phone, at 1-800-668-6868. Hopefully one day, thanks to the member for Cariboo—Prince George, they will only have to call a three-digit number, the 988 number, to seek help.

In closing, I want to reiterate my support for Bill C-220. The member for Edmonton Riverbend has brought forward sensible, compassionate legislation that will help many Canadians. I am pleased that his efforts have been welcomed by all parties in the House of Commons, and I wish him all the luck in the world as he moves the bill off to the Senate. I hope we can make this legislation a reality before the next election.

* * *

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill C-3, an act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (bereavement leave), be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

Seeing none, we will invite the hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend for his right of reply. The hon. member has up to five minutes.

The hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a long time coming to get to this point. I am absolutely thrilled and moved by a lot of the speeches we heard, not just today but over the course of the last 15 months when this bill first began in this place.

There are so many thanks to go around. I can only thank them so many times, but I want to thank our stakeholder community, which has from the beginning helped to explain this bill not only to other members of Parliament, but to the general public at large: the Canadian Grief Alliance for making public statements on the bill; the Canadian Cancer Society for lobbying members of Parliament; the Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association; the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association; the Heart and Stroke Foundation; the MS society as well as the many individuals who have shared their stories with our office, who reached out and told us about the death of a loved one. They told us this bill would have meant to them if it had passed prior to the death of their loved one.

It is rather fitting that this is National Hospice Palliative Care Week and we are having this conversation about supports for palliative care and where we can take those supports into the future. I know we have spoken at length with many stakeholders about laws that have been passed in New Zealand when it comes to supporting more palliative care measures that would allow Canada to essentially catch up in being a compassionate country, but we can do more.

I also want Douglas Wolfe and Sébastien St-Arnaud. Both of them have been incredibly helpful to work with in the public service. They reached out to me, when we had initial conversations, about how to make the bill better. This is a reflection of a lot of work they have put in.

I want to end where I began on this bill. I spoke in my very first speech about the inspiration for this. It was about the death of my grandma. My grandma passed away when I was brand new to the work force. I had to make a decision whether to spend those final moments with her or to continue on in my job. I know have shared that story in this chamber before, but it is something that moved and inspired me to get into politics. It has moved and inspired many in the stakeholder community to get better supports for palliative individuals.

I have wondered many times in the last 15 months what grandma would be thinking at this moment, knowing we are on the cusp of a law being made in the country because of the influence she had over me when I was a small little guy growing up in Edmonton.

I also lost my grandpa two months ago. I know he as well will be looking down upon moments like this and be proud. As a former veteran who fought for our country, he would be proud that his grandson brought this bill, a law, forward to this place.

This is an opportunity for all of us to come together. This has been non-partisan from the start. The Minister of Labour has been incredibly available to me whenever I needed to spitball some ideas with her. It has been helpful.

What I do hope we get from this bill and the ultimate vote on it is the opportunity to show future generations that politics does not always have to be partisan, that we do not have to shout across the aisle at one another. We do not have to argue on every issue. I hope we inspire that future generation to come together, to see that we as Canadians can make better legislation if we put down our collective arms sometimes to come up with better laws in the country.

I appreciate the time that everybody has spent on this, leading up to this bill. I certainly hope we are able to see it move to the other place, and sometime soon.

● (1825)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. If a member of a recognized party present in the chamber wishes to request a recorded or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded division, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to an order made on Monday, January 25, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 12, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

S. O. 52

EMERGENCY DEBATE

[English]

LINE 5 PIPELINE SHUTDOWN

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the Line 5 pipeline shutdown.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC) moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

He said: It is a “ticking time bomb”. Those are the words of the office of the Governor of Michigan yesterday about the Line 5 pipeline. I will point out that those words are entirely inaccurate, but they highlight something that is incredibly important, which is that the Liberal government has failed to express upon the governor and our other friends in the United States the very clear importance of that pipeline. It has failed to secure it being able to continue past the May 12 deadline, which is six days from now. This is truly an emergency and a very urgent situation.

Before I go any further, I will point out that I will be sharing my time with the leader of the official opposition, who is one of the foremost champions in the country of this nation-unifying pipeline that would link energy producers in the west with energy consumers in the east, not to mention he is also one of the loudest advocates for our energy industry and oil and gas workers. Therefore, I am proud to share my time with him.

In contrast, the Liberal government is at it again, trying to find ways to land-lock Alberta oil and, frankly, stick it to Albertans. The Liberals have been abundantly clear on their disdain for our energy industry and for our Canadian oil. Bill C-48, the shipping ban, Bill C-69, the no more pipelines bill, and the Prime Minister's comment about the oil sands needing to be phased out are all very clear examples.

In the end, the Liberals are not just sticking it to Albertans when they do that; all Canadians will pay the price. They already cancelled things like northern gateway and energy east. Then there was the cancellation of the Keystone XL project by the U.S. administration a few short months ago. That was because of the complete inaction of the Liberal government. It failed to provide any tangible support for that project, which included the refusal to initiate a NAFTA challenge or to back any legal challenges in support of the project. One would think it would have learned something, but now Enbridge Line 5 is also in serious jeopardy.

In November of last year, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer ordered Line 5 to be shut down on May 12. It is now May 6 and the Liberal government has not found a solution. It does not seem to understand the urgency here.

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For decades, the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline has safely moved Canadian oil east from the Alberta oil sands, with a pipeline running through Wisconsin and Michigan. It is responsible for supplying half of the oil needs of Ontario and Quebec. Again, half of the oil needs of Ontario and Quebec are supplied through that pipeline. The pipeline is an essential part of the Canadian energy supply chain clearly and its cancellation would create immediate and alarming fuel shortages across Ontario and Quebec, would increase truck and rail transportation of oil, would increase fuel prices and create greater environmental risks. It sounds like we better deal with that.

Line 5 oil is refined in Sarnia into gasoline, diesel, home heating fuel and aviation fuel. It is also the main source of propane used in Ontario and Quebec.

Line 5 also feeds into Line 9, which carries oil to refineries in Montreal and Lévis for Quebec's supply needs. The Minister of Natural Resources has highlighted in the past that Line 5 delivers 66% of the crude oil consumed in Quebec.

This cancellation would impact one of the most vital supply lines in Canada, which has been operating for decades. Jobs are at stake and so is the increased costs of absolutely everything from gasoline to food across Ontario and Quebec. The Liberals need to ensure that this vital infrastructure link remains uninterrupted, that jobs are not lost and that Canadians are not forced to pay more for absolutely everything.

For instance, many farmers use the propane source from Line 5 to heat homes, barns and commercial greenhouses as well as to dry grain. Sourcing propane elsewhere will drive the costs of agriculture production up along with the cost of food for Canadian families. Further, 5,000 well-paying jobs would be lost in Sarnia alone if this project is cancelled, with thousands more in jeopardy in my home province of Alberta as well as across both Ontario and Quebec energy industries.

• (1830)

The Toronto Pearson airport relies on 100% of its jet fuel from Line 5. The airport would literally cease to operate without finding another source of fuel. As the St. Lawrence Corridor Economic Development Commission recently stated in a news release:

Simply put, this line is critical for our daily lives and shutting it down will mean there won't be enough fuel to look after our needs from personal driving, transportation of groceries and goods, heating fuel and the fuel needs of industry and farms. Of course, this will affect refinery jobs in places like Sarnia – which expects to lose almost 5,000 quality high paying jobs but indirectly will affect an additional 23,500 jobs. Those jobs are held by real hardworking people. These jobs will be lost at a time that thousands of our neighbours, friends and family are already facing employment losses due to the pandemic.

From an environmental perspective, shutting down Line 5 would be a disaster. There would be an energy shortfall in Canada that would have to be obtained from other sources. Canadians are not simply going to be able to stop heating their homes or buying groceries. That means shipping oil and natural gas by rail, truck or ship, which are potentially more dangerous, potentially more costly and potentially more harmful to the environment. Sourcing the same amount of oil that Line 5 provides would require approximately 2,000 trucks or 800 railcars each day alone. It would also mean additional tankers in the St. Lawrence Seaway.

It is not just the shipping part that could impact the environment. If Line 5 closes, oil would need to be obtained from foreign sources, sources like Saudi Arabia, Russia, Azerbaijan and Nigeria, places that are not exactly known for their human rights or high environmental standards. Our standards in Canada and in my home province are far higher than any of the sources that would have to be used if Line 5 were to be shut down. The Liberal government is standing by while Line 5 is shut down. That, to me, sounds like a method to cut off one's nose to spite one's own face.

Alberta has the most environmentally friendly oil and gas in the entire world. Many Albertans right now are struggling. They are hurting. They are out of work and they just want the chance to go back to work. Then, of course, there is the problem we face with unity in this country. Many Albertans are frustrated and angry because they see no support from the current federal government in terms of being able to get their products to markets, in terms of being able to supply the energy needs of even their friends and neighbours across this country.

To me, it seems like a no-brainer that we would want a pipeline like this to continue to supply those needs, to provide that link between our western producers and eastern consumers, to make sure that our environment continues to have the best products it can in terms of oil and gas being good for our environment, in terms of keeping national unity going and making sure we can keep people in my province and all across this country working on something that is so crucial to our needs.

The Liberal government and the Prime Minister need to wake up. They need to wake up because Line 5 is crucial to Canada. It is crucial for jobs. It is crucial for the environment. It is crucial for national unity and it is crucial for all Canadians. They need to take action now. They cannot just talk about it. They need to get the job done, and they are not getting it done. I certainly hope they will be listening tonight, paying attention, understanding the importance of this project and making sure we can continue to keep this line open to serve our energy needs, to protect our environment and secure our national unity.

• (1835)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is one pipeline project about which I am happy to say the NDP is also concerned. This pipeline is shipping Canadian oil to eastern Canada and creating Canadian jobs in the industrial heartland of Ontario and Quebec. We see that importance.

I wonder what the member's plan would be if he were in government and Michigan, six days from now, pulled the plug on this pipeline.

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Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I will first say that I am glad to hear there is support from the NDP for this pipeline. I would like to have seen the same kind of support for a line that would have unified this country and gone across this country like the energy east pipeline. That would have been nice to see as well. It is unfortunate that some in this country do not understand the importance that project could have had.

Having said that, I firmly believe that had we had a Conservative government and the prime ministership of the Leader of the Opposition, we could have seen this problem resolved. We would not be standing here with six days to go asking why we did not do something. I know that had we had the Leader of the Opposition serving as the prime minister of this country, we would have got the job done, because we understand how vitally important this line is to the future.

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, the member needs to take a step into reality. We heard Conservatives yesterday say all the problems that Alberta was facing were because of Ottawa. Today, we are hearing that once again. The hatred that is spewed by Conservative members of Parliament, not all, but a number of them, toward Ottawa is very disappointing and should concern all Canadians who feel there is a national identity.

Have members of the Conservative Party taken any positive approach? For example, have they made any contact with the governor in question? Have they asked to meet with legislators? Have they met virtually or in person in the last four years with anyone from the state in question?

• (1840)

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I would start by saying very clearly in response to that, and I hope the government is listening because it can understand how to answer a question, the answer yes, in fact, we have. Our leader did that. That has happened.

I will also point out that maybe the member has this concern and feels there is somehow this hatred. It is not hatred. It is extreme disappointment in the fact that we have a Liberal government over there that does not seem to understand or care about the needs and concerns of the people of my province. I am extremely disappointed, as are all Conservative members, about the fact that the government tends to ignore and show no concern for the needs and concerns of Albertans.

That is why I expressed what I expressed tonight. That is why we expressed what we expressed last night. It is why we express it every single day. We are extremely disappointed that the government shows no attention, concern or care for our province.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech, but it made me jump out of my chair a little bit. I almost fell over, but I caught myself just in time. He said that the government does not support the oil industry.

It is important to know that since the late 1970s and early 1980s, we have collectively invested over \$70 billion to make this industry profitable.

In the last four years alone, the federal government's subsidy strategy for the oil and gas industry was \$24 billion, while for the forestry industry it was \$971 million. That is not counting the fact that, for the forest industry, 75% of the money was in the form of loans.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague a very simple question: Does he think \$24 billion is more or less than \$971 million?

[English]

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member was able to stop himself from falling right out of the chair. That is good news.

I will point out to him that we do not measure things by how much money the government can spend on something. If the government wants to show support for our energy industry and allow it to be profitable, the best thing it could do is stop getting in the way of projects being built. That is how it could best help the industry. If we want to see projects get built, it could stop putting forward bills like Bill C-48 and Bill C-69, which ended projects and cancelled projects in this country.

The government needs to allow those projects to move forward and serve the energy needs of our fellow Canadians and serve the energy needs of the world with some of the most environmentally friendly products found anywhere in the world. They are better for the environment by replacing less environmentally friendly sources, but also better for our economy in this country.

I know that member wants to see this country break up, but I want to see this country unified. That is why I am supporting what is happening here. It is unfortunate he does not want to get on board and do the same.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Banff—Airdrie, the opposition whip, for bringing this debate to the floor. The non-partisan Speaker granted yet another emergency debate because of the Liberal government's failure to fight for our economic interests, whether at home, around the world, or even with our closest allies.

As Canadians know, Canada's oil and gas sector suffered a tremendous blow with the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline project just a few months ago, on the first day in office of the new administration. Now another major threat, another major blow is looming and there has been inaction. Keystone was all about securing additional export market access for Canadian crude to help the struggling energy sector reach another market, help those workers and help secure a more stable and stronger price for a finite Canadian resource.

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However, Line 5 is not a new project. It is not a diversification. It is a line that has been a consistent and critical supply line for Canada for decades. Now, because of the inaction of the Liberal government, this critical piece of our energy infrastructure is at risk. Why are there emergency debates all the time about our economy with this government? Because Liberals are always slow, ideological and they are eroding our prosperity.

• (1845)

[Translation]

Tens of thousands of good jobs in Ontario and Quebec are at risk. As we begin planning to rebuild our economy and get Canadians back to work after COVID-19, we must do everything possible to protect these jobs.

Enbridge's Line 5 carries Canadian oil east, running through Wisconsin and Michigan. It supplies half of the oil needs of Quebec and Ontario. Members heard right. Half of Ontario's and Quebec's oil supply is at risk.

[English]

Tens of thousands of good jobs across Ontario and Quebec are at risk alongside another potential bruising blow for our energy sector in the west. As we begin planning to rebuild our economy and get Canadians back to work across this country after COVID-19, we must do everything possible to protect and secure these jobs.

Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline carries Canadian oil east, running through Wisconsin and Michigan, supplying about half of the oil needs for Ontario and Quebec: half. For decades the pipeline has safely shipped Canadian energy to be refined in Sarnia into gasoline, propane, diesel, home heating fuel and aviation fuel.

[Translation]

Line 5 also feeds into Line 9, which carries oil to refineries in Montreal and Lévis to meet Quebec's supply needs.

[English]

The governor of Michigan has ordered the pipeline shut down by next week. While this move clearly violates the transit pipelines treaty, which President Biden supported consistently as a U.S. senator, the Liberals have been silent. Once again they are refusing to take a strong, clear and consistent stand for Canadian workers.

Who are those Canadian workers? Some 6,500 families in the Sarnia area rely directly on jobs related to Line 5. Another almost 24,000 jobs in the wider southwestern Ontario region could be impacted and thousands more across Ontario and Quebec and thousands more in the west. They will also see yet another indifferent approach from the Liberal government toward the well-being of that part of our country.

[Translation]

Tens of thousands of jobs in Ontario and Quebec are at risk. As Canadians begin to return to work after COVID-19, we must do everything possible to protect these jobs.

[English]

On the heels of the disappointment for thousands of families in connection to Keystone, we cannot allow the Liberal government to

fail thousands more families by allowing its inaction to lead to more cancellations and uncertainty.

Our country was dealt a significant blow with the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline on the first day of the U.S. administration. We cannot afford another blow by those administrations, whether at a state and federal level in the U.S., to cancel the safe, reliable and effective Line 5. Our economy cannot afford it. Our national unity cannot afford it.

In his first economic speech as Prime Minister in 2016, the Prime Minister mocked our natural resource industry. He said that we are resourceful now. In the years since, the Prime Minister and his ideological government have consistently undermined our energy sector. The process has divided our country and is slowly eroding our prosperity.

It is time for a government that is proud of our resources, our innovation and the tens of thousands of Canadian families who depend on our energy sector. This sector, as my friend the Conservative whip reminded Canadians, is a world leader in environmental and social governance, or ESG. We are the guiding light for ethical extractive industries.

We are also the world leaders on indigenous partnerships and participation. I like to call it "ESGI". We should be very proud of that innovation. This world-leading ESGI resource flows through Line 5 and powers homes, our economy and employment for thousands of families in Ontario and Quebec, truly showing the tremendous potential of Canada's energy industry.

• (1850)

[Translation]

Without Line 5, the main source of propane used in Ontario and Quebec is at risk. Many farmers use propane to heat homes, barns and commercial greenhouses, as well as to dry grain.

Even if other sources of propane are found, they could be very costly. Sourcing propane elsewhere could drive up the cost of agriculture production and the cost of food.

It is time to get Canadians back to work. We cannot abandon Canadian jobs.

[English]

We are in a jobs crisis and a health crisis. Our economic recovery from COVID-19 depends on vaccines. We know how that has been going. Even the member for Kingston and the Islands wants his team to do better there. It also depends on a real plan to get Canadians back to work in all sectors of our economy and in all regions of our country.

We also need to be proud and get behind projects and investments that will accelerate this economic recovery, once again in every sector and in every region. The Liberal government can no longer pick and choose which jobs it feels are worth supporting. It is undermining the national unity of this country. It is undermining the prosperity we owe our children. We have to stop this divisive and ideological approach.

The royalties and tax revenues received by the governments because of our energy resources contribute to the social fabric we rely on, especially during the pandemic, and we will need to rebuild with these same revenues. The cancellation of Line 5 would mean a significant cut to revenues and the potential for us to rebuild our hospitals and our health care system.

[Translation]

We need Line 5 for our long-term care facilities.

[English]

It is an essential part of the Canadian energy supply chain, and quite frankly, an essential part of the Canadian economy. The result of a cancellation would be clear. There would be immediate and alarming fuel shortages, major job losses across Ontario and Quebec, increased rail and truck transportation of oil, increased fuel prices and greater environmental risks.

The Liberal government has failed to work effectively with three U.S. administrations, and it failed to stand up for the Canadian energy supply chain. It does not seem to care. The Prime Minister needs to value the things we produce in Canada, the things people do, getting their hands dirty to build things.

We are resourceful. We are resource rich and even richer in the hard work Canadians contribute to provide for their families and their country. Whether it is in Fort McMurray, Sarnia or Lévis, Canadians, all families, deserve an economic recovery.

[Translation]

Canadians in the regions and small towns deserve a government that will respect them. Blue-collar workers deserve a government that is proud of them.

[English]

They deserve a government that is proud of what we do in this country. On this side of the House, we are proud. We will fight for Line 5 and every job in this sector.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the shout-out during his speech. I will say that of all of the leaders of political parties here, he spends a lot of time talking about me. It is very flattering and truly a compliment.

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We are a good half an hour into this debate now. The member for Banff—Airdrie stood and spoke about the problems. He was asked a very direct question by the NDP, which I really appreciated. He was asked what he would do about it, and he did not answer the question. Then the Leader of the Opposition stood for 10 minutes and talked about the problem as he sees it, but he did not offer any kind of solution.

Maybe I will give the Leader of the Opposition an opportunity to answer the question that the member from the NDP asked, which is this: What would he do differently? He should not tell us about the plans, he should tell us what he would actually do to deal with the situation.

● (1855)

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, it is hard to not acknowledge the member for Kingston and the Islands because Canadians should know that he is the only who has generally showed up here over the last few months.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that references to the absence or presence of members in the House are not permitted.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, let me rephrase that. In this hybrid Parliament, there are several MPs who could be joining us in the hybrid format, whether in front of us on the screen or in the House. When the Prime Minister has his choice of those formats under this hybrid rule, Canadians should ask—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The rule is that we are not allowed to reference members' presence in the House. It does not matter whether it is a reference to members being virtually present or physically present in the House, he should not reference any presence in the House, full stop. To suggest that some people are here virtually or are here physically is still outside of the rules.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his comments. I was partway through listening to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition had to say on that. I will let him finish up on that point, and I am sure he will want to get on with the answer to the hon. member's question.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, perhaps there are many members of the cabinet in the hybrid format. I would ask them to put their hand emoji up because they are probably not here during an emergency debate, and that should concern Canadians.

Going back to the question—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands on a point of order.

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Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. He is specifically asking members to raise their hands to indicate if they are here, and that is against the rules. Reference cannot be made to somebody's presence in the House, whether they are attending virtually or physically. The Leader of the Opposition continues to do this by asking members to indicate their presence.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. It is good that we welcome everybody to participate in this debate. We praise the member for Kingston and the Islands, who gives tremendous performances in the House, especially yesterday. We appreciated his great performance and speech yesterday.

The Deputy Speaker: I have heard what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has had to say and, in my view, neither his reference to the participation of members, nor his speculation upon it, is making a direct reference to the absence or presence of members. I am satisfied that he will not dwell on that, and I am sure he will want to get past this point and on to the issue at hand.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is nice to have that clarity from you.

In response to the member's question, in November I asked for a call from the Prime Minister. The call became famous because the Prime Minister released a summary of the call with the opposition leader an hour before the call took place. That famous call is when I proposed a number of measures for the incoming Biden administration, particularly with respect to North American energy security and independence, which both relate to critical pipeline networks and the electricity grid.

The Prime Minister did very little with that, but that was my recommendation at the time. I also made our case to the governor of Michigan through a contact I had in the governor's office. As opposition leader, as much as I would like to lead in the absence of leadership, I cannot action our diplomats. However, I can say we are there to fight, and part of the reason we brought forward this emergency debate tonight is the months of inaction by the government.

Hopefully they will see this debate, whether live or virtually, as we said earlier, and act. It is time to stand up for those workers.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was pleasantly surprised by what the opposition leader said at the beginning of his intervention.

He said that—

The Deputy Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the member, but would he please make sure his microphone and headset are connected? It sounds like the member is using the computer microphone.

Now that it is working better, the hon. member for Jonquière once again has the floor.

Mr. Mario Simard: As I was saying, I was pleasantly surprised by the opposition leader, who started off by saying that Enbridge's Line 5 transports half the oil consumed in Quebec. The reason I was pleasantly surprised is that, throughout the last election cam-

paign, when the subject of the energy corridor came up, the Conservatives were at pains to say that Quebeckers did not consume any Alberta oil. Well, that is totally false, and now the matter is settled. I think today's Conservative Party leader might not agree with the person who was at the head of the Conservative Party during the last election campaign.

I now have a simple question for the opposition leader. Does what we are seeing now with Enbridge's Line 5 suggest that we should be thinking about our energy transition? Now that he has accepted the need for carbon pricing, is he ready to acknowledge that we have to give some thought to the energy transition?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised by the hon. member's question because the Bloc Québécois is not a party that defends blue-collar workers in the regions nor is it a party that listens to farmers who need propane and other energy sources. The Bloc Québécois is a party that opposes energy sector jobs and farmers. It defends the interests of big cities.

I am proud of our team because three weeks ago, I launched an innovative climate change policy that is ready to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting the jobs of Canadians in the regions, in the west, in Ontario and across the country. That is why we need to win the next election, for the regions of Quebec.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I ask the hon. member if he is familiar with why the people of Michigan do not trust the idea that a pipeline built by Enbridge in 1953 will not spill. Has he not heard of the July 2010 spill, when Enbridge's negligence led to the most expensive pipeline spill in U.S. history? Where was that? It was in Michigan.

This is about pipeline pollution. It is not about trying to stop a pipeline that gets goods to market. We need to find an alternative to get those goods to market and allow the government of Michigan to keep a campaign promise to protect the Great Lakes.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised to hear the former leader of the Green Party, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, encouraging more transport of hydrocarbons by rail and by truck. We know how that has gone in Lac-Mégantic. We know how that is actually worse for the environment because all of those sources emit greenhouse gases, so that is not a plan.

This is the trouble with the ideological left and I include the government in that group of parties there. They are against everything and they have no real ideas or credibility on how to actually reduce emissions while keeping hundreds of thousands of Canadians employed, how to innovate and how to lower carbon intensity. People cannot just shut down everything. When someone is part of a party, whether the Bloc Québécois or the Green Party, that will never be in government, they can live in fantasy.

