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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 8, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from April 7 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to continue debate.

Yesterday when I started my debate, I quoted the words of King Solomon out of the Proverbs: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” That admonition is actually etched on Canada’s Peace Tower, and there is a reason it is etched there. It is a reminder to governments and a reminder to leaders, including the Prime Minister, that those of us in this august chamber are called upon not only to lead by example, but to lead with vision and have a long-term view of the best interests of our country.

I mentioned yesterday that I believe this budget reflected an unserious Prime Minister, an unserious Minister of Finance and, quite frankly, an unserious government. I know that a few of my Liberal colleagues did not like my reference to “unserious”, but the reality is that it is a fair characterization of what has happened in this budget. Quite frankly, a serious Prime Minister would not say that budgets balance themselves. A serious Prime Minister would not say that he does not think about monetary policy, which is so critical today as we discuss inflation. A serious Prime Minister would not take a budget, cut the number of pages down by half, from 700 last year down to 300 this year, and then not cut anything else.

Why is it that the government somehow has made the assumption that bigger and bigger government is better? It is not. We as Conservatives believe that as much as possible, government should remain small. It should be as least intrusive in the lives of Canadians as possible. By the way, so should the tax burden, and I will get to that in a second.

I want to touch on four main things. I want to first talk about whether this is a growth budget. I want to talk about inflation and the cost of living, which of course is the biggest thing facing Canadians right now. I want to talk about spending, and this is a big-spending budget. It has not only big spending, but big permanent spending, which is going to saddle future generations of Canadians with a massive debt challenge. Then I want to talk about taxes and tax increases. The Liberal government always talks about having Canadians’ backs and having taxpayers’ backs. The problem is that it is all rhetoric. It is actually empty, vacuous rhetoric, because with every budget that it tables, the tax burden on Canadians increases and increases. I will get to that in a moment.

Let me start by talking about growth. One of the biggest challenges facing Canada today is that we have an economy that is not positioned for long-term success. Economist after economist and thought leader after thought leader has said that Canada’s competitiveness is leaving us way behind in the global marketplace, and I will talk in a moment about what that means. The problem is that the government loves to put out documents like this budget, and smack dab in the title of that budget is the word “growth”. The Liberals want Canadians to believe that they have now heavily invested in driving growth in Canada, but the reality is that they have not.

Why is fundamental growth so important? Why are the structural deficiencies in our economy so pernicious when it comes to our long-term prosperity as a country? It is because we are undermining our ability to compete on the global stage. That is the problem.

• (1005)

If we can learn to produce more per person and more units per person, we drive prosperity. What we do is mitigate the inflationary pressures we face today in our economy. A lot of my Liberal friends do not understand that, but if we become more productive as an economy, as a nation, we reduce the likelihood of runaway inflation. We reduce the likelihood that the Bank of Canada, our central bank, has to step in and start increasing interest rates the way it is doing now.

This is a budget that will only fuel inflation because it is all about spend, spend, spend. There is virtually nothing about growth. When we talk about the few elements in this budget that touch on growth, they are actually about giving subsidies to the private sector. I do not know why the NDP is not screaming bloody murder. They hate subsidies to the private sector, yet there is a \$15-billion fund in this budget that effectively amounts to using taxpayers’ dollars to incent private companies to invest in themselves and invest in clean technology.

The Budget

There is nothing in this budget that addresses the issue of inter-provincial trade barriers, which is one of the most significant underminers of economic performance in our country. In many ways, we have freer trade with our free trade partners around the world than we have with our 10 provinces and three territories. It is really a sad comment on our country that our federal relationship cannot overcome barriers that prevent us from freely trading among ourselves.

There is nothing in this budget to address comprehensive tax reform. We as Conservatives have been calling for comprehensive tax reform. Even the finance committee, in one of its earlier reports and studies, called specifically for comprehensive tax reform. Why? We want to make sure that our tax system is fair, that those who really cannot afford to pay taxes do not, that those who should not be paying a high tax rate do not and that those who should be paying their fair share of taxes do.

There are four areas of tax performance, which I will get to in a moment, but if we can get tax reform right, we can be assured that Canada will again become a place where the world wants to invest. Members will not believe this, but right now Canada's investment performance as a country is the very worst out of the 30 OECD countries. Many of them are in the EU. They of course include Japan, the United States and Canada. We are at the bottom of the list of those 30 countries when it comes to being able to attract investment from around the world, foreign direct investment, as it is called, or FDI. That is a terrible performance. The government has had seven years to fix that problem and it has done nothing about it other than throw a bit of money at it.