However, when one is in government, like this government, for almost six years, its fantasy is dividing this country, it is making us less prosperous and when they cannot even defend a pipeline that has operated safely for years and we have to bring an emergency debate about it, that shows that this tired, incompetent government needs to go.

● (1905)

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am addressing this House from my home on the island of Newfoundland, which is the ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk peoples, and it is also one of Canada's three proud oil-producing provinces.

The importance of our oil and gas industry is not lost on me. The hard-working men and women who work in it are not lost on me. Every day I can see supply ships heading right out from the harbour here in St. John's, right through the narrows and out to the rigs over 300 kilometres from shore. Indeed, my province relies more on oil revenue than even Alberta or Saskatchewan.

I know that this debate is very important. It is about energy security; Canada's energy security, the United States' energy security and North America's energy security. That is precisely what Line 5 is and the Government of Canada takes this issue very seriously. I take this issue very seriously.

The opposition have claimed in the media and again in this House, and they will continue to say, that we have done nothing on this issue. That we sat on our hands, that we do not take this issue seriously, but that could not be further from the truth. It is misleading, it is irresponsible and it is politically self-serving. Leave it to the members of the official opposition to play partisan politics and seek to score some cheap political points on the backs of working Canadians, of Canadian oil and gas workers, and of Canadians who just want to heat their homes.

We cannot solve this issue with false bravado by beating our chests while simultaneously sticking our heads in the sand, like the members opposite so often do, by calling people who disagree with them brain-dead. That bombastic approach does a great disservice for our oil and gas workers and it does nothing to advance their cause. We are better than that and we owe it to the workers in the industry to be better than that.

These workers built this country. We are the fourth-largest producer of oil and gas in the world. We have the third largest reserves. We do not get there without the people behind it. This is our number one export, one of our biggest industries.

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[*Translation*]

Tonight's emergency debate allows us to focus on something very important, something we do not see enough in Canadian politics. I am talking about the "Team Canada" spirit that unites the political parties, government and the private sector, in support of a critical piece of North American energy infrastructure, specifically a relatively small section of Enbridge Line 5. This section extends 7.2 kilometres across the Straits of Mackinac, a waterway between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan.

[*English*]

I will say to this House what I have said to members of the committee: Shutting down Line 5 would have profound consequences for Canada and the United States. It is a critical energy and economic link. The heating of Canadian homes, the flying of Canadian jets, the operation of Canadian refineries in Sarnia, in Montreal, in Lévis, are non-negotiable. The jobs of those workers are non-negotiable: the 5,000 direct jobs and the 23,000 indirect jobs in the Sarnia region and the thousands of jobs in Quebec.

We have been clear from the start. We would leave no stone unturned in defending Canada's energy security. We have been looking at all of our options. We are working at the political level. We are working at the diplomatic level. We are working at the legal level. It is a full-court press.

We raised Line 5 directly with the President of the United States and members of his cabinet during the virtual Canada-U.S. summit in February. The Prime Minister also raised the critical importance of North American energy security in conversation with Vice President Harris.

I raised the issue with U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm in our very first call. I was frank and unequivocal in expressing how significant this issue was for Canada. The Minister of Transport raised Line 5 with his counterpart, Transport Secretary Buttigieg, whose department oversees the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, the U.S. federal regulator for pipelines, which has consistently stated that Line 5 is safe. The Minister of Foreign Affairs raised this issue with his counterpart, Secretary of State Blinken. Ambassador Hillman has been making the case directly to Governor Whitmer. Meanwhile, in Detroit and in Lansing, Consul General Joe Comartin has been making the case to state lawmakers and members of the Whitmer administration.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Governor Whitmer, Consul General Joe Comartin in Detroit, the team at the Canadian embassy in Washington and all of our diplomats who have been engaging on this issue in Washington, Detroit and Lansing who defend Canada's interests there every day.

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• (1910)

I have been speaking continually with Enbridge, as has my office. We are doing what we can to support them. I have also been speaking with labour, with the Canada's Building Trades Unions, the International Union of Operating Engineers and the Canadian Labour Congress. Every day, we are working hard on this issue.

I have spoken with the member for Sarnia—Lambton, with Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley, given the criticality of this issue for the Sarnia region. Just before this debate tonight, I spoke with my counterparts in Quebec, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Ministers Julien, Eyre and Savage, as well as Alberta's special representative in D.C., a former member of this House, James Rajotte. I will be speaking with Ontario Minister Rickford soon as well.

We have been in constant communication on this issue since the fall. We have set up an officials-level working group to make sure we stay aligned and that we work together. It has been, and it will continue to be, a team Canada approach. Line 5 does not just affect one province, it supports this entire country. In the face of external challenges to our energy security, Canadians expect, rightfully, that their governments, federal and provincial, politicians of all stripes, act as one, to be united, and united we are.

MPs and senators in the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group held 23 virtual meetings with U.S. congressional lawmakers during a blitz of advocacy in March, raising Line 5 in every one of those meetings.

Look no further than to the special committee on the economic relationship between Canada and the United States that this House unanimously voted to create. I appeared before the committee, as did some of my colleagues. I would like to take a moment to thank the members of that committee for their efforts. I suspect we will be hearing more from them tonight.

There was no daylight between parties on the issue. The committee unanimously agreed that Line 5 is a significant aspect of Canada's economic relationship with the United States. The committee unanimously agreed, as their first recommendation, that the government should encourage Enbridge and the State of Michigan to resolve the dispute through a mediated settlement.

We know full well the economic impacts that a shutdown would have in this country. I have already mentioned the jobs, but it bears repeating. It is 5,000 direct jobs in Sarnia, 23,000 indirect jobs in the region, thousands more in Montreal and Lévis, 53% of Ontario's crude oil supply, four refineries depend on Line 5, all of the jet fuel for Pearson International Airport, 66% of Quebec's crude oil supply via Line 9, Suncor's refinery in Montreal and Valero's refinery in Lévis.

The United States depends on Line 5 as much as we do. No two other countries in the world have their energy sectors as closely intertwined as we do, 70 pipelines, nearly three dozen transmission lines, right across the border. A shutdown would have negative impacts on Michigan and the Great Lakes Region, to put it mildly. Sixty-five percent of the propane needs of Michigan's upper peninsula come from Line 5; 55% of state-wide propane needs come from Line 5. Michiganders heat their homes with the product that it delivers. In fact, when we saw extreme cold weather events wreak

havoc on power grids in Texas, Michigan was protected from the same circumstances because of Line 5.

There are thousands of jobs at refineries in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan that are at risk should Line 5 shut down. It supplies Marathon's refinery in Detroit. It supplies PBF Energy and bp-Husky refinery in Toledo, Ohio, refineries that have said they have very limited alternatives and would need to close down. Thousands of direct and contracted skilled trades jobs are at risk, and a loss of \$5.4 billion in annual economic output. Line 5 powers Detroit's auto industry. It flies jets from Detroit Metro Airport.

Its impact cannot be overstated. It would cause a combined shortage of 14.7 million gallons a day in the region. Michigan, alone, would face a 756,000-gallon a day propane shortage.

We are hopeful that the court-ordered mediation process unfolding between Enbridge and the State of Michigan will yield a local solution. To the opponents of Line 5, I ask, "What is the alternative?"

The reality is that those energy molecules will still get to market, people will not be left out in the cold. As I have said, that is non-negotiable. The demand for the 540,000 barrels a day of oil that Line 5 transports will not go away.

• (1915)

We can either use a pipeline that is demonstrably safe, is efficient, is economical and, as a piece of critical infrastructure, is itself low-emitting, or be forced to put oil on trains, on trucks and on marine transport. It would take 800 rail cars and 2,000 trucks a day just in Canada. In the United States, the number of extra trucks needed could be up to 15,000 a day. That is unquestionably less safe and would increase emissions.

We do not need more trucks on the road jamming up the 401 and 403 in the GTA or the 40 in Montreal, or jamming up our already congested border crossings. Those idling trucks would be releasing their emissions in Governor Whitmer's back yard, in Michigan, while they waited to cross the border.

Let me be crystal clear. The protection of the environment of the Great Lakes is of vital importance. I do not think anybody in the House disagrees with that. The reality of the situation is that Line 5 is safe. It has been safe for 65 years, operating in the Straits of Mackinac without incident.

Enbridge is committed to making a safe line even safer. It has proposed the Great Lakes tunnel project, which would take the pipeline off the lake-bed floor and house it in a cement tunnel underneath the lake-bed, protecting it from anchor strikes and protecting the Great Lakes.

This is exactly what Michigan was looking for, and Michigan continues to issue permits to allow the project to proceed. As I said, we are looking at all our options. We are ready to intervene at precisely the right moment.

The 1977 Transit Pipeline Treaty remains in effect and we have other legal tools we can avail ourselves of should the situation require it, but let me reiterate we are encouraged by the mediation process that is unfolding and we encourage Enbridge and the State of Michigan to reach a local solution that maintains the integrity of North American energy security.

We are taking the same approach members of the Special Committee on the Economic Relationship Between Canada and the United States have asked us to, and the same approach Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Ontario have urged us to. It is an approach that says diplomacy first. It is an approach that says team Canada, with collaboration at the forefront with provincial governments and stakeholders.

Make no mistake about it, this is an irritant in the Canada-U.S. relationship, just as President Biden's decision on Keystone XL was deeply disappointing and hurt our workers, and just as the countervailing and anti-dumping duties on softwood lumber are unfair, unjustified, unwarranted and hurt our forestry workers. However, we cannot lose sight of the great opportunities and possibilities of the Canada-U.S. relationship.

There are opportunities to make this relationship even stronger, and it is a relationship that is bigger than one project or one piece of energy infrastructure. This new administration is more aligned with the goals of the Government of Canada than ever before, and not just with our goals. It is more aligned now with the goals of the governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan than ever before. It is aligned on leaving no worker behind and putting workers at the forefront of building a low-emissions energy future. It is aligned on tackling the greatest challenge of our generation, which is the reality of climate change. It is aligned on securing North American energy security through the protection of critical energy infrastructure and resilient supply chains free of geopolitics.

The U.S. wants to work with us on critical minerals because we have 13 of the 35 minerals it deems essential, and we want to ensure resilient supply chains that prevent Chinese dominance. It wants to work closely with us on CCUS, speaking with a unified voice and seeing it as an opportunity to have oil and gas workers lead decarbonization efforts.

The Prime Minister and President Biden agreed in their February summit to work together to build our economies back better as we confront the climate crisis. North American energy security is a big part of this, and this was spelled out in their joint "Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership". This formal document recognized the important economic and energy security benefits of the bilateral energy relationship and its highly integrated infrastructure.

The "Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership" presents us with a plan to protect our highly integrated energy infrastructure, such as Line 5, to maintain the security and resilience of supply chains like that of Canadian crude heading south.

Royal Assent

• (1920)

It is a plan to renew and strengthen existing bilateral agreements on critical minerals, advance nature-based climate solutions, harmonize standards and regulations to increase competitiveness and provide an even playing field for our companies.

It is about people. It is about workers and ensuring that no worker is left behind, making sure that energy-producing regions or provinces such as mine are not left behind. We need the ingenuity, the determination and the hard work of our energy workers in our energy-producing provinces to build up our low-emissions energy future.

Let me conclude with where I began. This is an issue that impacts all of Canada. This government takes the issue of Line 5 and Canada's energy security very seriously. We have put forward a team Canada approach, working with the provinces, with Enbridge, with the unions and with the House. We are leaving no stone unturned in defending Canada's energy security and the workers who built this country.

ROYAL ASSENT

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

May 6, 2021

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, Administrator of the Government of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 6th day of May, 2021, at 6:27 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Ian McCowan

Secretary to the Governor General

The schedule indicates the bills assented to were Bill C-14, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 30, 2020 and other measures, and Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code.

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EMERGENCY DEBATE

[English]

LINE 5 PIPELINE SHUTDOWN

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. minister for his recognition that Line 5 is essential for our economic and energy security. Certainly he knows the serious impact this would have in my riding.

I was fortunate to sit on the Canada-U.S. committee that was in agreement on the seriousness of this issue and made specific recommendations for the government to act on. One of these was that the government should submit an amicus curiae brief, which is due on Tuesday, May 11.

Will the government be submitting such a brief?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member, and I can assure the House, as I have said, that we are looking at all our options and we will leave no stone unturned in defending Canada's energy security. We are working at the political level. We are working at the diplomatic level. We are also working at the legal level, and we will be ready to intervene strategically at precisely the right moment so that we can stand up for energy workers and stand up, frankly, for energy consumers in this country. By looking after both of those, we are standing up for Canada's energy security. People will not be left out in the cold. As I have said, that is non-negotiable.

• (1925)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech. He spoke a lot about team Canada. I hope he will be as passionate and energetic about defending the softwood lumber industry in our dispute with the United States as he is about defending the Enbridge pipeline. I will move on.

This crisis is showing us that we may sometimes be unprepared and dependent. One of the solutions to the Enbridge situation could be to work on developing energy independence, which would require a transition. We never hear the minister talk about this. Just today, he announced \$24 million towards developing net-zero oil. In my opinion, net-zero oil is like diet poutine. There is no such thing.

My question for the minister is a simple one. Does he not think that the Enbridge dispute shows how much we need to transition to a low-carbon energy economy, an economy that is less dependent on oil?

[English]

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Mr. Speaker, I would say that we cannot simply transition an economy by pulling on the plug of the economy. Line 5 is absolutely essential to shipping crude from Alberta and Saskatchewan, but it is also vital to the energy security of the citizens of Ontario and Quebec.

It has been operating safely for over 60 years, and the improvements that Enbridge is coming forward with would make it even safer by taking the pipeline off the lake-bed and putting it under-

neath the lake-bed to ensure that it remains safe. We want to make sure that all of these are put in place. A significant transition is happening globally, moving away from conventional sources of energy and moving toward renewables and greener sources of energy, all in a quest to make sure that we lower emissions to meet our Paris targets. Investors are turning that way as well.

However, sudden shocks to ordinary men and women, to the citizens of Quebec, Ontario and to the whole country are not a way to make that transition smooth, nor are they a way to make it easier for Canadians. We have to make sure that the economy is strong in order to make sure that the transition is practical.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was happy that other speakers, including the Leader of the Opposition, mentioned that this is a very different debate about pipelines we are having tonight because this pipeline is not an expansion project. It is not like Keystone XL, Trans Mountain or energy east. This is kind of a status quo pipeline that moves Canadian oil from the west to eastern Canada.

Like those other projects, it involves a credible environmental risk. The minister can say that it is demonstrably safe, but Michigan obviously does not think that. Michigan is concerned about the thinning of the pipeline. It is concerned about the pipeline's supports in the Straits of Mackinac. It is concerned that it has leaked multiple times on land, and it has also witnessed the Line 6B spill into the Kalamazoo River that basically destroyed over 50 kilometres of river. Michigan has had a bad history with these Enbridge pipelines.

If we are going to mediate this and use diplomatic processes to get through this, I would think we would have to demonstrate, beyond the idea of putting the pipeline in a tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac, other measures that would really make this safe and give Michigan the sense that they could trust this project.

What further measures is the federal government working on that would really take the safety of the ecosystem of the Great Lakes into account?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly sensitive to the history. The hon. member brings up the history of the Kalamazoo spill. That was quite significant, as has been raised in this House, one of the more significant ones in North America.

It is important to point out, though, that what we are talking about essentially is the pipeline depth or distance in the Straits of Mackinac. That has a safe track record of some 60-plus years. Enbridge has put significant funding aside in order to make sure that stretch of the pipeline is even safer, clearly an acknowledgement of the environmental sensitivity of this area. It is a significant improvement.

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If we were to go back in time and perhaps make representation of this to previous administrations or Michiganders who live around that area and say this is the intention, no doubt they would see that as good news. As it is right now, that seems to get lost, but it is very important to remember that what is being proposed here is a significant improvement in safety to an area that, as I said, in the Straits of Mackinac, has gone 60-odd years without incident. However, it is important and absolutely vital that we get that balance between the environment and the economy right. I believe that Enbridge is making the right investments to what is a very sensitive environmental area.

There is no question that there is an economic vitality that exists not only for Alberta and Saskatchewan, but also for Quebec and Ontario. It is vitally important that this issue is top of mind when we talk about energy security on our continent.

● (1930)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been interesting listening to the debate tonight. I have to say it is disappointing to hear opposition colleagues, particularly the Conservatives, politicize this issue so often, not always, but quite often. Let us keep in mind that there are thousands of jobs at stake, direct and indirect. Those folks are Conservative, Liberal, NDP and Green supporters. Some do not vote, but they still care passionately about their country and certainly about their families, obviously.

What is the minister's message to those in Sarnia and southwestern Ontario? Those of us who know London will know that Sarnia is just down the road. I want to thank the minister for continuously engaging on this issue, whether it is with local MPs from the southwest or Mayor Bradley, whom I know he has spoken to. What is his message to the people of Sarnia and southwestern Ontario? It is a critical time. We have seen the rhetoric continue to develop in the United States in a negative way. I am looking to hear some reassurances from the minister. I know he has them, because I know how much he cares about this.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Mr. Speaker, my message to them is that we will not them go cold in the winter. We are not just talking about hundreds of thousands of homes in southwestern Ontario; we are talking about hundreds of thousands of homes in Michigan. We are talking about essential jobs and homes in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

I have stood in this House and debated KXL and other pipelines, but this is an existing pipeline that powers and heats homes now, that employs thousands of people now. When we look at the economy of our country and of the United States as we pursue the vital mission of lowering our emissions, it is important that in that process people do not go cold in winter. That is essential and important. That is why I implore an argument, not just in this House but in Michigan as well, that we get it right. Let us take the time to get it right. There is too much at stake.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to let you know that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Jonquière.

There is nothing trivial about the reason we are here tonight. However, is the shutdown of Line 5 really so imminent, given the Canada-U.S. treaty on cross-border pipelines? Basically, the treaty states that the countries will not take unilateral action on existing pipelines.

Another question might be asked. In the event of a shutdown, is the reality as frightening as the worst-case scenario painted by the official opposition?

The issue of Enbridge's Line 5 gives us an opportunity to discuss the necessary energy transition that Canada must embark on and to put into perspective the legitimate reasons for Governor Whitmer's actions, which were neither spontaneous nor unpredictable.

The issue at the root of the debate over Enbridge's Line 5 is environmental safety. We need to know the truth about how safe the pipeline is. Given that in 2010, the pipeline spilled the equivalent of 20,000 barrels of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, the public and government authorities have every right to be concerned about waterway health and safety.

The Governor of Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer, criticizes the company for persistently violating the easement's terms and conditions and for not doing enough to protect the Great Lakes, contrary to what the Minister of Natural Resources said earlier about the company.

The governor says Enbridge has routinely refused to take action to protect the Great Lakes and the millions of Americans who depend on them for clean drinking water and good jobs. She also said the company has repeatedly violated the terms of the 1953 easement by ignoring structural problems that put the Great Lakes and families at risk.

The concerns of the American stakeholders are therefore nothing new. In fact, the concerns of the State of Michigan predate Ms. Whitmer's time in office. She is just the one who decided to take action. Inevitably, this will generate some discontent and concerns. It will force this oil company to review its priorities because, suddenly, the company has crossed the line and someone finally said no.

For that matter, why did Enbridge routinely refuse to be proactive about managing Line 5, particularly in the sensitive Straits of Mackinac? When the company itself reported defects in the protective coating of its structure, noting erosion and damage caused by commercial tugs, why did it fail to show any integrity?

Michigan could also be using the threat of shutting it down to force Enbridge to upgrade its bloody pipeline in order to make it safer. The company is loath to spend the money, so it is using every tool it can think of, including lobbying politicians. The Governor of Michigan is fed up, and the writing has been on the wall for quite some time.

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Between 1996 and 2014, Enbridge was responsible for 1,276 spills totalling nearly 10 million gallons of oil in both the United States and Canada. These data are conservative. Why? Because they are Enbridge's data. Do not bother looking for those figures on the company's website. They were there at one point but have since been removed. The documents I consulted, which are very well referenced, reveal another worrying problem, and that is how much power this industry has when it comes to Canadian regulators.

I encourage everyone to search for the words “national energy board” and “Enbridge” in the May 2, 2016, edition of Canada's National Observer. Members might be surprised by what they learn. It is enlightening.

The Bloc Québécois cannot condone the behaviour and reactions of Enbridge and the Department of Natural Resources to Governor Whitmer's announcement. The concerns are legitimate. Michigan was already affected in 2010. The governor has decided to focus on prevention rather than remediation.

I want to be clear. We do care about the repercussions of this measure if it goes ahead. Still, we have concerns. We do not support pipelines, and we certainly do not want to continue to rely on an outdated energy source.

● (1935)

Such transitions take time and planning. If we plan changes and anticipate challenges and solutions, moving away from oil is not only feasible, it is close at hand.

We know that a legal, political and diplomatic showdown between Enbridge, U.S. authorities and the Government of Canada is approaching. We would like to remind members that Quebec's refineries can quickly implement a plan B and switch to other sources of supply. We should also remember that Newfoundland and Labrador is Canada's third-largest producer, so depending on what happens with Line 5, planning for supply from this region would be wise.

Nevertheless, the pipelines running beneath our rivers will continue to pose a risk to environmental safety, and the transportation of oil and gas via pipelines will continue to face political opposition, as it should.

The current situation should spur us to make the energy transition. In Quebec, the transportation sector is the biggest greenhouse gas emitter, accounting for more than 80% of total emissions. Quebec's transportation electrification industry is booming, and our expertise, whose development we have made a priority, should serve as an example to the rest of Canada.

We do not manufacture cars in Quebec, but we do manufacture trains, buses, streetcars, subway cars and public transit vehicles that are all well suited to zero-emission electric technology. We are on the right track to get our transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions down.

We need federal zero-emission legislation. The more electric transportation evolves, the less dependent we will be on oil. Supply issues will gradually go away, and we will keep our money within our own economy.

Sure, there are costs associated with the transition. The financial argument is often invoked to convince people that we must continue relying on fossil fuels, but we need to be vocal about the real cost of energy and gas, which is much higher than the price we pay at the pump. The real cost includes the upstream and downstream environmental costs, in terms of the environmental damage created by the extraordinarily dirty extraction process, soil contamination and threats to wildlife, on top of the environmental costs of atmospheric pollution caused by burning oil here and in other countries.

Add to that the social costs, including the cost to our health care system, due to the prevalence of illnesses directly related to air pollution, especially the growing number of children and even babies with lung or respiratory issues. Plus, there is all the public money paid in subsidies and tax benefits to the oil and gas industry to sustain a dying industry, starting with the obscene Trans Mountain pipeline.

What about the cost of clean-up? How do we describe the losses incurred during oil spills? According to the International Monetary Fund, the global negative externalities for 2017 alone amount to more than \$2 trillion U.S.

Again, Canada's landscape is conducive to clean, renewable energy. The wind, solar and geothermal energy industries are reaching out to the government. The government just has to accept. The technology and resources are there.

The Conservatives are resolutely defeatist about their ability to break up with the extractive industries, while the Liberals insist on fuelling dependence on fossil fuels while claiming to favour a green transition. We are not fools. This is a green mirage.

Michigan's policy choices should be an eye-opener for us. They are certainly coming as a surprise to Enbridge and the powerful lobbies in their industry. Their track record, their failure to live up to their commitments, their lax maintenance of their facilities, and the arrogance that comes from feeling untouchable have just caught up with them.

Canada, the G7 country that subsidizes oil and gas production the most in relation to its gross domestic product, the country that announces to the world that it is committed to fighting climate change and then turns around and authorizes oil drilling in a marine protected area, might have avoided a diplomatic crisis and what is happening today if it had intervened with Enbridge sooner.

When governments give everything to the oil companies, the companies end up thinking they are in charge. Gretchen Whitmer has shown them that they are not in charge anymore.

● (1940)

[*English*]

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague from the Bloc Québécois a few questions about the costs of oil and gas.

She had some good questions: What are the costs of remediating this land and what are the costs of pollution that society bears on behalf of the oil and gas industry?

Inasmuch as there are some effects of every industry we have, does she know about the amount of tax, the amount of economic rent, that is paid by the oil and gas industry to governments across Canada to take care of all of these things? There is approximately \$24 billion a year, plus another couple of billion dollars a year in excise taxes, that are brought to this equation by this industry to deal with all our health care, all our education, all the things that contribute to our society. Can she comment on that, please?

• (1945)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

In response, I would like to ask him how much pollution costs. According to Health Canada, 15,000 people die prematurely because of pollution in Canada. How many people with asthma have to go to the hospital? A doctor recently testified that she was seeing more and more babies with lung problems. How much does that cost in terms of health care costs, and also in terms of the social cost of newborns staying in the hospital?

Unions representing energy workers support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, but an energy transition plan is needed. Even in 2021, wind and solar energy are already starting to be cheaper than oil. There are many jobs in these new sectors, good jobs that, through tax deductions at source, can help us improve our health care, education and other systems.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Repentigny for her speech.

I do not think anyone is disputing the importance of a green transition, but this evening, we are debating the importance of Line 5. I know one of the by-products of the oil transported through Line 5 is propane. During the 2019 strike, the propane shortage had a major economic impact on Quebec and eastern Ontario.

I would therefore ask my colleague if she thinks it is a good idea for Michigan to shut down Line 5 on May 12 and if she believes it will not really affect Quebec's economy.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, because it gives me a chance to explain that the Bloc Québécois is not doctrinaire.

Yes, the Bloc Québécois recognizes that we will still need fossil fuels in the years to come. Let us not kid ourselves. However, the energy transition will be well under way. Replacing oil and gas with more eco-friendly options is technologically and economically feasible. That said, we are certainly not suggesting that turning off the tap tomorrow morning will help with the energy transition.

I just want to point out that this transition calls for a complete overhaul of how we produce and consume energy for the long term. The thing is, we have to stop just talking and start taking action to make the green transition happen. Baby steps will not get us there. We need great leaps to achieve net zero.

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[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will make this a quick comment because of the time constraints.

Just to add to that back and forth between the member for Repentigny and the member for Calgary Centre, Health Canada recently came out with a study which showed that air pollutants cost, in the health costs of Canadians, about \$120 billion a year. That compares almost exactly with the value of Canadian fossil fuel exports, which is \$122 billion a year. Fossil fuel exports are the same as our health costs. I agree that health costs have a much more personal impact.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

What price do we put on a life? What price do we put on the destruction of natural environments? As I said earlier, we need big steps to achieve a sustainable energy transition that will create good jobs and ensure better health.

• (1950)

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by reading an excerpt from the request for the emergency debate, and members will all understand why. It reads, “The Minister of Natural Resources has confirmed this one pipeline alone is responsible for 53% of Ontario's crude and 66% of Quebec's.”

Members cannot imagine how happy I was to hear the leader of the official opposition mention that 66% earlier. I was happy because I remember how, during the election campaign, the Conservative Party, with its much-touted energy corridor project, kept repeating that most of Quebec's oil comes from dictatorship countries or the United States.

Earlier I was blown away when the leader of the official opposition told us that was not true. I hope that this lie, which was repeated multiple times, will not come up again in the future. I must say I was somewhat offended by the answer that he gave me. The leader of the official opposition told me that the Bloc Québécois is not a party that supports the regions and that we stand up for urban centres. I was offended because the regions of Quebec mainly live off the forestry industry, not the oil industry. I have never heard a typical Conservative talk about forestry. I was therefore somewhat offended, but I am not vindictive, so I will quickly move on to something else.

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Earlier this afternoon, as I was reflecting on today's debate, I thought there was a rather interesting connection with the pandemic we are experiencing. What does a crisis do? A crisis makes us confront our vulnerabilities. We went through this early on in the pandemic when we saw the gaps in our supply chains. Masks and vaccines come to mind. It forced us to confront our vulnerabilities. It showed us that we were not ready. We depend on exports, and I feel as though we are also dependent when it comes to our energy and our energy consumption. We are dependent on something, and we know what that is: oil.

Another major crisis that certainly lies ahead is climate change. Will we be ready to live through this climate crisis?

Based on what I am hearing tonight, I want to say no, because we do not seem to have learned anything from what has happened to us. Canada is still fundamentally an oil state that thinks only in terms of oil and for oil.

I believe the debate on Enbridge is an opportunity to revisit two fairly simple concepts: energy independence and the energy transition. I do find it surprising that it is the United States, or at least one U.S. state, that is asking us to take care of ecosystems. Let us be smart about this. We have to realize that the Great Lakes provide drinking water to 40 million people. We know there was a 3.2-million-litre spill in the Kalamazoo River.

I do not think it is appropriate for us to get a wake-up call from a U.S. state and for us to tell Enbridge today that it can go ahead, anything goes, it can do what it likes and we will put environmental considerations aside as long as the oil industry is fine and there are jobs. I think that we, by which I mean everyone besides me, must do some collective soul-searching about Canada's dependence on oil and gas, because I believe it is a terrible disease that Canada has been carrying around for over 20 years.

Why do I say that? I spoke earlier about the energy transition.

Concerning getting out of the crisis, the Liberal government announced to us that it wants a "green recovery". We all remember that. Ms. McKenna and Mr. Wilkinson were involved, as well as Mr. Guilbeault. I thought that the green recovery was promising and that we could perhaps live—

• (1955)

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I paid attention to the member's speech and he used the names of three cabinet ministers in a row. In this chamber, we are not supposed to use the names of ministers, but I would like to keep listening to his speech.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I remind the hon. member to refer to people in the House by their riding or title, not by name.

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I sincerely apologize. I am incorrigible. It will not happen again.

I was saying that in light of this promise of renewal and, perhaps, an awakening to the Canadian obsession with oil, I was eager to learn about this real green recovery plan.

All we have seen to date of this green recovery plan is a strategy for the electrification of transportation. That is fine and I accept it. This could let us get off fossil fuels. What is ironic is that the lion's share will be sent to Ontario, the only province that no longer has an electric vehicle incentive. However, since we are not that snide, we will accept the transportation electrification strategy.

The other big piece of the green recovery plan is hydrogen. I have to admit that I do not understand it. If we do not learn from this crisis, I believe we are going to hit a wall, and this wall will be hydrogen. The federal government's hydrogen strategy involves the production of grey hydrogen. My colleagues will not believe it, but producing one tonne of grey hydrogen using hydrocarbons generates between 10 and 11 tonnes of carbon dioxide. How can they claim that it is green?

Earlier, I made a joke to the Minister of Natural Resources, who made yet another announcement today about net-zero oil. In my opinion, net-zero oil is like diet poutine. There is no such thing. Poutine is not a diet food, and a plan for a green recovery should not include a grey-hydrogen strategy. That is not going to work. As I was saying, producing a tonne of this hydrogen generates 10 to 11 tonnes of greenhouse gases. That makes zero sense if the government is trying to lower its emissions.

As I was saying, the Liberal government made an announcement about its green recovery strategy, but there was not a single mention in this strategy about the forestry industry, which is probably the most promising industry in the fight against climate change.

The forestry industry is not just about two-by-fours anymore. It is not just about the commodity products we once knew. It is about so much more, and through what is known as the bioeconomy, we can replace many oil-based products.

Since I have only two minutes left, I will wrap up quickly. If, in the spirit of getting out of the crisis, we try to gain a bit more energy independence and be a bit more proactive in the energy transition, since we see that staking everything on oil is the road to ruin in the long run, and we want to commit to taking that direction, then forestry is the perfect industry. The forest is a carbon sink. Unfortunately, the Liberal government seems to turn a deaf ear to the subject of the forestry industry. I have not seen any concrete action by this government to support Quebec's forest.

I will close by saying that there is one figure in the budget that just kills me and provides food for thought. It is the \$17.6 billion vested in the green recovery plan. Remember that number.

When I heard that, I immediately thought of another number, the cost of purchasing and expanding the Trans Mountain pipeline. An oil industry project cost \$17.1 billion, and the government is now trying to convince people that we will have a green recovery for \$17.6 billion. To me, honestly, it is laughable and perfectly illustrates that Canada is a petro-state that only lives from and for oil. I get the impression that we all have to do some soul-searching today. I will stop there before I get too worked up.

• (2000)

[*English*]

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to my colleague for the last 10 minutes and I have to say that I am quite disappointed. The issue at hand, Line 5, actually impacts Quebec, but there was barely one mention of what we are here to discuss. The member goes off and talks about a whole bunch of different issues related to whether the government is investing enough in renewable energy, but he does not even talk about the Line 5 issue and how it impacts his province.

My question to him is twofold.

He talks about Canada being a petro-state. Can he talk about the fact that Canada's oil and gas sector has created immense benefit for the entire country, including for his province of Quebec? Can he opine about whether Line 5 is important to the people he represents and to his province of Quebec?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I think that is more of a legal debate. I am confident that Line 5 will not be shut down on May 12. I do not want to upset or discourage my colleague, but Quebec could easily obtain conventional oil because of its proximity to seaports. Conventional oil has a much lower carbon footprint than non-conventional oil from the oil sands. However, that is not what I want.

With regard to the economic spinoffs of oil for Quebec, I would like to remind the member of the existence of Dutch disease, a concept that is very easy to find on the Internet if he want to educate himself. Dutch disease completely destabilized Quebec's manufacturing sector because Alberta's economy drove up the value of the Canadian dollar. I therefore have to say that an oil-based Canada has a lot more disadvantages than advantages for Quebec.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

What role does biomass play in the transition to a green economy? Does the technology to replace textile fibres with tree fibres exist? How many trees will be cut down to develop that industry, and how many years will it take?

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, whose company at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources I very much enjoy. I am well aware that the forestry industry will not be replacing the entire fossil fuel industry anytime soon.

I just want to point out to him that, in the early 1970s, everyone said it was impossible to develop the oil sands and nobody would ever figure out the technology to make money extracting that kind

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of oil. Well, the federal government invested \$70 billion in it, and someone figured it out.

Nowadays, however, what people want is a low-carbon economy. The forestry industry can make that happen. If the federal government steps up and supports the forestry industry for the first time ever, we might have a better economy 10 years from now.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech.

Another very important element is keeping the Great Lakes safe. I think we are nearing a consensus that immediately shutting down Line 5 is not a good thing, but what can the government do to keep the Great Lakes safe?

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, earlier I said that the Great Lakes provide drinking water for 40 million people. We need to send a clear signal to Enbridge that we care about the drinking water of 40 million people.

It is not by holding an emergency debate where we tell Enbridge it can do what it wants and we will stand behind it that we will successfully secure the drinking water of these 40 million people. Enbridge is gambling with the quality of life of many people. It needs to realize that, and I get the impression that is the message the Governor of Michigan is trying to send.

For its part, the Canadian petro-state prefers to pander and stake everything on oil, telling Enbridge to do whatever it wants and that as long as there are economic spinoffs and jobs, Canada will be happy.

• (2005)

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Tonight we are debating the critical situation around Line 5, an Enbridge pipeline that transports crude oil and natural gas liquids from Alberta through Michigan to refineries and other facilities in Ontario, notably in Sarnia, and Quebec. It is capable of carrying 540,000 barrels per day. A similar pipeline in the Enbridge system, Line 6, also serves these markets, with 667,000 barrels per day.

As others have mentioned, including the Leader of the Opposition, this emergency debate is not at all like the debates we have had here about other pipelines, such as Keystone XL or Trans Mountain. These are expansion projects designed solely to increase the amount of raw bitumen exported from Canada at a time when world demand has flatlined and the climate crisis requires that it decline steeply in the future.

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This is a debate about the impending closure of a pipeline that brings western Canadian oil to eastern Canada, creating Canadian jobs. This is about maintaining the status quo, at least for the moment, and maintaining those jobs in the industrial heartland of Canada.

One similarity between this and the other pipeline debates is that at the heart of it, there is credible environmental concern. I would like to start by laying out the positions of the two sides in this confrontation: the Canadian workers and companies that need the pipeline to continue supplying oil to Ontario and Quebec, and the State of Michigan, which is concerned about the prospect of environmental damage.

Line 5 was built in 1953, and the Michigan section operates under an easement granted by the state. Back in November, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer stated that the pipeline is a threat to the environment, particularly if a rupture occurs in the section that travels on the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. That section has been a bone of contention for years, and it has suffered damage on occasion from dragged anchors. However, fortunately there have been no leaks in that water section.

Michigan has also pointed out violations in the easement conditions, including inadequate supports for the pipeline on the bottom of the strait. For its part, Enbridge has proposed to enclose the underwater section in a concrete tunnel to protect it from future accidents, and it has obtained some of the permits necessary to carry out that work.

Michigan, however, has claimed that because of past violations and present concerns, the pipeline is “a ticking time bomb” and will revoke the easement as of May 12, which is only six days away. If Enbridge is still using the pipeline after that date, the governor’s office has stated that it will be breaking the law.

What will the impact be if this pipeline is shut down? There are about 4,900 jobs in Sarnia that directly rely on the supply of crude oil that Line 5 now supplies. One of the products that plants in Sarnia produce is jet fuel, which supplies large airports such as the Toronto Pearson Airport. The oil not diverted in Sarnia is carried on to refineries in Quebec, so the impact could be huge.

There is some debate on how alternate supplies could mitigate these impacts. Pearson airport stated in a recent article in the National Post that it is not too worried about a shut down of Line 5, as it has diversified its sources of jet fuel. The refineries in Quebec said that they have made arrangements to get their crude oil from another pipeline. Industries in Sarnia may be able to get some crude oil through increased flow in Line 6, since they managed oil that way when Line 6 was ruptured in 2010. At that time, they got alternate supplies through Line 5.

It is clear that the petrochemical sector in Sarnia could be facing significant shortages that would have to be made up through transport by rail and truck. That is not an ideal situation, and it is one that could result in a direct loss of jobs in the Sarnia industrial complex and indirect job losses throughout the region. We have to have a strategy to keep Line 5 going and protect those jobs. That strategy

goes through convincing Michigan that it is in all of our interests to keep Line 5 operating.

- (2010)

What are the environmental risks that Michigan is citing in its decision to cancel this easement? One of the largest inland oil spills in U.S. history happened on another Enbridge pipeline in Michigan. As I mentioned, Line 6 goes through Sarnia via Michigan and goes around the south end of Lake Michigan instead of crossing under the Straits of Mackinac. In 2010, Line 6B ruptured and sent about 20,000 barrels of bitumen into the Kalamazoo River just east of Battle Creek, Michigan. The spill contaminated over 50 kilometres of the river and took five years to clean up. The people of Michigan are therefore very well aware of what could happen. Line 5 itself has suffered a number of leaks over the years, totalling over a million gallons in all.

In the order to cancel the easement for Line 5, Michigan has pointed out numerous violations of the original agreement, including the design of the support systems of the pipeline on the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac. Recent assessments show that the underwater part of the pipeline is suffering from thinning walls and other stressors. Another study makes it clear that a rupture in this section could damage hundreds of kilometres of shoreline along Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. Also, the Ojibwa of Michigan consider any agreement to allow Enbridge to continue operating Line 5 a violation of their treaty rights.

We need to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem and the thousands of jobs in Ontario and Quebec. The federal government needs to have a plan that would do both. All I have heard from the minister is that Line 5 is not negotiable. However, I think it is obvious that the only way out of this dilemma is through negotiation, proving to the State of Michigan and everyone else who cares about the environment, me included, that Line 5 will not have a history similar to Line 6B. We should point out the economic impacts that this closure would have on Michigan itself. Michigan and the neighbouring states of Ohio and Pennsylvania also receive some of the fuels carried through Line 5, including over half of Michigan’s propane supplies.

As usual, experts are advising that a diplomatic solution would be best, but Enbridge is counting the 1977 transit pipelines treaty if talks fail, and right now it does seem that both sides are the length of a continental pipeline apart. The treaty states:

No public authority in the territory of either Party shall institute any measures...interfering with in any way the transmission of hydrocarbon in transit.

It also states that the treaty is “subject to regulations by the appropriate governmental authorities”. I will leave that to the courts to decide, but the treaty is clearly a last-ditch strategy that may work.

As I said at the beginning, we have been debating this pipeline dispute in Canada over the past decade or more. This is an existing pipeline that supplies oil to Canadian industry and maintains good jobs. It is an integral part of the economies of Ontario and Quebec. We will be using oil and gas over the next three decades, albeit in declining amounts, as we transition to zero emissions by 2050, and Line 5 is an important delivery mechanism for that purpose.

This dispute has been a wake-up call. The public is increasingly unwilling to live with the environmental risks associated with pipelines and the climate impacts of burning fossil fuels. We in the NDP, and I think everyone in the House, are concerned about workers in the oil and gas sector, whether they work in the Alberta oil patch or the industrial cities of Ontario. We need a plan, not just empty promises, to provide good jobs for those workers over the coming decades. We need training programs that will allow them to move to jobs in building retrofits, electrification, electric vehicle manufacturing, battery technology and the myriad of other sectors that will provide good employment for decades to come. We need government programs to provide those jobs to prove to workers that we are serious about helping them.

As that transition takes place, we need to protect the jobs that Line 5 provides and protect the ecosystem of the Great Lakes. The federal government must have a clear and effective plan to do both.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for recognizing that this is not like other debates we have had. Line 5 does not have an alternative right now. People have talked about plans to use 2,000 trucks and 800 railcars a day, but the capacity to do this by next Wednesday does not exist, so I certainly agree that there is no plan.

What does the member think the government ought to be doing? We need detailed plans, not the vague words we heard from the natural resources minister.

● (2015)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying in my speech, I think it is clear that both sides have doubled down on this.

The Canadian government clearly wants this pipeline to continue, for good reason. Michigan, on the other hand, has doubled down on the fact that it is not going to continue because of environmental concerns.

There is one path forward that I see for the government, outside of the courts, and who knows, it may go to the courts and it may be in the courts for years. However, if it stays out of the courts, if we want a diplomatic solution, a mediated solution, the only path I can see is that Canada have a plan to really prove to Michigan that this is environmentally safe.

The minister said it is demonstrably safe. Obviously it is not or Michigan would not be proceeding in this manner. We need a solution that increases the environmental safety along all lengths of the pipeline, not just the Straits of Mackinac.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a debate like this, it would be important to hear from

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the Green Party. I am willing to give my speaking time to the member for Fredericton, if that is possible.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

I want to ask the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay about his comments around Enbridge and its track record.

I cannot help but think that if there is success in not having Line 5 shut down, we would be placing immense trust in Enbridge to maintain the safety and the sanctity of the Great Lakes. We can look at some of the infractions. Enbridge has been cited as having persistent and incurable violations of the easement.

Is it not a history of a lack of enforcement of safety protocols that has gotten us into this mess to begin with?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I would agree. I realize how important this pipeline is to Canadian industry and Canadian jobs, but I can also very much see Michigan's stance on this.

Michigan experienced one of the worst oil spills in North America, in the Kalamazoo River. Line 5 has been leaking off and on, on the land portions of the pipeline. As the member said, there are violations of the original easement agreement in terms of how the pipeline was constructed and maintained. I can see why Michigan is very concerned. That is why I think Canada should try to allay those concerns through promises to really up the ante in terms of environmental safety.

It really shows to everyone here why these environmental impact studies of pipelines are so important. I hear complaints all the time, especially from the Conservative side, that these environmental impact studies are a waste of time. Here is an example where, if we had done things right in the first place and not had these incidents, we would not be here tonight talking about this.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have been talking a lot about the impacts on south-western Ontario. My riding is quite close to Sarnia, and those job impacts will be felt if the closure happens quickly.

The member did an excellent job of showing that there needs to be that smart transition and what New Democrats have been calling for in terms of heading towards a low-carbon economy in the future.

A few days ago there was a study conducted by Western University, Lawson Health Research Institute. It talked about the evidence that showed exposure to high levels of pollution could significantly hinder the development of children and that it causes a lot of asthma. We have seen that in Sarnia. It is actually quite a bit higher, the incidence of child—

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The Speaker: I am going to have to cut the member off and go to the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay. There is only so much time left, 30 seconds or less.

• (2020)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, again, I will repeat what I said to the member for Repentigny, and hopefully more clearly this time because I kind of botched it.

A recent study was put out by Health Canada. It showed that the benefits we get from the oil and gas industry, the export costs of \$122 billion, are basically exactly matched to the costs that burning fossil fuels have on our economy and our health system. There is \$120 billion spent on asthma and all the other health problems that come from air pollution, largely caused by our fossil fuel society.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are gathered here tonight to debate the future of a pipeline that has been in operation for over 60 years. I think we must start that debate with a recognition of the fact that Canada and the planet are facing a climate emergency. We have known this for a long time. We are beginning to see the effects of climate change. They are already happening.

As people have tried, whether here in Canada or elsewhere, to push for meaningful action on climate change, it has driven a very polarized debate about pipelines and about the oil and gas sector. On the one hand, some people say we need to completely get rid of all oil and gas extraction. On the other hand, there are boosters of the industry who continue to advocate for what appears to be a limitless expansion and an increase in the rate of extraction of oil and gas. I am not sure that Canadians or anybody on the planet, frankly, has been well served by the extreme polarization of that debate.

Certainly, New Democrats have been very clear that when it comes to that kind of unbridled expansion and lack of critique of the oil and gas sector, or thinking that things can go on as they have for decades without any kind of meaningful change, that is not what is going to get us out of this climate emergency. We do need to change course. We need to think more critically about the oil and gas sector and how to transition successfully toward a low-carbon economy in a way that does not leave workers behind.

Right now we are in a debate where the imperatives of a large company that has known there has been opposition in the State of Michigan and elsewhere to its operations for a long time has refused to act. Instead it has lobbied to create political pressure for the company to be able to continue its operations as it has been doing for some time.

We need to get to a point where we can get concrete action on climate change and transition toward a low-carbon economy. Those companies that have the ability to get politicians like us all together advocating for their interests, when the money is not there to be made anymore can quickly turn their backs and walk away. Who is left holding the bag? It's their workers.

We have a lot of people in Canada who have made their living in the oil and gas sector. As the economy and market forces are driving people away now from fossil fuels, it is incumbent on us to make a plan for what the next stage of our economy will look like

so that those workers are not left holding the bag, and so that they do not face economic disaster when those companies move into other more profitable pursuits.

However, we are not talking about that expansionist drive here tonight. We are not talking about pipelines like the Keystone XL pipeline or the TMX pipeline. We are talking about a pipeline that has been in operation for over 60 years. When we talk about that transition, I do not believe it is a transition to zero oil and gas here in Canada. Even if we transition all of our home heating and our transportation away from fossil fuel use, there will continue to be a role for the oil and gas sector. This Parliament is brought to those at home by plastics, among other things, and those require oil and gas for their manufacture.

The question is this: What does a reduced oil and gas industry look like in Canada that can support a number of good paying jobs, albeit not what we saw at the height of the boom in Alberta? The answer has to be that for every ounce of oil and gas extracted from the ground here in Canada there are more value-added jobs like the refining capability that is in Sarnia.

The Line 5 pipeline debate is different from the debates around Keystone XL and TMX in a couple of key ways. One is that we are not talking about more extraction. We are talking about the extraction that has already been going on. Two, we are talking about transporting oil and gas to a place where the very kind of work that we would like to see happen in Canada, the value-added work that creates more jobs and more value here in Canada for every ounce of oil and gas extracted, takes place. Those are the kinds of things that Canada needs to be thinking far more about.

• (2025)

In the time that we have seen massive increases, not in the last five or six years when the oil and gas sector in Canada has been hit very hard, but over the last 20 years when we saw a huge expansion of our oil and gas infrastructure, we also saw a dramatic decline in the refining capability of the country. There are various reasons for that in terms of the market, and that is what happens when we do not have a government with its hand on the tiller, that is actually trying to make a plan for how Canadians themselves, not just international shareholders, can benefit the most from the oil and gas that is taken out of the ground.

With respect to shutting down Line 5 in the next couple of weeks, New Democrats have been very clear that this is not a good thing. It is going to impact thousands of workers in Canada, both on the supply end and the receiving end where there is value-added work being done.

That said, we understand the frustration of folks who have legitimate concerns about the Great Lakes, who want to see real action get taken. It is not like these concerns are new, and so there is a lot of frustration that a company that has been hearing these concerns for a long time could continue to get away with doing business as usual. They are talking about a corridor underneath the Great Lakes that could replace the existing pipeline. That sounds like a good thing in terms of eliminating one of the environmental threats, but that replacement is also not going to get built in the next two weeks. Therefore, the question is, what do we do in the meantime?

What we would like to hear from our own government and governments in the U.S. who, like New Democrats, support the ongoing operation of Line 5 is a plan for how to mitigate those environmental risks in the meantime. We would like to hear how we get to a place where we have another option that does not involve massive shipments by rail and by truck to these refineries in Canada, and that is something that has been seriously lacking. We owe that, not just to what Conservatives like to write off as environmentalists; these are concerned Canadian and U.S. citizens on both sides of the border. We also owe it to indigenous people on both sides of the border, whether it is the Bad River Band or it is the Wiikwemkoong on the banks of Lake Huron who are concerned, not just about what it means for the lake in a general environmental sense but also what it means for local economies who depend on the Great Lakes.

I appreciate that people do not have a lot of faith in Enbridge. They have every right not to; they should not. We should demand more. We should demand governments that have a plan for how to transition to a low-carbon future. We should have governments that take public interest regulation and enforcement seriously. If we had a stronger culture of that, then some of the issues around this pipeline would have been addressed much sooner. We need to be building a culture, not of saying yes to the oil industry any time it asks because it happens to employ a lot of people, but a culture that impresses upon that industry its responsibility, with governments who understand their own responsibility and are willing to enforce public interest regulation to ensure that these powerful companies do not just get away with anything and it is not just business as usual. That has to be there.

There is a governor in Michigan now who clearly feels that sense of exasperation and is putting pressure on Enbridge. We need to find a way to keep Line 5 open for now without dissipating that real and important pressure on Enbridge to do the right thing by the environment and by local people whose economies depend on the success and the health of the Great Lakes.

• (2030)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the speech by my colleague, in which he alluded to the potential for environmental disasters.

Earlier we heard the Minister of Natural Resources say that nothing has happened with this pipeline in 60 years. I will make an analogy, as my colleague from Jonquière did earlier when he was talking about diet poutine. I love that type of analogy. It would be like the people of Pompeii pointing to Vesuvius and saying that

nothing has happened in 60 years, so nothing will happen in the future.

I wonder if the Minister of Natural Resources' argument is valid. According to him, since nothing has happened in connection with the pipeline in 60 years, then nothing will ever happen in the future.

I would like my colleague's opinion on the minister's fallacious argument.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. Obviously, the answer is no. We cannot say that because there has not been a disaster in the past, there will not be one in the future.

We really have to think about how U.S. states and governments in Canada can succeed in creating a culture that promotes accountability in the implementation of regulations that are in the public interest.

Currently, few people trust Enbridge, the regulations or the governments whose job it is to enforce environmental standards. That is what must change. It is discouraging to realize tonight that the government has no plan, nor even any real inclination to take on this issue.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his work on the Canada-U.S. committee that studied this issue. I believe he participated in that.

I wonder if the member could elaborate on some of the specific recommendations that the government should do and the things it does not appear to do.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, indeed, I did participate. I am the NDP vice-chair of that committee.

One of the big things that has not been present enough in this conversation, if the member will permit me some criticism of the committee and its study, is indigenous voices. We did not hear from any indigenous witnesses at committee. I submitted some recommendations on that. If we are going to find a good way forward, we need to be engaging indigenous people on both sides of the border. That is going to be really important to finding a lasting solution.

One of the things that Canadians and Canadian governments, in particular, need to absorb when we look at natural resource projects is that there is no longer a path and there never should have been a path to undertaking large natural resource projects without meaningful engagement and the consent of the people on whose traditional territories these projects are being built.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Mount Royal.

I would like to take some time today to talk about the relationship between Canada and the United States, the trade relationship specifically, because it is germane to the discussion we are having as it relates to understanding what the relationship is like between Canada and the United States and how important it is to both countries.

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I will remind members that no two nations are dependent more on each other for their mutual security and prosperity than Canada and the United States. We are stronger together, and as recent history has shown during the COVID-19 pandemic, we can rely on the strength and security of that relationship between Canada and the United States, and the supply chains that exist.

Canada and the U.S. have one of the largest trading relationships in the world, and I will provide a few trade figures that underscore the sheer scale of our cross-border trade.

In 2019, bilateral trade in goods and services totalled \$1 trillion. That is more than \$2.7 billion in trade every single day. Our level of economic integration is unique. Approximately 76% of Canadian exports to the U.S. are inputs used to make goods in the U.S., and in addition to what we sell to the U.S., contains on average roughly 20% American content. We make things together and value together.

Canada is the number one export market for most U.S. states; 32 in 2019 and 2020 to be more precise. Approximately 75% of Canada's goods export to the U.S. The U.S. is the single greatest investor in Canada. In 2020, the U.S. stock investment in Canada was \$457 billion, representing nearly half of all investment in Canada, and Line 5 is part of this relationship.

Our enduring trade relationship, starting with the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement in 1989 and continuing with NAFTA in 1994, has been a model for success in the world. We renewed our commitment to the commercial relationship with the coming into force of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA. This new NAFTA addresses modern trade challenges, reduces red tape at the border and provides enhanced predictability and stability for workers and businesses across the integrated North American market. These outcomes strengthen our commercial relationship, promote new opportunities for Canadians and support our collective economic prosperity.

Crucially, the new agreement preserves virtually duty-free trade in North America and ensures continued predictability and secure market access for Canadian exporters to the United States. Under the agreement, Canada and the U.S. offer trade on similar terms, and bilateral trade is generally balanced. These outcomes reinforce integrated North American supply chains and help enhance our competitiveness globally.

Importantly, the new NAFTA also incorporates new and modernized provisions that seek to address 21st century issues, including digital trade, small and medium-sized enterprises, good regulatory practices and binding obligations on labour and environment. The new agreement supports inclusive trade with outcomes that advance interests of importance to gender equality and indigenous peoples.

The U.S. represents an especially attractive market for Canada's under-represented exporters, including women, indigenous and racialized peoples and LGBTQ entrepreneurs. We are pleased to have implemented an agreement that preserves the elements of NAFTA that are most important to Canadians and are fundamental to support cross-border trade and investment, such as the NAFTA chapter 19 binational panel dispute settlement mechanism, the cul-

tural exemption and the provisions on temporary entry for business persons.

Our unique relationship with the United States was recognized in a "Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership" announced by the Prime Minister and President Biden on February 23. The two leaders committed to work closely together in many areas, including launching strategies to strengthen that relationship and supply chain security. My colleagues across the government and myself are working with our U.S. counterparts to strengthen and advance our integrated bilateral supply chains in areas critical to growth and seeking other ways to continue to build together.

- (2035)

This collaboration contributes to the North American competitive advantage on the world stage, which, in addition to CUSMA, is bolstered by our integrated energy market, long-standing foreign policy and security co-operation, and is resilient and well-balanced in the supply chains. Canada and the U.S. can be competitive internationally with an integrated North American market.

Despite continued collaboration and success, there are always going to be challenges such as those with softwood lumber and what we are seeing today. U.S. duties on Canadian softwood lumber, for example, are unwarranted and unfair. This long-standing trade irritant distracts from the strong commercial relationship with the U.S., hampers current efforts and economic recovery, and harms workers and communities across Canada as well as U.S. consumers and home builders.

Canada remains ready to work together with the United States to find durable, mutually acceptable negotiated outcomes to this dispute. In the meantime, Canada will continue to vigorously pursue its challenges of U.S. duties under NAFTA chapter 19, CUSMA chapter 10, before the WTO.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought into focus the complexity and deep integration of medical supply chains between Canada and the U.S. Our collaboration allows for smooth flow of personal protective equipment across the border and into the hands of health care workers in both countries. It is important to keep our integrated supply chains working and ensure that products can flow across the borders unimpeded.

Canada is a trading nation with the U.S. and is by far the most important export destination. Approximately 80% of new exporters are SMEs that export to a single market, and almost 70% of new exporters choose the U.S. as their first export destination. The U.S. is a proven testing ground for new exporters and established ones piloting a new product or service.

Most Canadian exporters active in overseas markets originally began their exporting journey in the U.S., and the markets remain attractive to new exporters, particularly as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic both limits international travel and exacerbates the risk of faulty business decision-making in unfamiliar cultural environments.

This is a challenging business environment. Canada's Trade Commissioner Service in the U.S. is continuing to adapt and bring new service offerings to support Canadian companies of all sizes. E-commerce and related technologies are playing a critical role at this time and this will likely accelerate in the coming months. The Trade Commissioner Service is committed to supporting our companies to take advantage of this shift to digital trade by helping more exporters access online e-commerce platforms and helping our digital start-ups access the U.S. and other major players in a global and tangible economy.

To briefly summarize, Canada and the U.S. enjoy one of the most productive, collaborative and mutually beneficial bilateral relationships in the world. The continued safe operation of Line 5 supports this for both nations. Our government is deeply committed to further building on this foundation as we continue to keep our people safe and healthy from the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic and work toward our mutual economic recovery and growth.

• (2040)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, coming from southwestern Ontario, I understand the incredible importance of having Line 5 open. I am looking at our agriculture, whether it be the drying of crops or heating of barns, fuel and heat, a variety of different things and the thousands of jobs.

I also look at the fact that if we did not have this, we would have so many trucks on the roads. We are talking about 2,000 trucks on the roads and 800 rail cars having to go back-and-forth. The fact is that we do not even have enough drivers to drive those trucks.

We know the deadline is next week. Does the government have a plan B if this does not go through?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I think the member would know that I would be unaware of the specific plans.

At the end of day, she answered the question with her preamble. The incredible work that would be involved in moving this product without the use of the pipeline would be, as she so eloquently indicated, extremely difficult to do. The minister also indicated this earlier when he talked about the number of rail cars and trucks, not just in Canada but in the United States, that would be put on the roads.

Yes, the government has been working on this despite the fact there have been suggestions from the other side of the House that

this is not the case. I am very confident the government will come to a mutually beneficial agreement with the United States that will see us successful on both sides of the border by maintaining this important infrastructure.

• (2045)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I would like to talk briefly about Enbridge.

The American authorities blamed Enbridge for its culture of deviance on safety, which contributed to the spill in Michigan. There had also been a spill in Saskatchewan, and nothing had been done. Even though the company said it took measures, it did not take any. Then the spill in Michigan happened, along with the problem that we have tonight.

Does my colleague not think that this crisis could have been avoided if Canada had intervened with Enbridge to make it toe the line?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, hindsight is certainly 20/20, and we can always look back and try to assess how we did on something a lot more easily than in the moment, but I can say that, for me personally, making sure we are conscientious of that environmental responsibility and making sure that everything is as safe as possible is of utmost importance. I know it is for this government, as well. We can see that from the minister's passion in the speech he gave today. There is a deep desire to make sure that our environment is protected to the best ability possible.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Kingston and the Islands has an open mind when it comes to pipeline debates. Here we have two sides that are seemingly miles apart. The Minister of Natural Resources says this pipeline is demonstrably safe. Michigan obviously thinks otherwise. Earlier, I asked the Conservative whip what he would do, and I know the member liked it, because he repeated it to another member.

What do you think your government should be doing to move this forward, when clearly the two sides are so far apart?

The Speaker: Before the hon. member answers that question, I know it is kind of laid back and relaxed late in the evening, but I just want to remind hon. members to place their questions through the Chair and not to each other. Otherwise, I will start answering the questions and members do not want that to happen.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I think the member for Elmwood—Transcona put it very well when he was talking about the need for this particular piece of infrastructure. Yes, everything in this room has come into contact with the necessity for having oil and gas at one point or another, but that does not, in my opinion, negate our responsibility to be as conscientious and environmentally sensitive as we can, especially moving forward as we aim to reach that net-neutrality, so I appreciate the preamble to his question.

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More specifically to what the government should be doing, I would expect that any government, not just this government, would be working with its counterparts, and obviously that is not always happening in public, to come to an agreement, a compromise or a settlement that can be both productive and meaningful on both sides, trying to get to the root of the problem as both sides see it, as we would in any negotiation, so that this project can continue to deliver the incredible amount of service it is delivering right now throughout both Canada and the United States.

I trust that this government, and in particular this minister, is working really hard on this issue.

[Translation]

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to take part in a debate where all parties in the House have the rare opportunity to agree. We must do everything we can to ensure that Line 5 continues to operate.

I had the pleasure of sitting on the Special Committee on the Economic Relationship between Canada and the United States and working with my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, the Conservative Party and the NDP to deliver a unanimous report to the government.

● (2050)

[English]

It was also a pleasure to have our colleague from Sarnia—Lambton frequently join the committee, because this affects her riding almost more than anywhere else. This is about jobs. This is about economic security for Canadians. This is about the price we pay for things like gas, and this is about our relationship with our closest ally.

How did we get here? What is Line 5? Line 5 is a 645-mile pipeline that was built in 1953. It was built long before most of us were born, when Dwight Eisenhower was the President of the United States and issued a presidential permit to allow for the construction, operation and maintenance of Line 5. In Canada, Louis St. Laurent was our Prime Minister. That is how far back this line has been carrying shipments of light crude oil, light synthetic crude oil and natural gas liquids to Canada. It carries today about 540,000 barrels per day, and since it first entered into service in 1953, it has carried approximately 80 million barrels. It is responsible for transporting about 70% of the total Michigan crude oil production. It starts in Wisconsin and moves through Michigan to Ontario, where it ends near Sarnia.

What has happened? A notice has been given by the Governor of Michigan that she intends to end the easement that has been in effect since 1953 permitting the continued operation of Line 5. For a period of time, a portion of Line 5 crosses the Straits of Mackinac. It is about a four-mile portion of Line 5, and it is a dual pipeline. The governor has issued a shutdown order, telling Enbridge it can no longer operate that portion of the pipeline, which has no alternative, so essentially shutting down that four-mile stretch would mean the pipeline can no longer operate.

However, the governor has cited hypothetical safety concerns. We learned at committee that, first of all, there has never been an

escape of product into the Straits of Mackinac since 1954, when the pipeline started operating. Second, there have been numerous tests that have been done, and what they have determined, from private companies, is that the chance of a leak is less than 0.05% per year, meaning less than one in 2,000 chance per year that there would be any leak into the Straits of Mackinac.

The company has come forward with an alternative. The company has said, “Let us build a tunnel, an alternative”, and previously Michigan had agreed to this. The company will need a few years to get that in place, which would mean we would no longer have this four-mile stretch. I respect Governor Whitmer, in the sense that she had a very tough time during the recent presidential election. She was threatened in a way that no public official should ever be threatened, and my complete sympathies go to her and her family for what she went through, but this decision puts Canadian families, Canadian workers and also American families and American workers through a horrible ordeal because it risks their jobs and it risks their economic security. I would beg her to reconsider.

One thing I would like to say is that, like our friends in the United States, Canada has a federal system, which means that in Canada we have sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution and certain powers are federal and certain powers are provincial. In the United States, there are certain powers that are federal, and in my view, based on the evidence we heard at committee, the Governor of Michigan lacks the power to terminate this easement.

For example, Congress enacted the Pipeline Safety Act and invested a federal agency called the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, which people call PHMSA, with exclusive authority to regulate pipeline safety. The act provides that the state authority “may not adopt or continue in force” safety standards for interstate pipeline facilities or interstate pipeline transportation. It comprehensively regulates pipeline security.

In the United States, as in Canada, there is something called the supremacy clause, which means that if the federal government enters into an area of jurisdiction, the state cannot, by its actions, trump the federal legislation. Having enacted the Pipeline Safety Act, it would seem to me that it would be unconstitutional, if I can use that word, for the Governor of Michigan to revoke the easement, because all the safety concerns from the pipeline are dealt with through PHMSA and its regulations. They have confirmed as a result of all their reviews, and there have been a number of independent reviews done, that the dual pipelines, which are the two lines going under the Straits of Mackinac, are fit for service and safe to operate. That is very important, and I reiterate that since starting operation over 65 years ago, these pipelines have never released any product into the Straits of Mackinac.

Another issue, constitutionally, is who gets to regulate interstate and foreign commerce. In the United States, the Constitution says that the federal government is exclusively responsible for regulating interstate commerce. There is no argument here that this does not go through a number of states. As I mentioned before, Line 5 originates in Superior, Wisconsin. It then goes into the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and receives product at Lewiston, Michigan, where local Michigan crude oil is collected and transported to U.S. and Canadian refineries. It transports 14,000 barrels of Michigan oil per day. Then, the oil is taken not only to Sarnia, but also to Marathon's Detroit refinery and to two refineries in Toledo, Ohio. In addition, in Ontario, the pipeline is connected to other pipelines that transport crude to Pennsylvania and to my home in Montreal, Quebec.

It is hard to argue that this does not constitute interstate commerce: Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania. That is more than one state, and it is definitely commerce. My feeling is that this is under federal jurisdiction.

Then, let us look at international. There is no dispute that international commerce is federal, and the United States has even entered into pipeline treaties with Canada, including a 1977 pipeline treaty that ensured the continued operation across the border, which should not be ended by any one state.

• (2055)

[Translation]

In the context of Canada-U.S. relations, clearly it is not acceptable for different states to be involved in deciding whether a pipeline can cross the border between our two countries. The same is true for a pipeline that crosses several states. There is no question that a state like Michigan should not have the power to stop oil flowing through its territory between Wisconsin and Ohio or Pennsylvania. We therefore need specific, clear rules that apply to all states. That is why the United States has a federal government.

[English]

Given that there is a congressional law, a law passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, that deals with this issue and exclusively regulates the safety of the pipeline, given the fact that it is a pipeline that goes between four different states, at least, given that it is a pipeline that transverses an international boundary between the United States and Canada, and given the fact that the United States government has actually entered into an agreement with Canada related to the continued operation of the pipeline and issued a presidential permit for this pipeline, I would argue legally that Enbridge is correct in its pleadings in the Western District of Michigan and the Governor of Michigan does not have the power to end the easement or to cease operations of the pipeline. I also agree with Enbridge's position that it would be up to Michigan to seek an order of the court, an injunction, to stop the pipeline from operating.

In the meantime, we need to be team Canada. We need to appeal to state legislatures in Michigan and elsewhere, especially those states that are impacted by the governor's decision. We need to appeal to fellow legislators in Washington, whether it is the Prime Minister to the President, or all of us to our fellow legislators. We need to let them know how important this pipeline is to Canada,

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and perhaps to their states, which they may not be aware of. We need to make sure we do everything in our power to protect the jobs of Canadians and Americans, protect the continued operations of a pipeline that has operated safely for over 65 years and make sure the refineries in Canada do not lose—

• (2100)

The Deputy Speaker: We will have to leave it there and move on to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague said in his speech that we have not seen any movement. I am from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, and my riding borders Michigan, albeit over bodies of water. We are here at the eleventh hour. The government has had five months under the new U.S. administration, and we have not seen any movement on this.

My constituents in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, and those in the farming community across southwestern Ontario, are wondering where they are going to get propane to heat their livestock barns and their greenhouses or dry their grain. There would be thousands of transport trucks on the road on a daily basis in order to meet those needs. We saw the shortage during the rail strike.

I am wondering if the member would comment on how farmers would get their feedstock, their propane, if this pipeline were to shut down.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, in my speech I did not say there has not been any progress over five months. I said that we need the continued operations of the pipeline. I am in complete agreement with the member. We heard at committee how aggressively the government, our ambassador to Washington and others have been in making this very clear to the Americans.

The saving grace is that Enbridge has taken Michigan to court and has made it very clear it will not cease operating the pipeline. Michigan has not secured an injunction to stop the pipeline from operating. The case Enbridge has made is very strong, and we need to continue to make sure that the Biden administration in Washington clearly understands that this pipeline must continue to operate. I am in full agreement that we need to do everything in our power to do so.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. I have a great deal of respect for him.

He used the same argument as the Minister of Natural Resources, namely that nothing has happened to Line 5 in 60 years. As I said earlier, that is what the people of Pompei said about Mount Vesuvius: nothing has happened in 60 years. I could even mention the movie *La Haine* directed by Mathieu Kassovitz. In this movie, a man falls from a 30-storey building, and the whole time he is falling, he says to himself, "So far, so good". It is not the fall that counts, but the landing.

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I would like to ask my hon. colleague a question. How does the argument that there has not been a natural disaster in 60 years prove that nothing will happen in the future?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean that I have a great deal of respect for him as well.

I am not saying that it will not happen just because there has not been a spill in 65 years. What I am saying is that many studies have been conducted in the past five years, including the study by Dynamic Risk Assessment Systems in 2017. According to this study, the risk of the pipeline failing is 0.0476% per year. That means the risk of the pipeline rupturing is less than one in two thousand.

[English]

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of commentary about how this is a different pipeline debate because this is very much a status quo pipeline. The member referenced the origins of Line 5 being built in 1953. I think of eroding infrastructure like Line 5 throughout the U.S.A. and Canada and consider the shutdown of Line 5 to be imminent.

We are in an emergency debate without an alternative. The government has failed to initiate the transition, or at the very least mitigate a worst-case scenario, and this is case in point that the status quo is not working.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, we are all in agreement that we need to make a transition, but I do not think that transition is going to happen tomorrow. Many Canadians rely on the good jobs and income that come from the oil and other liquids that are delivered in the pipeline. I do not believe it is going to get shut down tomorrow or imminently.

The legal case, as I tried to illustrate in my presentation, is a very good one, and I think the governor of Michigan lacks the power to do it. We need to ensure the U.S. federal government intervenes, but the courts in the United States, I trust, will make sure that an illegal action, such as trying to end an easement illegally, will not be allowed to happen.

• (2105)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am humbled to be in this debate tonight. I know so many of my colleagues on this side of the House wanted to comment on the emergency of Line 5. I am here representing so many of them. We do have a good list of speakers, but many more wanted to address this issue. They have been advocates for this industry for years, advocates for how we will benefit across Canada, from the riches, the technology and the environmental advances that come with the energy industry. I thank all my colleagues for being such great advocates, before I came here, as well.

If I were to criticize the government's approach, it would be a target-rich environment considering how it is actually dealing with energy in this country, but particularly with how it is dealing with Line 5. We have had months to deal with this. If I had to pick one failure here, and I am going to start with just one, of the government, it is the lack of leadership.

A new United States president is sitting in Washington, with a new, better relationship with the Canadian government, supposedly,

yet where is Canada, and what is happening with that special relationship? The steel and aluminum trade is still constrained. The softwood lumber agreements are not to be heard of. So much for CUSMA, with buy America, and Keystone XL was cancelled on day one. So much for energy security. So much for environmental progress. So much for North American jobs. So much for indigenous advancement.

The Prime Minister's response to Keystone XL was that he was disappointed, but he was clearly not engaged. With a shrug, he moved on, along with his Minister of Natural Resources, to other things. Effectively, all the progress thousands of Canadians brought to energy advances, and the Prime Minister gave a quick shrug and moved on. This is the Prime Minister. He is not really involved with this file. It has been delegated to his Minister of Natural Resources. Leadership and accountability have been pushed down a level.

As much as anyone in this House, I admire the Minister of Natural Resources' words on the importance of an industry that contributes more to Canadians than any other industry in this country. However, I have heard his words repetitively. I have heard his protests about how hard he tried on Keystone XL, and I have reminded him then that this trying and failing is becoming repetitive with his cabinet colleagues.

His cheerleading has been falling on deaf ears with his government's leadership, who are once again saying, just like with Teck Frontier's project withdrawal, "Let us just move on."

Before I move on any further, I need to mention I will be splitting my time tonight with the member for Sarnia—Lambton.

At that point, months ago in January, I spoke directly to the minister about the importance of solving Line 5 as quickly as possible. I told the minister that time and uncertainty are our enemy and that we need to elevate the urgency. Disappointment, a shrug and moving on are repetitions Canadians do not want to hear yet again.

It is now May 6, as my colleague said, six days from the date the Governor of Michigan wants to shut Line 5. In the U.S. courts, this matter may be held in abeyance until court jurisdiction is decided and the mediation process between the parties is completed. I should point out that this mediation was recommended by the federal court judge. Before that, the Governor of Michigan's administration would not even return the calls of the company or the Canadian government.

Yesterday, the governor of Michigan said she would ignore the legal process and shut down Line 5 on May 12. That is tough negotiating. The minister says phrases such as, “This is non-negotiable”, “No stone unturned” or “This is different from Keystone XL”, and we can see how Canadians are becoming wary of the minister's words.

The minister has failed on several resources files, and this approach needs to change. Insanity is defined as doing the same thing over and over, and expecting a different result. The minister must know it is beyond time to move this file off of his desk and onto his boss's desk.

● (2110)

This is not just a natural resources file. My party's leader led our debate here tonight because he knows this issue is not just a natural resources file. It is fundamentally important to Canadians across this whole country. It touches so many departments, such as foreign affairs, international trade, transport and energy. We need a whole-of-government approach to solving this issue.

My leader is in the debate. Where is the minister's leader, the Prime Minister? He is not here. He is not working on this file. He is not engaged in an issue the outcome of which affects tens of thousands of Canadians, the Canadian economy and our relationship with our major trading partner. It is long past due.

The Prime Minister needs to get off his hands and engage in this file. I would tell him to pick up the phone and fly down to meet the President. This is his new and improved political relationship with the U.S. President. It is time he plays that relationship card to show us it exists and has some currency.

We have seen the government act on files when it felt it should be active. We have seen a fulsome reaction to some trade issues. We have seen the leadership of the government take actions above and beyond accepted democratic norms in order to save jobs in one engineering company.

I have not spoken enough about the Canada-U.S. bilateral relationship, but that is a huge casualty in this file. Last year, we watched the government accept it had badly negotiated a renewed North American free trade agreement. Real negotiators saw through our team's virtue signalling and inability to solve difficult issues.

I listened as the lead minister on the file stated that her greatest success was removing the energy-sharing agreement from the previous texts of NAFTA. I knew then that the current government did not understand the nature of trade between our two countries. With the U.S. government's decision on Keystone, and maybe the ignorance on Line 5, Canada's energy trade with our dominant trading partner is expendable. That is not a comfort. That is real risk.

Canada-U.S. trade was solidified three decades ago by leaders on both sides who understood how strong we were together. The government has alluded to a special relationship with the incoming U.S. administration and it should prove it. It needs to be utilized. The initial results are very discouraging.

Here are the risks. Are American federal or state courts now going to decide Canada's energy security? We know local courts in the U.S. can be parochial. Judges make mistakes that take years to go

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through a process to unwind through courts and legislatures. What is the worth of the trade and security agreements we have made with our largest trading partner? Who benefits from all this confusion? Who bears the costs?

If we fail at this, farmers, workers, Canadians, Americans, consumers, an energy-secure continent and the rule of international law regarding the environment will all be losers in this equation. Ironically, some of the pipeline's oil that flowed underneath the Straits of Mackinac will then flow above it.

What is the tangible outcome? By all accounts it is negative. We have been pounding the desk for months to have the Prime Minister engage directly with President Biden on this file. Where is he?

● (2115)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really like my colleague from Calgary Centre. I consider him to be a gentleman, so I do not want to ask him an awkward question.

I think the Governor of Michigan's criticisms are valid. Does my colleague agree that we can criticize the government for being slow to act and dragging its feet, but that Enbridge itself might bear some of the blame as well?

When the Governor of Michigan accuses Enbridge of not doing enough to protect the Great Lakes, does my colleague agree that the company should do more?

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a very theoretical question because I am sure my colleague is well aware that there has never been an oil spill in the Great Lakes on either the Canadian or the American side. I think Canadians are just as keen as Americans are to keep the waters of the Great Lakes safe.

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[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what is not theoretical is the fact that there are many people, both in Canada and on the other side of the border, who are concerned about the environment and they are concerned about climate change. They lack confidence in environmental review processes. While this is not exactly the same because it is an existing pipeline and, as I said earlier, New Democrats are supportive of keeping Line 5 operational to support the jobs in Sarnia and in the value-added sector in oil and gas within Canada, there are legitimate environmental concerns here. Those concerns, both here and the larger concerns I just made reference to, are going to continue to play within this industry and are going to continue to be a challenge to it. Jobs in the oil and gas sector, whether a high number or a lower number, are going to continue to be contested, unless we can get to a place where we have environmental review mechanisms and enforcement mechanisms that people have confidence in.

I hear the member and his party often boosting the industry, but what do they propose in terms of giving Canadians and, as I say, Americans on the other side of the border, more confidence in the environmental review mechanisms and—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, that is the first I have heard that Canadians do not have confidence in the environmental review standards, which are both provincial and federal. Most people think they are onerous and overlap, and can take years or sometimes decades to get through.

I think that as far as the world goes, Canada has the most robust environmental review regime known across many jurisdictions. I am challenged by the supposition of my colleague's comments, which do seem to be beyond reality, is perhaps the narrative. I have yet to hear from a Canadian who says the environmental review process is too short.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a member who finally had a speech dedicated to what should we be doing now to save Line 5 and ensure that these good-paying energy jobs stay in Canada, and that customers, consumers in Ontario and Quebec, continue to have an ample supply of energy so that they can live their lives like they have been living them for the last few decades. I listened to the West of Centre podcast where we had the Minister of Natural Resources on it. He talked a really great game. They were doing all of these things. They were absolutely committed.

I wonder if the member could rate the performance of the natural resources minister in this current crisis with the potential shutdown of Line 5 in the next week and a half?

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, the minister has unfortunately let down Canadians on so many files. I mean, I have been in this House for a year and a half. I have been working solidly on the natural resources file for several months now, ever since I was named the shadow minister for natural resources, which was last September. Since September, we have had failures on so many files.

As a matter of fact, I would like to point out to the minister that he would have to reach out to my office to say what it is that they

are succeeding on, because I do not see the successes. All of the big projects are failures. Keystone XL failed. We are slowing down on TMX. We are failing on Line 5 now, at this point in time, at the very last minute. We are failing on Keystone XL, Trans Mountain and Teck Frontier, all projects that should have advanced in this Parliament and have not met the bar with the minister. I think he is challenged by getting his projects, which would benefit this country, through a reluctant cabinet on the government's side.

• (2120)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank every member who is in the House tonight for this very important debate, showing their support and their understanding of how serious this is. Obviously, for my riding of Sarnia—Lambton, this is an extremely serious issue.

As many have said tonight, there are three refineries and multiple other related businesses in Sarnia—Lambton, and a shutdown of Line 5 could impact as many as 23,000 jobs in my riding. Just to put that in perspective, in the pandemic about a third of Canadians are on the CERB and many businesses are on government supports; we are talking about a substantial percentage my riding who would be out of work. I want to take this opportunity not just to repeat what has been said already in the House, but to try to give an understanding of the situation that exists and to call for action of a specific nature, as we move forward.

Members know that Governor Whitmer has brought this executive order. This is an election promise that she ran on. To be fair, I do not think she was aware at the time of the impact on her own constituents. Thirty per cent of Michiganders in the upper hand of Michigan use propane that comes down from Line 5 to heat their homes in the wintertime.

We know that members of many of the trade unions that got Governor Whitmer elected are actually going to lose work over the tunnel project that has been proposed to resolve any outstanding concerns about the pipeline. That is a \$500-million tunnel project that would, in fact, encase the pipeline below the Straits of Mackinac and eliminate the risk totally.

There has not been an issue. I have heard members talk about how what has happened in the past is no predictor of the future, but this technology we are talking about is in use in many places around the world. There are many pipelines that are built under the water, and not just small sections of 50 kilometres, which we are talking about in the Straits of Mackinac, but thousands of kilometres. In fact, Governor Whitmer is likely unaware that there are eight other pipelines that run underneath the St. Clair River in my riding, which has Michigan on the other side, some of those pipelines belonging to Enbridge as well.

This technology is safe. Just to let members know, for those who know my background as a chemical engineer, I have looked at all the reports that have been written about Line 5. The Environmental Protection Agency does regular monitoring, regular inspections and audits on this line. The federal pipeline safety department, PHMSA, also regulates this line, inspects the line and follows up. The State of Michigan is involved in monitoring, Enbridge has its own continuous monitoring on this line. There is a huge amount of technology that goes into making sure that this line is safe, and it has operated for 68 years without an incident.

I have talked about the impact to Michigan.

Regarding the line that comes from Alberta, obviously there is an economic hit for Alberta and this is at a time when Albertans have already been punished by the bad policies of the Liberal government, including the “no more pipelines bill”, Bill C-69 and the many cancelled oil and gas projects including Teck mines, northern gateway, Kinder Morgan backing out, the KXL and the Petronas LNG and now the Kitimat LNG. There is just an ongoing punishment there, so this would just be another hit to Alberta at a time when it can least afford it.

The other states that are being impacted are Wisconsin, Ohio and Pennsylvania. There are refineries in Ohio and Pennsylvania that supply all the jet fuel for the Detroit airport. There are many jobs in Michigan as well. Overall, we think 50,000 jobs could be impacted by this; not to mention in Ontario, many farmers heat their barns for their animals, dry their grain and heat their greenhouses with the fuel that is coming down through Line 5.

When I hear people who are anti-pipeline and want to shut down Line 5, I ask them if they live in Ontario and drive a car because, if they do, their gasoline is coming out of Line 5. Do they eat food, like beef, chicken and pork that is grown in Ontario or Quebec? If so, they are going to be impacted by Line 5.

• (2125)

Do they eat vegetables or grains that are produced in any of these provinces? If so, this definitely would be an impact to them. It has already been mentioned as well that the plastics industry and many of the great smart phones and things we enjoy so much are a result of the fossil fuels that are coming down through Line 5. There is a huge impact there, and I was pleased to see the natural resources minister emphasize again that this is essential for the economic and energy security of Canada.

I have been calling on the government for action. I called on it to have the Prime Minister intervene with President Biden directly to let him understand the importance. The Prime Minister did raise it, but we have not seen President Biden take an action, and I am sure that is because the case is before the court. Right now, what is being decided in the court is whether this issue should be heard at the state level or at the federal level. There are a number of these amicus curiae briefs of support and against that have been submitted. There are 14 Democratic states that have submitted a brief against keeping Line 5 open, and one Republican from Ohio has submitted one in support of keeping Line 5 open. This is why it is so important that the Canadian government provide a brief of support, and it is due next Tuesday, so we are running out of time. It is fine to say

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we will do all things and take every effort, but seeing the piece of paper submitted by May 11 would be very helpful.

At the same time, I agree with the member for Mount Royal, who indicated that he does not believe that a state court at this point in time has the power to force Line 5 down and also that they will likely not put an injunction out while the case is before the court. In terms of that timing, the judge did order mediation between Governor Whitmer and Enbridge, and that mediation is coming to an end within the next week. Then, the deadline for the briefs exists, and she will have to review all of that information before she can render a decision about whether the case should be heard in federal court or state court. Then, of course, the case needs to be heard, so that would be another whole bunch of testimony that will happen.

Although I do not think things are going to happen next Wednesday, I do think that there is no other contingency plan in place. The tankers, railcars and trucks have been suggested. We are short of railcars in Canada right now, and there is a shortage of trucks as well, so even if we could find them, to take that volume is certainly environmentally worse from an emissions point of view. We know, with the Lac-Mégantic issue that occurred, that rail is not as safe as a pipeline is.

I think those are important considerations, and I would say that, when it comes to the Canada-U.S. committee, which I was fortunate to sit in and go through, it came with seven recommendations for the government. This is the call to action I would like to see the government act on. It called for mediation; that is happening. It called for U.S. decision-makers at all levels to be contacted, and I know there are efforts of lobby within Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington and Michigan. It is unfortunate the Governor Whitmer will not meet with the natural resources minister. She did take a call with the leader of the official opposition and with Doug Ford, and so I think we need to press on there. The amicus brief, as I have mentioned, is an important support for Canada to bring. Then, it called for the Prime Minister to press and, if necessary, put a treaty violation complaint in if this continues, because this certainly is a federal treaty that allows that line to operate.

I have not heard of any contingency plans, but somebody should start thinking about those. The companies in my riding are thinking about that. As well, we should look at our other vulnerabilities, because if we continue to see that the U.S. is not going to stand as our friend in these matters, then what other supply chain and critical energy infrastructure is vulnerable, and what will we do about that? The committee then called to have members of Parliament engage, as we are tonight, and so I am happy to see everybody all on the same page, calling for the action.

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Let us move forward. Let us keep Line 5 open.

• (2130)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank the member for her remarks. She really did spell out in detail many of the safety measures that are followed to ensure that this pipeline remains safe.

I have been fortunate to be on the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group and have met with a lot of U.S. federal representatives on this issue. In meeting with the people, I found that most, but not all, of them were onside, although some raised questions.

What I cannot understand, and maybe the member can answer this, is why the Governor of Michigan is absolutely unwilling to listen to reason on this issue. As the member mentioned, Enbridge is looking at the tunnel prospect going forward.

I hate to use the word, but is it just boneheadedness on the governor's part? Why the resistance?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, in addition to it being an election promise that the governor ran on, I think it is interesting to note that the State of Michigan has approved two of the four permits to build this tunnel. Why would the State of Michigan be approving these things if the governor was definitely shutting this line down? I would say that it does show a willingness and that she understands that the tunnel project is the appropriate solution to this issue.

I think that she also has some people potentially running against her, so there are political things at play in terms of making sure that she sticks with her promise. However, I think she would love for somebody to intervene and overrule her at this point.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I know this issue is particularly close to her heart, since it is happening in her riding. Even so, I thought her speech was thoughtful and she did not resort to political rhetoric. I thank her for that as well.

I would like to hear her thoughts on something. We know that an energy transition will not happen overnight, but I think we can all agree that the Line 5 pipeline shutdown will not happen overnight either. Nevertheless, in the long term we will need to find a way out of fossil fuels. I wonder if she thinks this would be a good idea as part of a negotiation.

Instead of trying to hold on to Line 5 forever, we could have a discussion at some point about how, after taking the time to do things right, we will have to shut down the pipeline.

Would that not be a good approach right now, to avoid choosing a drastic and ill-prepared solution?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we absolutely need a plan for the transition. I think that will take a long time because farmers who are currently using oil will need another method.

People who own cars and rely on oil will need to buy electric cars, for example. We need a plan, and I think that plan could take 10 years.

We need a plan.

[*English*]

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the member for Sarnia—Lambton for likely being the greatest advocate for Line 5 and getting this problem resolved quickly.

I have been hearing from lots of farmers in my riding. The member talked about it in her speech, but I would like her to expand on how important Line 5 is to our farmers and our agri-food supply, not only here in Ontario but in Quebec as well, and the impact it would have on everyday Canadians' grocery bills if this does not get resolved ASAP.

• (2135)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, farmers heating their barns, drying their grains or heating their greenhouses are going to immediately see a shortage of propane. As we know, when the supply is short the price goes up.

In the most extreme cases, such as when we saw the rail blockades, we know that there is potential for those barns to not be heated and for the animals to freeze. That was a real threat, so that is something that could happen in extreme circumstances. More likely, the cost would go up, and that would cause the cost of all food to go up. We have seen people struggling, especially those on a fixed income, so this would be extreme, especially for our seniors.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that messages have been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following public bills to which concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-204, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, trafficking in human organs; and Bill S-205, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act, Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate.

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LINE 5 PIPELINE SHUTDOWN

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time this evening with the member for Don Valley West.

I thank the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie for initiating this emergency debate. This a pressing issue and a national priority that belongs on the floor of the House. Just as importantly, it is one of those rare matters upon which members from both sides of the House are in complete agreement.

The Governor of Michigan's attempts to shut down the Line 5 pipeline through the Straits of Mackinac strike at three key pillars of our future. First, a shutdown would significantly stall the robust economic recovery we need to help us build back better from this global pandemic. Second, it would badly damage North American energy security. We need to power our post-COVID-19 recovery. Third, it would undermine our commitment to creating a low-carbon economy that leaves no one behind.

Why is Line 5 so critical for all these priorities? First and foremost, it supports thousands of jobs on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border. It supplies the fuels and other essential products that underpin our national economies and support our pandemic responses, such as heating our homes and businesses and powering everything from farming and manufacturing to air travel. Second, Line 5 is critical to our continent's highly integrated energy sectors, linking western Canada's petroleum industry to key markets and refineries in both central Canada and the northern U.S. Third, Line 5 allows us to get our resources to global markets and generate the revenues we need to invest in a clean energy future.

Without Line 5, refineries would have to get their feedstock through alternate forms of transportation that are more dangerous and produce more emissions, such as rail, truck and barge. Estimates suggest that shutting down Line 5 could add as many as 15,000 dedicated trucks, or 800 rail cars, a day to transport the displaced product. Not only would this significantly increase CO₂ emissions at a time when we are making efforts to reduce them, it would also raise the risk of rail disasters and oil spills, impacting our communities, wildlife and ecosystems. All of this added risk and environmental damage would be for nothing.

The U.S. pipeline regulator, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, has repeatedly inspected Line 5 through the Straits of Mackinac and, as recently as last year, has consistently found the pipeline fit for service. It is why we have seen such broad and consistent support for the continued safe operation of Line 5.

The Prime Minister and members of the opposition, multiple governments, industry and unions have all come together as members of team Canada to show that shutting down Line 5 on a whim does not make sense. As the Minister of Natural Resources has said, Line 5 is non-negotiable for Canada, full stop.

With that in mind, I would like to use the rest of my time to explore why support on this side of the border is so strong and unwavering. Line 5 is crucial for Canada's energy security. It currently transports up to 540,000 barrels of oil and natural gas every day that are vital to central Canada's supply of gasoline, home heating fuels and jet fuel, not to mention the more than roughly 20,000 jobs in Sarnia, Ontario, that depend on this pipeline. Propane transported by Line 5 is used by our schools and hospitals, and by our businesses that are hoping to come back stronger than ever in the wake of COVID-19.

It is not just Canada that will suffer if Line 5 is shut down. Michigan is dependent on Line 5 for 55% of its propane needs, and prices for propane in that state could rise by 38¢ a gallon if it shut down. Additionally, refineries in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania, as well as here in Ontario and Quebec, would be un-

able to obtain the crude oil they require to operate. This could lead to the loss of thousands of jobs here in Canada and in the United States.

While I understand the Governor of Michigan is concerned about leaks, her fear is unfounded. In the 68 years that Line 5 has been operating, not once has it suffered any leaks along the 7.2 kilometres of pipeline that cross the Straits of Mackinac. What is the secret to that success? The twin pipes are made of specially constructed seamless steel measuring almost an inch thick, which is three times the thickness of what is required even today. The pipe was then covered with fibre-reinforced enamel and laid in an area where the risk of corrosion was minimized by cold temperatures and a lack of oxygen.

Furthermore, this stretch of pipeline is carefully monitored using sophisticated cameras and radar on a 24-7 schedule to ensure no vessels drop anchor over it. All of this is managed by specially trained staff using sophisticated computer systems, and is further supplemented with regular inspections by expert divers and remotely operated vehicles.

● (2140)

This is a stretch of pipeline that far exceeds the minimum standards required of it. As a result, there are 68 years of safe, leak-free history to back it up. Despite all of this, Enbridge has proposed even more stringent safeguards including a cement-encased tunnel deep under the lake-bed. It would be a tunnel large enough for a new pipeline system and would also be able to accommodate other future uses, such as electricity transmission, making it a piece of infrastructure that would maintain its usefulness as we transition to a net-zero future.

All of this brings me to my final point, which is that the fate of Line 5 is a matter for the federal government in Washington, D.C., to decide. It is not a matter to be decided by the state governor in Lansing, Michigan.

This is because in 1977, when Jimmy Carter was president of the United States and the late Pierre Elliott Trudeau was our prime minister, our two countries signed a consequential treaty born of the OPEC oil embargo and several years of bilateral discussions to ship oil and gas by pipeline from Alaska and Canada's north to southern markets. In the preamble of that treaty were three key points worth revisiting today.

First, the treaty recognizes that pipelines are "an efficient, economical and safe means of transporting hydrocarbons from producing areas to consumers, in both Canada and the United States".

Second, it notes that the pipelines operating at the time provided an important service to both Canadian and American consumers.

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Third, it states that both national governments were “convinced”, and that is the word used in the treaty, that it was appropriate for the two countries to enter into a treaty to govern the transmission of hydrocarbons by pipeline rather than leaving it to unilateral action.

Canada's preference is for this matter to be resolved amicably between Enbridge and the State of Michigan. No one wants to see a protracted legal battle. There is also consensus on both sides of the border that we want a robust economy coupled with strict environmental stewardship. This is what Line 5 and the Great Lakes tunnel project are all about.

It is for all these reasons that I remain optimistic that cooler heads will ultimately prevail. Ultimately the friendship and mutual economic interests that have defined our nation's 154-year history with the United States will once again prevail with Line 5.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hon. member for his speech. I am quite enamoured of it. If we could have taken that speech and put it in any context around Northern Gateway, Trans Mountain, energy east or Keystone XL, it would have fit with all of those things, yet we have seen time and again that the government has shut down those pipelines. We have seen how the government failed to stand up for the 134,000 oil field workers in northern Alberta when all of those pipelines were on the docket to be cut.

What has changed in the member's mind that now he is suddenly an ardent defender of pipelines?

• (2145)

Mr. Raj Saini: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his kind remarks. That is the first time a Conservative has ever said anything about my speech.

Right now we are dealing with a reality that is in front of us. We see that if Line 5 gets shut down, it will have a devastating impact, not only economically, but also environmentally. As I referenced in my speech, this pipeline is very safe. It was made safe in 1953 by the technology used then, and it will continue to be made even safer by the adjustments and the new infrastructure that Enbridge has proposed to build.

I am very confident that this pipeline will serve its purpose, but more importantly, it will serve an environmental purpose by keeping 15,000 trucks off the road and 800 railcars off the rails. We will minimize the environmental impact while still maintaining a robust economy.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He clearly explained that Line 5 supplies refineries in both Quebec and Ontario, and that its potential shutdown is a legitimate cause for concern. On the other hand, there are all sorts of environmental concerns.

My colleague said that this pipeline was safe, but it is important to remember the 20,000 barrels of oil that spilled into the Kalamazoo River in 2010. One cannot help but think that another similar incident could occur, which is worrisome for the environmental health of our waterways.

If we want to move toward a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and toward net-zero emissions, how can we strike a balance between economic and environmental concerns?

[*English*]

Mr. Raj Saini: Mr. Speaker, I think the concerns will be resolved by making sure that the pipeline is built to standards above what are required today. If Line 5 gets shut down, we will see the environmental impacts of putting 15,000 trucks and 800 railcars on the road. There will be a higher chance of spills and a higher chance of accidents on the road. We will see a huge disruption across the border and a thickening of it. Other products will be delayed. Trucks will be all over the road.

If we want to talk about the environment, we know there has never been a spill on this pipeline. We recognize that to get to net zero, we need to make sure that we incentivize our transport industry to either go electric or minimize the impacts. This pipeline serves all of those purposes, especially for the environment.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am curious. If Line 5 is shut down, what is the Liberal government's plan to help the thousands of Canadians whose livelihoods would be impacted?

Mr. Raj Saini: Mr. Speaker, as the minister mentioned earlier today, we are using all of our resources and will leave no stone unturned to make sure that we engage at the political level, at the diplomatic level and at the stakeholder level. At the committee on the Canada-U.S. special relationship, we heard from a lot of stakeholders on both sides of the border who are worried about this closure and are engaging with their counterparts.

Right now, the Government of Canada is fully seized and engaged on this file, and we look forward to an amicable resolution between Enbridge and the State of Michigan on this issue.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I do not dispute the importance of Line 5 to the economy, and I have known about the problems with the Straits of Mackinac since 2011. I wonder why it has not been fixed yet. There were indeed 15 spills on this pipeline between 1988 and 2012, resulting in 260,000 gallons of oil spilt. Enbridge has a terrible record of gross negligence and gross incompetence. Over 1,000 Enbridge spills across the Enbridge pipeline system dumped 7.4 million gallons of oil into the environment between 1999 and 2013.

We should be holding these companies to account. If we want these pipelines flowing through the United States or flowing through our provinces, they should be held to account. Enbridge is a grossly negligent company, and people wonder why B.C. does not want the Enbridge northern gateway—

• (2150)

The Deputy Speaker: We are out of time.

We will go back to the hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

Mr. Raj Saini: Mr. Speaker, right now what we are dealing with is the safety of Line 5, and it has been safe, especially under the waters of the Straits of Mackinac. In 68 years there has never been a spill, and I am very confident with the ideas that Enbridge has to encase the pipeline in cement and bring it lower under the lake-bed. I think it will be protected.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to join this debate. I am not in Ottawa. I am joining it from the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wyandot peoples. This continues to be the home to many diverse first nations, Inuit and Métis people.

I am very proud to be part of this debate tonight, and I want to begin by commending three members whose speeches I have found to be quite informative as I was listening to the debate.

I thought the member for Mount Royal gave a passionate speech and brought in a set of legal arguments that I was not totally aware of. I think one of the purposes of debate is to learn, and the member for Mount Royal certainly added to my knowledge and understanding of the international law issues around this and some of the legal opportunities we could engage in.

I also want to thank the member for Sarnia—Lambton. This is obviously a personal issue for many people in her riding. She brought forward her engineering experience and her passion for farmers and workers in her riding, and I thought that was quite exceptional. I really want to commend the member for Sarnia—Lambton.

I also want to commend the most recent speech, which I just listened to, by the member for Kitchener Centre. Having built upon the history and legal work of the member for Mount Royal and the sincere personal and economic concern about this issue from the member for Sarnia—Lambton, the member for Kitchener Centre was able to put this into a broader context. I would hope this issue crosses partisan divides and unites us in the House so we can say that Line 5 is an essential tool for the economic, social and cultural well-being of Canada. We need to unite to do our very best to convince the decision-makers involved in this decision to make the right decision.

I speak to this issue as a son of the Great Lakes. I speak to it as someone who comes from the border city of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. I note that my staff wrote me out a nice phonetic spelling for “Mackinac”, but that was not necessary. I grew up going to Mackinac Island every year. I crossed the Mackinac Bridge many times a year. I know the Straits of Mackinac and the people of Michigan. I have been both a tourist and a friend in many parts of the state of Michigan. I have great respect for the people of Michigan and want them to understand that the partnership we have, particularly on Line 5, is in many ways something we can work on together.

I am not going to repeat the arguments that have been quite well made in many speeches. Instead, I want to bring in, as part of my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, some issues that I would like to speak to the Americans about tonight. I know that some of them are probably listening.

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I do not think we need to convince each other of the importance of this line. Some may have some differences. I would disagree with some of the concerns that have been raised, but I do not doubt anyone's concern about the importance of supporting Line 5.

Canada and the United States have long enjoyed one of the most productive, collaborative and mutually beneficial bilateral relationships in the world. Line 5 is one example of the mutually beneficial partnership that has existed for almost 70 years. Ours is a partnership of neighbours, forged by shared geography on this continent, similar values, common interests, people-to-people and family connections and powerful multi-layered economic and security ties. Our two countries enjoy the largest trading relationship in the world, which has been talked about tonight. We defend and protect North America together. We are stewards of our shared environment, and we stand on the world stage to respond to many pressing global challenges together.

As recently as February 23, the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States committed to a road map for a renewed relationship and a renewed U.S.-Canada partnership that sets out a blueprint for an ambitious whole-of-government approach to this important bilateral relationship. Together our leaders have created an enhanced partnership that will advance global health, security, and climate change; bolster co-operation, defence and security; and reaffirm the commitment to diversity, equity and justice.

• (2155)

Obviously that plays out in our COVID-19 pandemic response: We need to be in this together. We recognize that we have differences. We have a border, and that border needs to be thick at times. In a pandemic, we thicken the border. However, we always try to keep it as thin as possible to keep trade travelling across our borders day after day.

We have been working on research. We have been working on combatting the virus through the sharing of vaccines and through collaboration on diagnostics and other projects. This is something we need to do, and it is a top concern, obviously, to both governments.

However, Line 5 is also of great concern, because it is not only symbolic; it is a real issue between our two economies and our two peoples. The people who produce energy in this country, largely western Canadians in Alberta and Saskatchewan, need to have markets for the energy they produce. Canada produces the best, cleanest energy in the world, and we need to support the economies and the people of western Canada.

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Let us never doubt that it is part of our job all the time to defend and stand with the people of western Canada. I am an easterner. I am an Ontarian. I am a Great Lakes member of Parliament. That does not mean I am any less committed to the whole of this country and the well-being of everyone in it. In the Line 5 project, we have energy that needs to move across the country, and we know that pipelines are the safest, healthiest way for energy products to do so.

After the people of Don Valley West gave me an extended leave of absence between 2011 and 2015, which I believe was unfortunate for them and for me, I was able to spend four years as the president and CEO of the Asthma Society of Canada. This week is asthma week in Canada, and we remember the number of issues that people with respiratory illnesses face. One of those is the need to have clean energy. The cleanest way to transport energy across this country is through pipelines. We do not want it crossing the country in trucks, trains and tankers. That is a dirtier, less healthy way to transport energy.

We are committed to pipelines, and not one party in the House has a monopoly on that commitment. We come at this issue strongly, convinced that Canada needs to have a robust energy industry, and we need to transport energy safely, carefully and to the benefit of Canadians across the country. To do that means we need to continue to fight for Line 5.

What I have not appreciated in the debate tonight nearly as much as the speeches I gave is the hand-wringing, whinging, whining and blaming that has gone on in some of the speeches. I have not found that helpful. To disagree with the way our Prime Minister handles certain things is the opposition's right. It is in the job description of the opposition. However, we have to add constructive thoughts. Even the member for Sarnia—Lambton was very clear in saying that the issue had been raised by the Prime Minister.

We have tossed the ball into the court of the American decision-makers continuously and steadfastly, with incredible diligence, and have done it faithfully to the people of Canada coast to coast to coast. That means the energy producers, the energy users and the energy transporters. We hold things in a careful balance to find a way forward as we move to a more sustainable, greener economy. We still have energy needs and we still need to do things carefully and cautiously.

I also do not appreciate the thought that we have a magic wand on one side of the House or the other. We do not have a magic wand. What we do have is persistence, data and an argument that will remind our American siblings and cousins that this is an important part of our shared economic prosperity and future together. We can do it in a cleaner way, obviously.

• (2200)

Canada is moving its economy toward a net-zero position. We believe in sustainability. We believe that climate change is real. We are not denying that. We also recognize that in the process, we will need to keep Canadians moving. We will need to keep farmers producing produce and food for Canadian tables. We will need to ensure people can heat their homes and keep their businesses going. We will do that and we will stand with them.

What I would expect of the opposition—

The Deputy Speaker: We will have to leave it there. We are slightly over the 10 minutes. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary will have a chance to expand on those thoughts over the course of the next five minutes.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the comments from the member on the other side. I also appreciate him bringing his role as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to this debate as well, because it is very important. I have heard his words and ask him this.

At what point in time does he feel this will receive enough importance, with six days left before the decision is made by the Governor of Michigan to shut this line down, to elevate it to the Prime Minister meeting with the United States President to move the issue forward? This is very important to so many people in Canada. How do we move it to a level of extreme importance for our trading partner?

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, as has been said in this debate, the Prime Minister of Canada has this on his agenda. He has already raised the issue with the American administration, with the President. It has been raised in a number of ways at a number of times.

We also have cabinet government in our country. The Prime Minister is seized with the issue at his level. However, Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of International Trade, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a number of ministers have this on their plate and are working in concert also with the Ontario government. This is what we do. It is not all on one person's plate. That would be an unwise way to act. The way to act is to ensure the Prime Minister raises the issue, raises it well and ensures his ministers, the people around that cabinet table, are raising it with their people.

I want to give a shout-out to the Canada-U.S. parliamentary association. It raised the issue with its counterparts, and we do that with legislators across the country. I see the chair from Malpeque is in the room. We also raised the issue with the special committee on Canada-U.S. relations. This is parliamentary. It is government. It is provincial. It is federal. It is industrial. It is civil society.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He clearly has a lot to say, and I appreciate that.

From what I understand of the situation and tonight's debate, it is uncertain whether Line 5 will actually be shut down on May 12. Hypothetically speaking, let us say that Line 5 did close on May 12. We can assume that Quebec would find other sources of supply rather quickly, which might be a good thing.

What action would the government take? Would it find a way to reopen Line 5? Would it find other sources of supply? Would it move toward other energy sources to meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets?

• (2205)

[English]

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, I am quite relieved that is not my responsibility as the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs or the member of Parliament for Don Valley West. However, I am convinced that the Minister of Natural Resources and all those at the provincial level who are looking at the important ways energy fuels our economy have the responsibility.

It has been very clear in this debate that no Canadian has or his hand on the tap to turn this pipeline on or off. That is happening somewhere else. It has also been pointed out in this debate that legal arguments are being made. There will be court decisions around this activity. There could be stays.

What we do now is we keep going on all the diplomatic channels. We keep going on the business and industry channels. We know Canadian business is smart. Canadian business is entrepreneurial and it will work. That is why I am not a New Democrat. I believe in the market's ability to fix these problems.

Government is there to assist those businesses. We will be there to guide them and we will not let people go cold.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure, but also a sense of urgency, that I rise today to participate in this emergency debate. I would like to say that I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Peace River—Westlock.

The word “emergency” is indeed very appropriate because if nothing changes, in a matter of days, on May 12, the entire Canadian economy might be shaken by a serious economic situation that will lead to the loss of thousands of jobs. People across the country will unfortunately be affected by an American decision that will have very real consequences for Canadians, especially in Quebec. I am, of course, talking about shutting down Line 5.

What precisely is Line 5?

Line 5 is a pipeline that starts in Edmonton and goes to Sarnia. I will take this opportunity to send my regards to my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton, who is incredibly committed to her fellow citizens and is a champion for the cause of the Line 5 workers. As I was saying, this pipeline takes Canadian oil from the West and sends it to Sarnia, in Ontario. From there, the oil is transported in Line 9 toward Quebec, among other places, and it crosses three American states. One of these states, Michigan, has decided to turn off the taps. Michigan does not want Line 5 on its territory. We have known this for months. We will have the opportunity to talk

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about it later, but something could have been done, something different from what have seen so far.

I would like to point out that this situation could have major consequences for Quebec. Like my colleagues, I note that there is not a lot of talk about it in Quebec. However, if it actually does happen on May 12, I am sure that some people will be in for a rude awakening.

As I said earlier, Line 5 carries oil from western Canada to Sarnia. From Sarnia, the oil crosses Ontario and goes to Montreal through Line 9. Without this Line 9, more than half of the oil consumed in Quebec could be cut off and two-thirds of the crude oil consumed in Quebec could be cut off.

A study published by the École des hautes études commerciales points out that nine billion litres of oil are consumed in Quebec, along with more than three billion litres for industry. This means that more than 10 billion litres of oil are consumed in Quebec. It is said, and rightly so, that there is a lot of interest in green energy in Quebec and, of course, in electric vehicles. However, the reality is that 10 billion litres of oil are consumed in Quebec every year, and that is increasing, by the way.

If, God forbid, Line 5 were to be closed, 800 additional rail cars and 3,000 more tractor trailers would be hauling gas. No one wants that. If, God forbid, this were to happen, Quebecers will have to look elsewhere for their energy supply. This means that we will buy oil in Brazil, Saudi Arabia or Algeria. This oil will not arrive miraculously, but will arrive by boat. Magnificent and enormous tankers will be travelling the St. Lawrence River. I am not sure that Quebecers will be very happy about that.

There are two refineries in Quebec: one in Montreal, the other in Lévis. It is not true that there is no oil in Quebec because Quebecers do not like oil. There is oil, and there are people who make their living from it.

We must stop thinking of oil as “the gas we put in our cars”. It is much more than that. There are 50,000 people in Quebec working in the petrochemical industry. People across Quebec work in the plastics industry and God only knows just how much plastic we needed over the past year and a half with the pandemic. People work with polyester, whether it is used as a fibre or in asphalt. We need oil for all these things. I will not even mention the 300 things we wear every day, such as polyester shirts. The reality is that oil is part of our daily life, whether we like it or not. Quebecers live with oil. We must realize that the closure of Line 5 could have major consequences for these people, not just those working in the petrochemical industry, but also those working on farms and in the food industry, in other words, our farmers who feed us.

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• (2210)

God knows that the current pandemic is making us more aware of food self-sufficiency. If we want our farmers to occupy the land and work properly then they need to have access to this type of energy. If not, we will have to turn elsewhere because we risk losing our crops, our agriculture, our animals. That is why we need to be aware that what is happening right now could have major adverse consequences on Quebec's economy.

As a Quebecker, I am very proud that Quebec developed extraordinary expertise in hydroelectric power. As Quebeckers, we can be proud of the creation of Hydro-Québec in the 1940s under the auspices of the Liberal government of Mr. Godbout. The following government, the Union Nationale, started the major shift to state ownership and the first large hydro projects. Just think of the mega-project on the Betsiamites River in 1952-53. No one remembers, but it was the first major project. There was also the Manic-5 generating station, built around 1958 under the Union Nationale government. The major shift to state ownership occurred in 1962 under the Jean Lesage government. The James Bay project, developed in 1971, recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. In Quebec, we can be proud of that energy.

We also have a petrochemical industry, and Quebec has pipelines. Jason Kenney did not invent pipelines. Quebec has had pipelines since 1941, before Alberta even had its big oil boom. There are nearly 2,000 kilometres of pipelines in Quebec right now. There are nine pipelines under the St. Lawrence. In 2012, less than 10 years ago, Quebec opened a pipeline that goes from Lévis to Montreal. The pipeline spans 248 kilometres, over nearly 630 plots of land and 26 waterways, including the St. Lawrence River.

We have this expertise in Quebec, but it is part of a bigger whole. We are proud of having a wide range of energy sources. Nevertheless, Quebec still has oil needs. Whether people like it or not, this form of energy is essential to keeping our economy and everything else running.

Line 5 is a pipeline. We have pipelines in Quebec, and people need to stop acting as if we did not. We are all aware that no one is safe from disasters. We also know that pipelines are 99.999% effective. Yes, one drop of oil in the river is one drop too many. We all agree on that. However, the overall track record for pipelines is not all that bad. This is the most effective, safest, greenest and most economical way to transport oil.

As I have said, the clock is ticking and we need to take action. The Prime Minister has already been in contact with his U.S. counterpart. Since the Prime Minister has a close relationship with the current U.S. President and they are fairly aligned ideologically, he has a duty to use this close relationship and friendship with the new tenant at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to make sure that Canada's interests are being well represented.

Since the beginning of the debate, it has been said that all Canadian parliamentarians have come together to contact American parliamentarians. I commend them for that. However, leadership needs to come from the top down. The Prime Minister needs to make direct calls to the decision-makers, the governor of Michigan and those directly affected. Why does the Prime Minister not use his friendship with former President Obama to convince him to play an

active role in this case? The Prime Minister could use his friendship with President Barack Obama in a useful way on behalf of Canadians. Why not ask him to get involved in this situation, which is important for the Canadian economy and beneficial for the American economy too?

I am pleased to see that all Canadian parliamentarians are united in this decision, but we need to take action now more than ever to ensure that Line 5 does not shut down in a week's time.

• (2215)

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the hon. member's speech, but I want to go back to what one of his colleagues said earlier about the Leader of the Opposition who, in fact, did contact the Governor of Michigan. I wonder if he can report on what that conversation was all about, what happened, what the leader said and what the governor said. It did not work, obviously, because we are in this situation. Still, it would be interesting to know what dynamics the leader picked up on from the Governor of Michigan over this issue.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague of one thing. I was not a witness to that conversation, but I have witnessed the hard work and passion of the leader of the official opposition in this Parliament when we had the time to talk about the Canadian economy.

I can assure the member that the first point our leader addressed with the Prime Minister when he was elected the new Leader of the Opposition was the economy of Alberta, which is suffering so much. Alberta's economy could suffer more with this situation.

I can also assure the member that when the Leader of the Opposition talked with the Prime Minister about the budget, he raised the issue of Line 5. I can assure the member that the Leader of the Opposition is a champion of the Canadian economy and he is a champion of Canada's natural resources.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for his speech.

I understand him. I think he is being realistic when he says that we depend on the petrochemical industry. It is true that we cannot close our eyes and pretend that we do not need oil. However, in the long term, oil will not last forever. In the future, there may well be other challenges like the ones we are seeing now or the ones we saw with Keystone XL and TransMountain. It is important to understand that we will not need more pipelines in the future. We will need fewer pipelines, especially considering climate change.

If we want to keep Line 5 going, the aim should not be to keep it forever, but to start a transition process and eventually shut it down. I would like my colleague to tell me whether that is not the realistic approach we must take.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I admire her very much, and I admire her deeply sincere political engagement.

I would like to remind her that nobody has a crystal ball. We do not know what will happen. I remember back when I was a kid, there were ads on TV saying there would be no more oil by the 1980s. That is what we were told back then.

I want to say that the concern the member raised is important. We all know we have to shift and transition. That is why, three weeks ago, our leader unveiled a thoughtful, realistic and responsible game plan to address climate change. Our plan includes that transition, and transportation electrification is a big part of it.

The member and I both know that there is extraordinary potential in places like Saint-Jérôme in Quebec, and we want to support that potential with investments in excess of \$1 billion for electric vehicle batteries.

• (2220)

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague. One thing I am concerned about tonight's debate is that we are not talking enough about solutions to this issue. We are not hearing good ideas coming forward as to how to alleviate this logjam. We are also not talking about why this has come about.

This is about fear. This is about the Governor of Michigan and her constituents being concerned about a spill. We know that Enbridge has a track record of a spill in the Kalamazoo, along with other breaks. We have also seen President Biden kill Keystone XL. We have seen the Norwegian government withdraw the money from their sovereign wealth fund. These are all signals that we are not doing enough here in Canada to tackle climate change and do our part.

Why do the Conservatives continue to argue in defence of tax breaks and subsidies to oil and gas companies, instead of calling on them to do a bigger and better part? Why are they not calling for more stringent environmental regulations to build trust with the Governor of Michigan—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give 15 seconds to the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent to answer.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I welcome the question from my colleague.

I am sure he knows that Canada has the highest standards for producing petroleum and natural resources. We have to be proud of that and do what we can to sell the pride that we have for our natural resources.

Yes, I am proud, as a Canadian, of the petroleum industry and the hydroelectricity in Quebec. We have to be proud of ourselves and say to everybody, especially to the Americans, that here in Canada

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we have the highest standards in producing our natural resources. Be proud.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, Enbridge Energy's Line 5 pipeline could be shut down in a week. This is another example of the Liberal government's failure to act. We have known about the May 12 deadline for months, and the Liberals have done nothing. Pipelines and getting goods to market are topics that are very important to me and my constituents, and under the Liberals, we have seen countless energy projects and pipelines cancelled, pipelines that could have prevented this situation.

We have seen this government pass Bill C-48, the shipping ban bill, and Bill C-69, the no more pipelines bill. Also, the Liberal government abandoned Albertans in failing to stand up for Keystone XL. Indeed, this government's record on pipelines is brutal. In cancelling energy east and northern gateway, and causing the cancellation of the Carmon Creek project, they have left 134,000 Canadian oil patch workers and their families in the lurch. When the Liberals stand up and say that this is about jobs, I say, yeah right, that is a bunch of BS. The Liberals are ashamed of Alberta and the prosperity that comes from our natural resources.

Canadians want good, ethical and responsibly sourced oil, yet we have refineries in Saint John, New Brunswick, that must take oil from countries with atrocious human rights records and no environmental protections whatsoever; measures that we do not have because of the national east-west pipeline that our Canadian oil is unable to get across this country.

Our Canadian oil is produced with some of the highest standards in the world. For now, we have the Line 5, which transports half a million barrels of oil a day from the Canadian west to the Canadian east, from production fields in Alberta to refineries in Ontario and Quebec. This is a win-win for all of Canada, and several provinces get their direct share of the benefits of our natural resource. Indeed, Canada needs more Canadian oil, not less. We need more Canadian energy, not less. We can share our energy. I know that Quebec is a world leader in hydroelectricity. Why can we not share that and go back and forth?

Pipelines are not just something to transport oil in. They are something that we transport all kinds of things in. As we transitioned from oil and moved to the production of natural gas, we switched over many pipelines from oil to natural gas. Who knows what in the future we will be transporting through these same pipelines. These pipelines will not become obsolete as we use less and less oil.

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Moreover, we are at a crossroads here today. In fact, we are actually at the edge of the cliff in regard to Line 5 due to Liberal inaction. This pipeline that plays such a critical role in the Canadian economy could be shut down very soon. We did not have to be here. We could have had other pipeline projects initiated five years ago, which could have been in play today, and yet here we are with only one pipeline transporting oil from west to east.

This Line 5 pipeline plays such a critical role in the Canadian economy, and it could shut down very soon. With the closure of Line 5, the livelihoods of thousands of Canadians will be impacted. Not that the Liberals seemed to care when it was 134,000 Albertans who were losing their jobs because of the lack of pipelines, but today here we are with 5,000 direct jobs in the Sarnia region and 25,000 jobs in southern Ontario and Quebec impacted.

This pipeline provides \$165 billion in revenue and thousands of indirect jobs both in Quebec and Ontario. We cannot abandon these jobs either. Just because this government does not want to stand up for jobs in Alberta does not mean that we should not stand up for these jobs in Ontario and Quebec. Justin Trudeau cannot and should not be choosing which jobs are worth saving. The energy sector—

• (2225)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Madam Chair, point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would caution the member not to use the name of the Prime Minister.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Madam Speaker, in the member's big attack on the Liberals, he should not be referring to the Prime Minister by his name. Instead of attacks, it would be nice if he could get into the debate and propose some solutions.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member for Malpeque for calling it out. The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock knows that we cannot use names in the chamber.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, the energy sector is a key component to our continued recovery, and we cannot abandon this industry and the families it supports.

Today is a sad day, and we must have an emergency debate to ensure that a pipeline will not be shut down. In fact, we are less than a week away from that deadline. Michigan's governor wants to shut down Line 5 on May 12. Currently the case is before a judge and it will soon go to the courts of the United States and that is in their hands.

For the past several months I have joined my Conservative colleagues in asking questions of the Liberal government about its actions on Line 5. In fact, on February 24, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources stated the government was fully committed to the continuing and safe operation of Line 5, yet the Liberals have abandoned any action and have failed to meaningfully engage to ensure the continuation of Line 5.

Here we are today, one week away from the shutdown of Line 5. Are we going to let America's courts determine our energy security? It seems like we are.

Right now Enbridge, the owner of the pipeline, is in mediation, but there is no guarantee in this regard in either situation. We cannot take that risk in courts. That is why other projects and pipelines that would have been built today would be the solution. The Government of Canada needs to take leadership and ensure this pipeline continues, but we could have had other pipelines in play to ensure we were not held ransom, as we are today.

Line 5 impacts millions of Canadians, and through increased prices, greater truck traffic and environmental risks, the Liberals have failed to protect Line 5 and other pipeline projects. During the special committee on Canada-U.S. relations, members heard that Line 5 is not just an important pipeline, it is an economic lifeline for both Canada and the U.S. It would impede access to the energy that is needed to run both of our economies and would cause energy shortages and have a significant impact on the price of gasoline, diesel, propane, jet fuel, plastics and chemicals.

To Conservatives, Line 5 is of national importance. Action needs to be taken. The Governor of Michigan has referred to this pipeline as a "ticking time bomb". We cannot have a Prime Minister who sits on his hands and lets others decide our fate.

Time and again we have seen these death by delay tactics on major projects like the Teck Frontier mine and the failure to stand up for Keystone XL. The Prime Minister is missing in action, much like his failure to show up for the negotiations on the TPP. The Prime Minister is the captain of the Canadian ship. We are asking him, rather than letting us drift along on the current, to put his hand on the tiller and provide some direction.

We cannot rely on American courts or politicians to defend our interests. We have already seen how American politicians and a disinterested Liberal government have made the construction and completion of Keystone XL impossible. To save Line 5, we need action and a political response at the highest level. The shutdown of Line 5 is not an issue that can be swept into the closet. The impending closure is right in front of us, and millions of Canadians will be impacted by this shutdown.

The Canadian government needs to stand up for its treaties and agreements. The transit pipelines treaty is one of these agreements. Back in 1977, Joe Biden, then a senator and now the American president, voted for and supported the transit pipelines treaty. This treaty ensures that oil and petroleum products can travel from Canada through the U.S. and come back into Canada.

This pipeline has operated safely for 68 years, but Michigan's governor's plan to cancel an easement, which would shut down this pipeline, needs our action now, and we have a treaty to back it up. Our Prime Minister needs to work directly with the American president to ensure the continuation of Line 5. This task would ensure that Line 5 cannot be delegated. It requires action at the highest level, and this matter needs to be dealt with quickly so that Canadian jobs are protected.

I have heard over and over again from the Liberals how this is about jobs, that pipelines are safe and that there are 1,500 trucks, 800 railcars, northern gateway and Keystone XL. However, northern gateway, Keystone XL and energy east all would have displaced foreign oil, displaced these trucks, displaced railcars, taken the oil off the rail and taken it off the road.

The logic is the same for all other pipelines, not just Line 5, and energy east would have been operational by now, if the Liberals had not stuck a stick in its spokes. If there is no action on Line 5 and Line 5 is shut down, 5,000 jobs in Sarnia, Ontario, will be lost due to the Prime Minister's inaction.

• (2230)

Enbridge Line 5 plays a key role in our national energy supply chain: 15,000 trucks a day would be required to replace the capacity of this pipeline.

The special committee heard from Scott Archer of UA Local 663, who commented on the importance of Line 5 by saying that for Canadians, this is “non-negotiable. You need to take a stand to protect Canadian families, businesses and industry.”

The continued operation of Line 5 is of national importance. In February, I asked a question on behalf of my friend JD from Slave Lake: On what day will the Prime Minister pick up the phone and defend Alberta's energy interests and market access? We have seen continual failure and lack of action by the current do-nothing Liberal government on pipelines, especially Keystone XL and now Line 5. Why did he not act before this came before the courts?

To secure our future and to ensure—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing I feel is really missing from this conversation is the voices of indigenous people. We know that the Special Committee on the Economic Relationship between Canada and the United States did the interim report on Enbridge Line 5. There was not one indigenous witness who participated in that report.

To build meaningful relationships with indigenous peoples when it comes to energy, to apply the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, on both sides of the border, indigenous voices need to be included.

Does my colleague agree that this was a serious oversight, and that indigenous people need to be part of this really important conversation?

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Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, indigenous Canadians and all Canadians need to be part of this important discussion. As a member of Parliament who represents over 15 first nations and Métis communities in northern Alberta, I have seen first-hand the devastation that comes when the Liberal government does not protect and stand up for Canadian oil field worker jobs. The northern gateway cancellation was devastating to many of my northern Alberta communities, as they are involved in the construction of, particularly, the Carmon Creek project, which was right in the heart of my riding.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I heard him say that the solution could be to build more pipelines. I think that is diametrically opposed to what we need to do to fight the climate crisis. Joe Biden, the new U.S. President, revoked the Keystone XL construction permit, which proves that even the U.S., an oil-producing nation with a population larger than Canada's, understands that we need to move toward an energy transition.

With all due respect, I want to be sure I understand. Does my colleague believe that building more pipelines is really in line with fighting the climate crisis?

• (2235)

[*English*]

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I believe, 100%, that building more pipelines is totally in line with fighting climate change. Canadian oil is the lowest carbon footprint oil production in the world. Having tankers bring in oil from around the world is not environmentally friendly in any way, shape or form, whether it is CO₂ emissions or just general environmental standards that take place where the oil is produced.

While Canada has dithered, the United States has gone from being our biggest market to being our competitor on oil. The United States has ramped up oil production significantly over the last 20 years. The Americans just purely do not need our energy any longer.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to elaborate on the importance of the energy sector to indigenous people in the area that he serves. I know it is critical for employment, and they are very active participants in the energy sector.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. colleague from Edmonton Centre for his advocacy for his community and for his advocacy on the oil patch in general.

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Across my riding, many of the 14 first nations had a stake in the northern gateway pipeline project. The northern gateway pipeline project would have come right through many of their communities. It would have given them jobs. Many of these communities have construction jobs. They are into road building. They work in the forestry sector building roads and they service oil wells that are in their area. They work in all of the sectors that provide services to the oil patch. They drive trucks. They drive the big equipment. They do the things that are required to make the oil patch work.

Since the current government has taken power, we have seen a dramatic decrease in the amount of activity that has happened up in northern Alberta, leaving many of these people without jobs.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I consider it a privilege to participate in this debate tonight. I also considered it a privilege to sit on the committee that studied this issue and filed a report. I am going to take my time tonight to make reference to the report and the recommendations therein.

I have sat on a lot of committees over the years, but I have seldom sat on a committee where the views were so unanimous. The views of the witnesses were entirely in line with each other. The views of the parties and the participants on the committee were in line with each other. The report was a unanimous report, although there were separate opinions filed by the Conservative Party and the NDP. The general, overall view was that this was a unanimous view, almost a team Canada view, on the seriousness of this particular initiative by the Governor of Michigan.

Before I forget, I should mention that I am splitting my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

Not only were the views virtually unanimous—

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I hate to interrupt my esteemed colleague from Scarborough—Guildwood, but I believe he meant to share his time with the member for Winnipeg North.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I thought that was what I just said, that I was sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North. If I did not say that then I will repeat it because I know what great enthusiasm the chamber has for the member for Winnipeg North and his views on pretty much any subject one can imagine. I thank my hon. colleague for that intervention.

Not only were the views virtually unanimous, but the quality of the witnesses was extraordinary. Some of the witnesses included the two lead trade negotiators from the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Natural Resources, the very able ambassador of Canada to the United States and Maryscott Greenwood, for those who have been involved with Canada-U.S. affairs over the years. I see my colleague from Malpeque knows Maryscott Greenwood as a very able person.

Witnesses also included the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canada's Building Trades Unions, the Canadian Propane Association and the Laborers' International Union. The mayor of Sarnia was particularly interesting presenting of his views, along with the

Government of Alberta, the Government of Ontario, the Government of Saskatchewan, the Sarnia Construction Association and Local 663. That is not a complete list of the witnesses, but I have to say that the views that were expressed were, as I said, virtually unanimous, as was the seriousness with which they were expressed.

Regrettably, the witness that we probably wanted to hear from the most was either the governor or a representative from the State of Michigan. Whether they were unable or declined, I do not know, but it was regrettable that we were not able to hear from the State of Michigan as to why it considers, in the words of the governor, that this particular section of the pipeline is a ticking time bomb. I do not know how a ticking time bomb ticks for 68 years and does not gone off.

There was no evidence in front of the committee that this is actually an environmental risk that needs to be addressed immediately by way of injunctive relief. It appeared to have more to do with politics, promises made and things of that nature, rather than any particular imperative with respect to environmental damage.

I do take note that in the background there seemed to be a reputational issue with the proponent Enbridge, and it is a cautionary note for all corporations that reputations do matter. I take it that there is a lot of, for want of a better term, bad blood between the corporation and the state. It is speculation on my part rather than evidence that this was possibly a motivating factor to what is, by any standard, a very extraordinary injunctive relief.

My colleague from Mount Royal, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, did an outstanding presentation on the legal positions of Canada, the corporation and the State of Michigan. I would hope that those who want to run around lighting their hair on fire and being alarmist take some comfort in his legal analysis. I think it bears a great deal of merit.

I thought he in particular pushed witnesses to the point where the feeling among the committee members was that the legal position of the Government of Canada, and indeed the corporation, is quite a strong one. While there is an impending date, that is not a date that will result in an immediate shut down of the line.

• (2240)

I hope that is of some comfort and I urge hon. members to review the member for Mount Royal's speech because I think it does set the legal framework as well as it can be done.

The committee arrived at seven recommendations, the first of which is probably the easiest, which was to encourage a settlement between and among the parties. That is obviously the preferred course.

The second recommendation was that the Government of Canada continue to engage with relevant stakeholders. As I said, we heard from a great number of witnesses up and down the political food chain, for want of a better term, up and down the industrial food chain, up and down the labour food chain, all of whom had been engaged at the most significant levels with their counterparts in the United States and all of whom reported very similar reports on their actual engagement.

The third recommendation had to do with the filing of an amicus curiae brief if a negotiated, mediated settlement was not reached and the brief just set out the legal position. As I said, I thought that the member for Mount Royal articulated that brief about as well as it could be articulated. It should be noted that the 1977 agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America concerning transit pipelines is in our view the treaty that will prevail.

I take note that we cannot have a situation where we have 67 pipelines crossing the border on a daily basis and any governor or any premier at any point unilaterally deciding that a particular pipeline needs to be shut down for good reasons or for not-so-good reasons. That in and of itself is probably the determining factor as to whether even the Governor of Michigan has any jurisdiction to unilaterally shut down a pipeline.

The fourth recommendation was that the Prime Minister and his ministers pursue frequent and direct dialogue with the U.S. President and his administration. We have heard tonight that has happened and it continues to happen with three or four ministers directly engaged with it. It has been on the agenda with the Prime Minister and the President.

The fifth recommendation is that Canada should evaluate other possible vulnerabilities to Canada's critical infrastructure and supply chains and develop contingency plans. There are contingency plans; unfortunately, all of them are very difficult, putting 1,500 trucks—

• (2245)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry, but I have to give the opportunity for members to ask questions and make comments.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his work on the Canada-U.S. committee. He did mention that this amicus brief of support would be one of the actions from the committee and something very important. Could he say why with two business days remaining before the due date for that brief, why we have not seen any activity on the part of the government?

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, it does not mean that there has not been activity on the part of this government. As I indicated earlier, there has been engagement up and down the political food chain; I am assuming as well up and down the legal food chain and I would anticipate that the timing for the intervention will be to Canada's best advantage.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, in light of the timeline and the urgency of the situation, I wonder whether the government would invoke the pipeline transit treaty?

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I will not profess any great familiarity with the pipeline transit treaty, but I would imagine that that treaty would prevail over all matters, including any unilateral initiatives on the part of a governor or a premier, and that would immediately go to a point of resolution.

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• (2250)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the member for Scarborough—Guildwood, probably more than any other members on the Canada-U.S. IPG, met with the most people, the most representatives on the U.S. side on this issue. I certainly thank him for that.

The member did say in his remarks that one of the areas of concern is the reputational matter related to Enbridge, in other areas than the pipeline under the Strait.

Should we be doing more in that area? Could we be doing more on the ground in the state on the public side of this issue? I know we are short on time, but is there more we could be doing there?

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I, together, engaged four or five congresspeople over the course of the last couple of months. Recommendation number 7 was that all members of Parliament and all senators engage wherever they can with their legislative counterparts.

That was one of the suggestions from one of the congresspeople, that there be a greater public engagement so that the people of Michigan know the consequences. There did seem to be a lack of awareness about the unilateral initiatives on the part of the governor. It was suggested to us to have a more public relations-focused campaign.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I do not think that Canadians are fully aware of the reputation of Enbridge across the United States.

After the Kalamazoo, Michigan spill in 2010, the National Transportation Safety Board reviewed the occurrences of that spill. The head of the inquiry actually said to the media that Enbridge had a culture of negligence, and that they resembled, at the time of that spill, a bunch of Keystone cops.

We have a problem in defending, and we will have to defend, that we need to get the products to Sarnia and are cutting a corner getting from Alberta to eastern Canada by ducking through the United States. I would maintain that as a Canadian concerned for the safety of the Great Lakes and the environmental risk there, we have a problem because I do not trust Enbridge either.

That pipeline is old, and when—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to give an opportunity for the minister to answer in five seconds or less.

The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I can hardly respond to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands in five seconds. That is an impossible task.

However, she does make a point, and I take it.

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, it is a pleasure to speak on a really important issue and I would like to approach it in a couple of ways.

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When I think of the Line 5 pipeline, a couple of thoughts come to mind in a significant way. One is the economics of it. We can all appreciate how important it is for Canada's economy. We could talk about Alberta, where the product is taken from the ground and is brought to the eastern provinces, particularly Ontario and Quebec. I would argue the economic argument goes far beyond direct and indirect jobs.

As one member has already said, it goes beyond just gasoline. There are many things that need to be factored into the product that are absolutely critical in terms of Canada's and the U.S.'s economic development going forward. I suggest that if we were to dip into the history of it, we would find that prior to the pipeline, as I found out with a bit of research, at one time it was being transported by oil tanker. I suspect the move toward a pipeline was better for the environment.

I see the former leader shaking her head with some disappointment. I know the Green Party is consistent. It does not like pipelines. I have had that discussion with the former leader in the past. Green Party members will talk about using train transportation or other ways to transport it, if not ideally keep it in the ground, and that is great. The Green Party has that hard-set policy, and I respect it. I do not agree with it, but I do respect it. The impact for both Canada and the U.S. is significant.

Here is the other concern that I have. Canada and the U.S. have a very special relationship. We all know that. I do not think it is healthy for either side when a lot of partisan politics are being played. When that takes place, it hardens the feelings south going north and north going south for a lot of people. I do not believe that is good for our relationship. That is why I am pleased with the manner in which the Government of Canada has responded to the issue.

The Conservatives are wrong when they try to give a false impression that the Government of Canada is not doing anything. That is just not true, and I believe they know that. They know that the Government of Canada has put in a great deal of effort. We recognize that. I will read two quotes, one from earlier today when the leader of the Conservative Party posed a question during question period about what the government is saying about the importance of the line.

The minister said earlier today in question period:

Mr. Speaker, people will not be left out in the cold. The heating of Canadian homes or the flying of Canadian jets or the operation of Canadian refineries are non-negotiable. Line 5 is not just vital to Canada, it is also vital to the United States. Therefore, it is vital to all of North America. Shutting it down would have profound consequences. There are 5,000 direct jobs in Sarnia, 23,000 indirect jobs in the region, thousands of jobs at refineries in Montreal and Lévis, but also in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan, and that is the case we are making. Line 5 is essential for North American energy security.

● (2255)

What the minister indicated today in question period is not something new; this has been consistent from the government. It is the policy. Whether the Prime Minister, that minister or other ministers, we recognize the value of the pipeline.

The Conservatives' back room used to be the MP lobby. Within the House leadership, which has a direct link into the leader's den, there is this political spin to make this into an anti-Alberta issue and

that the Liberals do not care. Again, nothing could be further from the truth. What the Conservatives will say after the spin is that the Government of Canada is not doing anything. It is just not true.

I asked the member for Banff—Airdrie, who led the debate tonight, to tell me what the Conservative Party had done. Has the member contacted the governor in question? Did the Conservatives write letters? What has the Conservative caucus in Alberta, let alone the Conservative Party of Canada, actually done? I would ask the Conservatives to share something with me, to give me an example of anything they have done in the last four years. One would think they had done something. It might be disappointing, but we like to have an answer. The Conservatives did not say anything, at least that member did not say anything, and he introduced the motion to the House. At the same time, he slams the government of the day, saying we are not doing anything.

This is what the Minister of Natural Resources said when it was the Liberal Party's turn to speak this evening:

“We have been clear from the start. We would leave no stone unturned in defending Canada's energy security. We have been looking at all of our options. We are working at the political level. We are working at the diplomatic level. We are working at the legal level. It is a full-court press.

We raised Line 5 directly with the President of the United States and members of his cabinet during the virtual Canada-U.S. summit in February. The Prime Minister also raised the critical importance of North American energy security in conversation with Vice President Harris.

I raised the issue with U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm. I was frank and unequivocal in expressing how significant this issue was for Canada. The Minister of Transport raised line 5 with his counterpart, Transport Secretary Buttigieg whose department oversees the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, the U.S. federal regulator for pipelines, which has consistently stated that Line 5 is safe. The Minister of Foreign Affairs raised this issue with his counterpart, Secretary of State Blinken. Ambassador Hillman has been making the case directly to Governor Whitmer. Meanwhile, in Detroit and in Lansing, Consul General Joe Comartin has been making the case to state lawmakers and members of the Whitmer administration.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Governor Whitmer, Consul General Joe Comartin in Detroit, the team at the Canadian embassy in Washington and all of our diplomats who have been engaging on this issue in Washington, Detroit and Lansing who defend Canada's interests there every day.”

How can the Conservative Party say that we are doing nothing? How silly and how stupid. The Conservative Party needs to stop playing the partisan politics of division and hatred toward Ottawa, in particular with the people of Alberta. We saw the same partisan politics in another emergency debate yesterday. It does not matter the issue, if there is a problem, the Conservatives blame Ottawa. They point the finger at Ottawa and say that it is Ottawa is the problem. I remind the Conservatives—

• (2300)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will stop the hon. parliamentary secretary and give way to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands has the floor.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always great to be able to respond to the member.

I have an access to information request here for all briefing notes provided to, and directives by, the Prime Minister with regard to Enbridge Line 5 between November 1, 2019, and March 9, 2021. A thorough search of the records under the control of the Privy Council Office was carried out, however no records relevant to the request were found.

The member keeps saying Conservatives are spinning a false narrative and suggesting the government is doing nothing when we have proof here that shows it is not even on the Prime Minister's radar. How does the member want to respond to that?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that is not proof. I just finished indicating a list of ways in which we have been communicating with our U.S. counterparts. I posed the question to one of my Conservative colleagues of what the federal Conservative Party had actually done, other than point the finger, accuse and falsely say that we had not been doing anything.

Read some of the speeches—

• (2305)

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

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to hear the assistant government House leader on that side of the House. Hansard will know there is no font for sarcasm, but I hope he gets that.

He brought up last night's emergency debate and I will refer to it. My colleague for Edmonton Strathcona, a member of the New Democratic Party, made it quite clear about the Prime Minister and his potential relationship with Alberta.

She said:

The Prime Minister saw this coming [referring to COVID]. He has watched this happening in Alberta, and he has done nothing, because he would rather watch Alberta burn than help Jason Kenney.

Those are not my words. They are from Hansard. They are my colleague's words: the member for Edmonton Strathcona, a member of the New Democratic Party. I hope it is not true—

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

For the record, on that occasion, the member for Edmonton Strathcona withdrew those remarks so I do not think they should be referred to today as though they actually occurred.

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

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I apologize as I just have that quote there. We will go through with the withdrawal of the re-

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marks, but nevertheless I think they were part of the record. Let us go forward and address what that means.

If the NDP in Alberta actually think the Prime Minister is not helping Alberta enough, and this line is potentially linked to Alberta's prosperity, can this member get the Prime Minister to please demonstrate he is actually involved in files that affect this whole country and that bind Alberta and western Canada with the eastern Canadian refineries that use our product? Can he get involved in the file? That is what—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, contrary to what Conservatives try to preach, and no doubt they put out their propaganda like no other, the Government of Canada, the Prime Minister and every member of the Liberal caucus understands what is taking place in Alberta and other regions of our country. We care for Alberta as we care for Ontario, Quebec and my home province of Manitoba. We believe in all regions of this country and we are there for them, because we understand and appreciate the value of our nation and the many contributions made by each and every community.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, earlier there were comments about Enbridge and its reputation, and of course Enbridge has a poor record on pipeline breaks, including the massive 2010 Line 6B rupture, which spilled almost a million gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River. Hence, we find ourselves in this situation.

As well, we are talking about a very old pipeline. In the event this pipeline is indeed cancelled, what is the government going to do to ensure protection is provided to the workers who would be impacted? Equally important, work would need to be done in moving Canada into the reality of having to address a climate emergency with significant measures in place to transition our—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the parliamentary secretary the opportunity to answer in 15 seconds.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I believe that May 12 will come and go, and we will continue to receive over 500,000 barrels a day through that line as common sense, diplomats and national political leaders who want to resolve this matter will do their jobs.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise virtually today to speak in this emergency debate about a critical piece of infrastructure, in an industry that is critical to the economy of our country and our recovery post-COVID-19.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

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Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline carries Canadian oil east, running through Wisconsin and Michigan. It is supplying about half the oil needs of Ontario and Quebec. For decades, the pipeline safely shipped oil that is refined in Sarnia into gasoline, diesel, home-heating fuel and aviation fuel. It is also a major source of propane used in Ontario and Quebec. A lot of farmers use the propane to heat their homes, barns and commercial greenhouses, as well as to dry grain. Sourcing propane elsewhere could drive the cost of ag production up, along with the cost of food for Canadian families. This would, without a doubt, hurt industry and competitiveness.

Canada's oil and gas sector suffered another tremendous blow with the cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline project. Keystone was all about securing additional export markets for access for western Canadian crude, to help this struggling sector and secure better average prices for our resources. Another great threat to our economy is looming: the cancellation of one of the most vital supply lines in our country. Tens of thousands of good jobs are at risk and, with no doubt, there will be increasing costs for many goods and services.

While I appreciate the discussion today, I do find it somewhat ironic that many of the voices that we are hearing from were silent while the energy industry was struggling, other projects were being cancelled and capital was being deployed outside of our country. Today's discussion is a symptom of a much larger problem, a problem that is six years of relative inaction by the government. I agree with the Minister of Natural Resources that this industry is, and has been, a critical pillar of our economic success. He spoke today about the action the government has taken since this fall. The much larger question is: where has the government been for the last six years?

I acknowledge that Line 5 has the attention now, but where has the government been when it comes to supporting this critical industry? The government has had six years to negotiate an agreement on a North American energy strategy. The cancellation of Keystone XL and now this crisis on Line 5 demonstrate to me the lack of a proactive strategy by the government. I would also note that there is virtually no mention of this important sector in the budget and absolutely no mention of a strategy for greater energy, security and self-sufficiency.

I am a proud Albertan and I recognize the critical importance that the natural resource industry plays today and how critical it will be for our economic recovery. The government has sent many signals that do not support its argument that it sees this industry as being critical. Support is not demonstrated by enacting legislation like Bill C-48 and Bill C-69. Canada has a critical trading relationship with the U.S., but we can also provide energy solutions for other jurisdictions and displace countries that do not extract resources to the same high and improving standards we have demonstrated.

In April of this year, there was a paper written by Philip Cross, and I would recommend reading it, with the title, "How oil sands investment and production benefit Canada's economy". I would like to take this opportunity to share with colleagues a few of its salient quotes. This sector is one of the key supply sources of energy. "The oil sands are a uniquely Canadian success story and an increasingly rare example of innovation in Canada." It is "important for the in-

dustry and governments in Canada to set the public record straight on what this industry has accomplished and its importance to Canada's economy." "The largest oil sands plants today are operated by Canadian companies...[such as] Suncor Energy, CNR, and Cenovus." "Canada's participation in the oil sands extends to First Nations."

A number of indigenous ventures have participated in the oil sands: One Earth, Mikisew Group of Companies, Boucher, Tuccaro Group and Acden, to name a few. The economic benefits are enormous: \$8.3 billion in oil sands investment represents 4.5% of all the business investment in Canada. "This exceeds all investments made by the retail trade industry, construction, or all business services, and is four times more than auto..." "Both investment and production in the oil sands are important to Canada's economy..." Some \$10 billion in investments results in Canada's GDP going up by 0.5% and increases overall employment by over 81,000. Combined with Ontario, Central Canada reaps about 13.6% of the jobs.

• (2310)

Canada's oil and natural gas resources are among the most responsibly produced energy resources on the planet, under the most stringent environmental regulations in the world. In Canada's oil sands, conditions have fallen significantly. According to data from the Government of Canada's 2019 national inventory report, greenhouse gas emissions in Canada's oil sands have fallen 34% per barrel since 1990, and they are going down further.

Media portrayals rarely present what the oil sands mine looks after the land has been rehabilitated, something all companies must commit to and set aside funds for when they begin operations. The boreal footprint of the oil sands is significantly less when compared with that of what is flooded to build massive hydro power projects.

Let us talk about a bit about innovation. The Alberta carbon trunk line system is the world's newest integrated large-scale carbon capture utilization and storage system. Designed as the backbone infrastructure needed to support a lower-carbon economy in Alberta, the ACTL system captures industrial emissions and delivers the CO₂ to mature oil and gas reservoirs for use in enhanced oil recovery and permanent storage. As the largest capacity pipeline for CO₂ from human activity, it is capable of transporting up to 14.6 million tonnes of CO₂ per year, which represents 20% of all current oil sands emissions, or equal to the impact of capturing the CO₂ from more than three million cars. The future of a lower-carbon economy relies on key infrastructure investments like the ACTL system to provide sustainable solutions to global energy requirements.

I wanted to illustrate today that we have these enormous assets and that we should recognize the fine work that industry has done to supply this important resource. Today I heard much discussion about an energy transition, but we are in the here and now. There are significant jobs at risk not only in the energy sector, but in sectors that depend upon a safe, secure supply of energy. Canada relies on exports to fuel our economy, and without the safe supply of energy, we run the risk of seeing our manufacturers, agricultural sectors and other industries go down, as they depend on this supply.

I have no doubt there will be a transition over time, but in the interim, I suggest that Canada has the opportunity to be a market leader in the supply of energy as we build into this transition. Oil will be critical during this transition, but we also have a tremendous opportunity to be an exporter of LNG and nuclear technology as we displace coal as an energy source.

Many speak about the new jobs that are about to be created to replace these valuable energy sector jobs, but I have yet to hear a substantive plan that demonstrates what those jobs will be and in what specific sectors they will be. The hard reality is we are a large country with a small population. We have built infrastructure and an impressive social safety net that supports people across the country. Much of this is as a result of the revenue produced from the natural resources and commodities that we have been blessed with. We should not lose sight of this important fact.

Line 5 is an important piece of this infrastructure, and shutting it down would have a dramatic impact on the citizens and industry in Ontario and Quebec. This makes us abundantly aware of the importance of energy security for our country. The last thing we want to rely on are alternatives for transportation, such as rail or truck traffic, or foreign markets for supply.

I hope the government will recognize not only the importance of Line 5, but also that the natural resources sector could be an important part of our future success. Jobs and people's economic well-being are at stake. My province has taken the brunt of the economic slowdown, and we are overdue for the government to do more than talk about the support of an industry. It should demonstrate with action.

It is time for the Prime Minister to show Canadians the specific plan for the natural resources sector and the thousands of jobs that this sector employs. The industry is ready and willing to be a substantive part of our economic recovery. This is about leadership,

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and it is also time for the Prime Minister to reach out to the President and reinforce the economic importance of energy security for both our countries, and ensure the continued operation of Line 5.

• (2315)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member, especially, for laying out the facts on what is really happening and what industry is doing in the province of Alberta with carbon sinks and improving the environment, etc. That is information that the government and all Canadians need to get out there, instead of, if I can put it that way, badmouthing Alberta.

On tonight's debate, though, right at the end he said the Prime Minister needs to talk to the President. What is the key point that the member would suggest the Prime Minister or the government do at this point, related to Line 5 and its importance to the country and to the United States?

• (2320)

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his work on the finance committee and for being one of those rare staunch supporters of the energy industry from the other side.

The important point is that this is about energy security for North America, and there is a tremendous opportunity for Canada and the U.S. to collectively build that security and displace other players who are not living to the same standards. There is an enormous opportunity here and we should take full advantage of it. I do believe that the Americans would be good partners, understanding that we both have the same goal.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Edmonton Centre is right that this is one pipeline that the NDP and the Conservatives can agree that we need. This is a pipeline supplying Canadian oil to Canadian industry. It is not an expansion pipeline, at a time in the world when demand for oil has flatlined and will undoubtedly decline over the next 30 years.

With respect to the other pipelines the member mentioned, the Canada Energy Regulator put out a report saying we do not need them. We do not need them because the projects they were meant to handle are not going ahead, and they are not going ahead because the world financial markets realize there is no future in new oil projects.

This flight of capital is not just happening in Canada; it is happening all over the world. I wanted to point that out because there is a real difference between these pipelines. That is why we see the value of this pipeline. We want it not to be shut down. We know it is important for Canadian jobs, and we know it is important for that transition—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the member for Edmonton Centre an opportunity to comment.

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Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, respectfully, I completely disagree. There is investment taking place in industry. Norway is about to open massive drilling into a big reservoir. Russia is expanding its production. There are plenty of people who are in the resource business, and they are continuing to extract oil. There is still demand in the market, and I believe that Canada can play an enormous role in doing it better and providing that energy, at least as a bridge strategy until we find other alternatives that will displace oil.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, as a former practising lawyer, I would just say that the notion that keeps being repeated here, that Canada has the toughest environmental regulations in the world, is absurd. The U.S. has always had tougher environmental laws than Canada, and ours were weakened in the Harper years and have not been repaired.

I wanted to draw attention to the hon. member's claim, which is true, that the industry has improved and reduced the amount of greenhouse gases per barrel of oil. He went back to the early 1990s. At that time, Canada produced less than half a million barrels a day. We are now six times higher than that. When we reduce the amount of pollution per barrel and then more than quadruple production, increase it six times, we obviously do have an increase in pollution, despite the fact that the pollution per barrel goes down.

I just wanted to draw that to the member's attention, although this debate has nothing to do with greenhouse gases per barrel. This is about the pollution if the pipeline breaks.

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, I will agree to disagree. I still think that Canada can be a major producer of energy products and displace others who are not doing it to the same standards. Quite frankly, pipelines are the safest way to transport oil.

• (2325)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I join tonight's energy debate wishing we did not need to have one, but the troubling situation with Enbridge Line 5 dictates that we need to. I also wish that the government would treat it with a lot more urgency than it has shown by its actions up to this point. It is actually a lot more accurate if we call it inaction. The Liberals lack of leadership has brought us near the brink.

As Canadians, we now find ourselves in a difficult position where a major problem is closer to happening than we could have ever imagined. This will be added to everything else Canada has already been facing with COVID-19 and lockdowns for well over a year.

People are tired and they are frustrated, as we all know, but now we are one week away from the Governor of Michigan's imposed deadline for shutting down Line 5. Since the first announcement almost six months ago, Canadians have been left in suspense about their future.

We are dealing with people's essential needs: fuel for getting to places where they need to be or for keeping our supply chains running, home heating, thousands of local jobs and keeping the environment cleaner and safer, just to name a few.

Whenever we talk pipelines, these are the actual issues at stake for ordinary people in their daily lives. This has always been a real-

ity that affects the entire country, but this is the clearest example yet of how Ontario and Quebec will directly suffer as a result of anti-energy ideology.

As soon as we lose Line 5, gas and heat either get even more expensive than they already are or in other cases, it will just be unavailable, yet here we are facing the real possibility of fuel shortages on top of losing thousands of jobs directly and indirectly. Once again, it will in large part come on the back of the lack of leadership from the Liberal government.

Over 6,000 workers in Sarnia plus another 23,000 in the wider region after the effects ripple through the economy, these big numbers are made up of people with families, dreams and personal potential and they are at risk of joining the thousands and thousands of other energy jobs that have already been lost in western Canada under the same Liberal government. In this case, it does not matter if people live and work in the east or in the west.

Under the Prime Minister, they effectively all but cancelled the energy east pipeline through their unsupportive policies and rhetoric, not unlike the later problems of Trans Mountain.

We could use a pipeline exactly like energy east right now, because without it, we have no alternative replacement for moving oil and gas across Canada in the safest and cleanest way we know how to do it. This increased vulnerability in our energy supply was preventable with a worthwhile project well on its way before the Liberals undid it. If the oil and gas stops flowing with Line 5, the much-needed demand for it will not go away and it will have to be supplied in other ways.

The pipeline currently carries around 540,000 barrels per day. It will take 800 rail cars, or 2,000 trucks or nine oil tankers on the Great Lakes per day to make up for it, with increased greenhouse gas emissions combined with greater environmental and safety risks.

When I raised this point with the Minister of Natural Resources at our committee, he wanted to focus on petty politics, saying he did not want to have to answer gotcha questions when I asked some simple questions about the capacity of Line 5, instead of addressing the issue at hand, with all the social, economic and environmental importance. The superficial approach and attitude of the government was on full display.

This is the same cabinet minister who instead of the Prime Minister is supposed to be leading the charge for Line 5 and energy development in Canada. He has been saying he is confident Line 5 will not get shut down. Canadians are counting on him being right.

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Following recent media reports that the government's diplomatic approach was “frustrated”, I asked the minister to be absolutely clear that this threatened shutdown would be averted. The parliamentary secretary responded with a canned answer on his behalf, although it was interesting to hear him say, “We are ready to intervene precisely at the right moment.” Sadly, this is not being clear with Canadians.

When exactly is the right time? An ATIP I referred to earlier, a request from my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot, showed that as of March 10, there were exactly zero briefing notes on record under the control of the Privy Council Office from the Prime Minister dating back to March 1, 2019. To say that this is not even on his radar would be an understatement.

Again, it has been six months since the governor's announcement and we are now one week away from the deadline. This is also not the kind of deadline where a homework assignment can be turned in on the last day. It is quite the opposite. If the minister is confident that Line 5 will not stop flowing on May 13 and that it will continue for a little while longer after at least, that does not mean we are out of the woods whatsoever. For all the government knows, it would only be kicking a can down the road with the same or worse uncertainty wherever it might lead.

• (2330)

We already know that Enbridge, for its own part, plans to continue its operations and take the battle all the way through the courts in the U.S. However, the governor of Michigan just called Line 5 a ticking time bomb and clearly wants to fight back too. That really is not the point. For each month this has been dragged out, there has already been damage done. The mayor of Sarnia has described it as hovering for months.

Anxiety has been building as more time passes and the deadline gets closer. The workers in the wider community have had to live with it all along. Beyond that, it starts to have a broader, chilling effect. This is how the same mayor describes it. He said:

Anytime there's uncertainty about the source of what drives a particular economy, it does have an impact when you're trying to recruit companies and industries into the area.... When you're in the economic development game, you're always trying to eliminate anything that could be an impediment and the longer this goes on, the more of that anxiety is there.

Considering these wide-ranging effects, the right time to intervene was probably long before the deadline rather than a week before. Even if Line 5 makes it past the deadline while the courts handle the dispute, it could still find itself in a compromised position. As some lawyers have already noted, the perception of defying an order from the state government could somehow be used to undermine their case or political capital.

Hostile, anti-energy groups will certainly enjoy calling Line 5 an illegal pipeline, even though that is misleading and unclear. These are the same activists supporting the governor who are part of a movement that is pushing the same disinformation and anti-development ideology that led President Biden to cancel Keystone XL and our own Prime Minister to hold back other pipelines here in Canada.

We should also remember that there is at least one cabinet minister who actively took part in the anti-energy crusade and apparently

has no regrets. These groups uncritically oppose operational pipelines as much as those under proposal, and it makes no difference to them the distinctions the government wants to make in its own positioning.

For years and years, the Liberals have played with fire going along with a lot of this movement's rhetoric. In doing this, they have helped to enable the same people who are behind this attack on Line 5. However, they are not the ones getting burned. The costs and consequences are falling on Canadian families and workers instead.

This should be a wake-up call for all the government. Looking at how this year is going so far, we see the results of a damaging pattern from the Liberal record of mixed signals and carelessness at best, or death by delay tactics at worst.

Back when President Biden cancelled Keystone XL on his first day in office, the Prime Minister said his government was going to fight for it, but it also made sure to quickly add that Joe Biden was keeping a campaign promise and that there were other priorities to work on with him. In other words, it did not take long for it to basically give up and move on.

Will the Liberals eventually do the same thing with Governor Whitmer's campaign promise to stop Line 5? If they say they support Line 5, do they mean it? Are they going to be proactive? Do they really care or understand the urgency? Will they think of other things to preoccupy themselves like they did with Keystone?

When we talk about Keystone, and listening to some of the questions from various members throughout the debate here tonight, there are a lot of questions on the indigenous involvement. When we look at Keystone XL in particular, I always talk about the group Natural Law Energy. The CEO is based in my riding, and he is from the Nekaneeet first nation. It has an equity stake in the pipeline project.

We need to look at natural resource development, and we need to look at the continuation of pipelines in operation as an opportunity for indigenous Canadians to continue to be part of the economy, and to advance toward reconciliation and self-determination, because these are extremely important issues to them and, quite frankly, to all Canadians.

The other thing with Enbridge Line 5 that quite a few of my colleagues have spoken quite well about is that this is a national unity issue. What Line 5 does, and what these other pipelines that never got built would have done, is that Line 5 continues to displace the need for foreign oil coming into Canada.

As we are talking about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, why should we be importing oil with tankers across the ocean into Canada? We have the ability to refine our own oil and to use Canadian oil in Canada and in North America. We need to have a North American strategy and security for our energy production here in Canada. That is what Line 5 does. It unites Canada, and it helps to unite us with our partners across the line and to the south as well.

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• (2335)

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's speech with interest, but I do not buy all the facts, and I do not support the finger pointing. I do not see how that is helpful for Canada to advance its issues towards the United States in protecting Line 5.

I have heard some statements that the member made which are incorrect, in my opinion. He said that Canada has done nothing, but I know that this issue was brought to President Biden on February 23. In fact, on February 23, both leaders said that they “recognized the important economic and energy security benefits of the bilateral energy relationship and its highly integrated infrastructure”.

I remember when we were fighting for NAFTA. The Conservatives, NDP and Liberals were all united in fighting for it. When are the Conservatives going to join the government to fight for Line 5?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, quite clearly that is what we are doing here tonight. We are fighting for Line 5.

A lot of us have done everything we can to raise awareness around this issue to bring it to the government's attention, and when we see things like an ATIP that shows there is zero communication from the Prime Minister to the Privy Council Office, it shows there is a complete lack of interest to do what is right by Canadians.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I must admit, as much as I like my riding, I think that the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands has the privilege of living in one of the most beautiful parts of the country.

The member mentioned that the Governor of Michigan is acting on an election promise. That election promise was given because the people of Michigan have lost faith in Enbridge after the catastrophic spill in the Kalamazoo in 2010.

The Conservatives constantly and clearly feel that environmental regulations are too burdensome and too onerous in this country. In this situation, we would not be here tonight if that spill had not occurred, if Enbridge had built that pipeline better and had monitored it better.

I was just wondering if this gives the Conservatives a new appreciation for environmental impact studies.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I think they are a key part of the equation. However, technology has improved over time. My uncle worked for TransCanada PipeLines for well over 35 years. I have talked to him about the improvements that have been made in pipeline monitoring and the way technology has advanced, and there is a greater hands-on approach taken by these companies.

With Line 5, Enbridge is looking to build a new corridor underneath the streets which is going to be encapsulated in concrete. It is going to put the latest and greatest technology into that. I think that is a huge positive and something that we need to embrace.

These energy companies have done a great job of advancing technology, pursuing how to be more environmentally sustainable and to have better and best practices. I think that we need to allow them to put them into practice as well.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the members mentioned February 23 when there was interest shown on trying to deal with Line 5. It has been six years. Does the member think that the government could have been much more proactive in negotiating some form of a North American strategy so that we would not be in the position we are in today?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I think that question is an important one, especially when we look at the last administration in the United States. I am sure there would have been a willingness there to get a strategy for North American energy security done, and I think that even with this new administration there is an opportunity, but the fact is that it has been six years of basically nothing.

Again, we have to look at the track record of this government, and that six-year time window just shows a lack of seriousness in getting this done. It shows that companies are seeing investment, but we would see more investment, I believe, if the government took these matters seriously.

• (2340)

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Nickel Belt, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, for whom I have the utmost respect. I know he does an incredible job. He fights for his constituents in the Nickel Belt and Greater Sudbury area, and represents them well. I have a lot of respect for him as a person.

Tonight, we are debating the importance of Line 5 and crude oil. I know that this has a direct impact on my constituents in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. Although it is not directly about crude oil, the indirect effects are similar to concerns about propane gas. I felt them myself during the strike of November 2019. I know it is important for many people. Although it had nothing to do with Line 5, the CN strike and the propane crisis had a major impact on my constituents and on Quebec.

Actually, I would like to thank a local business, Propane Levac, that took the bull by the horns and found a solution with CN. I also want to thank CN, with whom we worked in close collaboration. Even during the strike, we managed to get some propane in eastern Ontario and even to supply a large part of Quebec. That was all made possible by Propane Levac. During the month of November, most farmers relied on propane to run their driers to dry their grain, which was so important. Once again, I would like to thank Propane Levac, who played an important role during this crisis.

Line 5 is important for Ontario and for Quebec.

[English]

We know how important Line 5 also is for the U.S. We know that Canada exports 56% of the crude oil used in the U.S. and 91% of Canada's energy exports, which include crude oil, natural gas, electricity from clean sources and uranium, are exported to the U.S. The point is that our economies are integrated. There is about \$2.1 billion in economic activity every day across the U.S.-Canada border. Obviously, it is an important economic relationship that goes far beyond any prime minister or president. If Line 5 were cancelled, it would be an insult to Canada, Canadians, Ontario and Quebec. There will be a solution. We will be able to find a solution to that problem.

In 2016-17, when former President Trump said he was going to renegotiate NAFTA, all of us in the chamber took a united stand. The Conservatives, NDP, some of the Bloc and the Greens all said we were going to fight for Canada and would not point fingers at each other because one party lacked a strategy or because somebody did not say something at the right time. We were all going to stand together and fight for Canada.

I remember all of us, even backbenchers, going to Washington and lobbying members of Congress, whether they were Republicans or Democrats, and we all had the same story. Members of the agriculture committee went there and we talked about a hamburger. Nothing unites the U.S. and Canada more than a hamburger. We discussed the fact that the tomatoes may be grown in Ontario, the buns may be made in the U.S. and the cattle may come from Alberta, be sent down south, processed in the U.S. and shipped back to Canada. The hamburger was a united story to describe how the economies of Canada and the U.S. are truly integrated. It was a good story to tell our U.S. counterparts to describe how Canada and the U.S. have truly integrated economies and are best friends. Yes, we may have disagreements once in a while, but I sincerely believe that the team Canada approach is what made CUSMA the success we know it to be today. I am glad the official opposition supported it at the time.

• (2345)

Now that we are dealing with Line 5, I think the approach should be a team Canada approach. It should not be about finger pointing or saying the Liberals are bad or the Liberals are doing this or that. I do not know if it has something to do with the official opposition leader's numbers in Alberta. I hope it does not, because I know I saw some polls and they were doing even worse than our own Prime Minister in Alberta. I hope it has nothing to do with politics. I would hope they would put the 6,500 jobs that the leader of the official opposition has mentioned in this House tonight in front of partisan politics, because it is important. It is important that we support the workers. It is important that we support the families that still rely on the benefits of Line 5.

I am not going to stand here and say we need to shut down Line 5 because it is going to benefit the environment. That is simply a false narrative. There is a transition toward a green economy. It is not going to happen tomorrow.

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[Translation]

It is important that Line 5 not be shut down on May 12. It is important that we continue to support our oil and gas workers. I want to say to my colleagues from Alberta that even though I am from eastern Ontario, I fully support the people of Alberta.

I have a personal connection to Alberta's oil sands because I have a cousin who is a first responder serving those communities. He is the resource person when people are too far away from the hospital. He is the first person to respond to emergency calls because sometimes when people get hurt it is an emergency.

It is true that Line 5 affects not just Alberta, but all of Canada. I believe that it is important that we all stick together and fight to support our government, Line 5 and our oil and gas workers. We know the extent to which Line 5 supports the economy, not just in Alberta, but also in Ontario and Quebec.

Earlier I mentioned how propane still plays a big role in helping our farmers and in my riding. It is also used to heat our homes in some rural areas that unfortunately do not yet have natural gas and where the only way to get heat is with propane tanks.

At some point, I know there is going to be a change and a transition, which is important to talk about. Alberta is an oil-producing province right now, but at some point there will be a green transition, despite the fact that the rest of the world might not be at the same level as Canada in that transition. Some dependence on oil will remain, but at some point the world is going to want access to green technologies. Alberta will be able to play a big role, and if it is not in oil, it will be in some other technology.

In 1910, before Ford marketed its Model T, everyone was using wagons and horses, but we knew we could not depend on those wagons and horses forever. Even today, we say we need oil for our cars, but I know we are transitioning to cars that do not necessarily need gasoline.

This does not mean that Canada does not have a role to play in this new world. We know that we have the 15 mineral components required to do so. We know that Canada can play a major role in this green transition and Alberta needs to be part of the transition, as does Newfoundland.

My message today is that instead of pointing fingers at others in the House, we should join forces against those who want to shut down Line 5. Canada and Canadian workers deserve it.

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[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I fully agree. Now is the time for a team Canada approach. I actually spearheaded a letter-writing campaign with all of the trade unions in my riding and all of the stakeholders, and we got all of our friends who live in Michigan, who are her constituents, to write to Governor Whitmer as well. I sponsored a petition. I think all of these things are very important.

We have heard that the government is taking action and will pursue every alternative, but there are specific recommendations from the Canada-U.S. committee that all parties agreed to. Does the member agree that those need to happen?

• (2350)

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, the government has looked at all the options, including legal options. If politicians fail to listen to the economic arguments, those legal options are on the table and I know Canada will use them to defend Line 5.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Liberals are masters of performative politics. They say they take climate change seriously, yet they find money to spend on another pipeline that will only contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

Last year, the Liberals offered \$18 billion in subsidies to oil and gas companies. They talk about jobs. Where is the support for creating green jobs, jobs of the future, the jobs that my generation and generations to come desperately need? When will the Liberals stop greenwashing their agenda and act on the climate emergency that we all face?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, I have had the privilege of singing *O Canada* every third Wednesday. I hope she was not talking about that performance, because I certainly do not think it is a great performance.

We have to be realistic. If we shut down the oil sands tomorrow morning, Tesla, Ford or any auto manufacturer would not have the capacity to build battery-powered cars. That is the truth. I would invite the hon. member to look at some of the ideas we have put forward regarding the green transition in budget 2021.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague on the other side of the House spoke about the legality of what is happening here and I refer to his previous colleague, the deputy House leader, when he referred to the opinion of one of your colleagues earlier in the evening—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry, but the hon. member has to speak through the Speaker and not directly to other members.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I was referring to his reference to the legal position of the government on this and the previous deputy House leader's reference to his colleague's legal opinion of what was going to happen at the hearing with the Governor of Michigan. Yesterday, in *The Globe and Mail*, the Governor's office was quite clear that, "the Governor's position is that Enbridge must stop operating Line 5 by May 12."

Inasmuch as we have all kinds of great legal opinions out here at this point in time, when we have an intransigent party to the side,

when do we move it to the top levels of decision-making to make sure they intervene and get the proper outcome for the country?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, I understand the article the member for Calgary Centre is citing. I know both parties are still in mediation. I believe, and I am sure he supports me, that during mediation both parties are still participating. If one party steps out of mediation and declares that we need to shut Line 5 down on May 12, there is a bit of politics being played.

I can assure him that our Prime Minister raised this issue at the highest level in the U.S. I can assure the member that Canada will do everything possible to secure Line 5, because it is in Canada's interests.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am afraid many members have not been able to distinguish between why some pipelines are opposed on climate reasons and others are not. Despite what many members have said in this place, there are pipelines in use that do not expand fossil fuel production, unlike Keystone, energy east and TMX, which are all about the export of raw bitumen to other countries to be refined elsewhere. The Line 5 pipeline is not being opposed by environmentalists on either side of the border because of climate constraints. It is being opposed by people who are concerned that a pipeline built in 1953 and maintained by a company with a terrible record for leaks poses a threat to the Great Lakes.

I would ask my hon. colleague this. It is very important for the Canadian government to make its views clear, but we must be realistic. Another pipeline is needed—

• (2355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give a few seconds for the hon. member to answer.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, I hear what my hon. colleague is saying. I am not involved in those direct negotiations, but what I have heard from Enbridge is that it is proposing some mitigation measures to ensure the pipeline is safe.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there has been much talk in the House of Commons about the threat of Line 5 closing, whether during question period, opposition days, or as part of this evening's emergency debate. Let us be clear. Our position is consistent: Line 5 is essential to Canada's energy security. It is non-negotiable.

We have heard inside and outside the House, both in the United States and Canada, how important this line is. There have been many interventions with the Prime Minister, President Biden. I want to thank the Special Committee on the Economic Relationship between Canada and the United States. It has done very good work. Vern Yu from Enbridge said, "The stakes could not be higher."

The infrastructure of Line 5 is really important to economic growth, job growth and energy security. Let us be clear. To our government, today's debate is key. On both sides of the border we agree that it is really important to keep Line 5 open. It is really important for workers and families on both sides of the border. We must continue to work together to ensure that it remains a very important economic driver.

[English]

We have reminded the Americans of an opinion piece that ran in The Detroit News, which focused on the energy emergencies last winter. They affected 34 states. Millions of Americans were left to shiver in the dark when the grid was shut down, yet Michigan provided propane to its customers thanks to Line 5. It is why our government is fighting hard to keep it open.

Michigan State Senator Curt VanderWall summed things up well when he said, "Critical energy supplies. Jobs. Tax revenue. Environmental benefits. Safety. Line 5 delivers all of that for Michigan". Senator VanderWall is backed by the numbers, and families and businesses in Michigan's upper peninsula rely on Line 5. It is really important for propane demand in that area. I can give another example. The Michigan Oil and Gas Association said, "Line 5's

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closure will jeopardize...nearly 47,000 Michigan jobs". We know this is important on both sides of the border.

There are many Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. who support Line 5, and they are working with us and Enbridge to ensure that this pipeline remains open. It has been safe, and it has moved 27 billion barrels of crude oil since 1953.

Many support Line 5, including the CEO of the Lake Superior Community Partnership and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, and I want to assure the House that we are working at all levels of government to ensure that this pipeline remains open. We need to take a team Canada approach, and I hope that all parties in the House will support us and continue working with us to ensure that this pipeline remains open. We must work together.

• (2400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being midnight, I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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