There is also nothing in this budget about rural broadband. One of the best things we can do as a country is invest in the infrastructure that will bring rural broadband to every single Canadian, especially rural Canadians, many of whom still do not have broadband. When we give Canadians access to broadband, we link them to the rest of the world. We link them to the rest of their country. We link them to the rest of their community. When we do that, we improve productivity and our ability to compete and produce in this country. Whether it is products or services, we can do things more efficiently if we have comprehensive broadband infrastructure across our country. There is virtually nothing in this budget on that, except to signal that the Liberals did a bit in the last couple of years, so that should be good enough. When we are talking about competitiveness within the global stage, that is not enough.

• (1010)

There is nothing in this budget about trade-related or climate-related resiliency. In fact, I noted yesterday that there is one glaring hole in this budget. There are a number of us on this side of the House, some of whom are in the House right now listening to me speak, whose communities were devastated by the atmospheric river event that took place in B.C. last year in November, with the massive amount of rain that fell and the flooding that ensued.

In my community of Abbotsford, the whole Sumas Prairie was flooded, a prairie that is full of chicken farmers, egg farmers, dairy farmers, blueberry growers, vegetable growers and greenhouses. It goes on and on. In fact, Abbotsford is the agriculture capital of British Columbia. It is the breadbasket of the province, and for

much of the country, by the way. It is the number one farm gate producer in the country per hectare, so everyone can understand, when one of our big prairies is under water by four, five or six feet, the devastation that was wreaked.

We sent a letter to the minister, co-signed by a number of my MP colleagues on the Conservative side, and begged her to please take this seriously. This was a once-in-100-year event that is probably going to become a much more regular event because of climate change-related weather patterns. This is going to happen again. It could happen this coming year or it could happen three years from now, but it is going to happen again.

Did the minister listen to us? Did she reach out to us and ask what it was all about, what specifically we would like her to do and what projects we think she should fund? She did not even reach out. Surely, we as a country can do better when one of the most significant climate-related events does not even get a mention in this budget, is not worthy of a mention, to protect human life, to protect livestock and to protect livelihoods. Clearly the minister does not care.

I have mentioned all of the different areas of this budget that could have addressed growth but did not. We want a deeply rooted economic recovery, not the shallow recovery we are experiencing right now, nor an inflation-driven recovery where Canadians actually get further and further behind. If we are going to have a true, thoroughly rooted recovery within an economically competitive economy, that needs to be driven by the private sector, by small and medium-sized businesses and, yes, by the many large businesses across Canada. This should not be bigger and bigger government trying to steer the economy in the right direction and always getting it wrong.

Next I would like to talk about inflation and the cost of living. Members may recall that in the last budget, from one year ago, the minister stood up in the House and said that in addition to all of the other massive spending she was undertaking in the budget, which, by the way, was the biggest spending budget in Canadian history, much of which has gone to waste, she was also setting aside over 100 billion dollars' worth of investment that she was going to call stimulus. She wanted to plug that stimulus into the economy, inject it into the economy, because the economy was not doing that well. She was priming the pump, so to speak, and we could see where this was going.

The Budget

• (1015)

Then the Minister of Finance cautioned us. She said she was going to take care not to pump too much stimulus into the economy. We all know, in the House, that if we pump too much stimulus, too much cash, into the economy, it is more cash chasing the same number of goods and services. That creates inflation. She said that she was going to take care of that and make sure that consumers and Canadians were protected. She said she was going to put in place labour-based guardrails, and a number of other guardrails, that would give her an idea of whether this stimulus was actually required so she would not make the mistake of pumping too much in and driving inflation. At that time, a year ago, inflation was not at the level it is today.

Now, we fast-forward to today. Yesterday, I was in the budget lock-up, where we got to ask questions of the government officials. We wanted to know what happened to the stimulus. We wanted to know how much of the stimulus was actually spent, whether the guardrails were applied and how much of that stimulus was left unspent.

There was no answer. Officials stumbled, fumbled and said they could not really identify how much of that stimulus was spent, because it had been allocated to different departments and they were responsible for reporting on their own spending. They said they could not really tell us that.

What did they say about the guardrails? What did they say about these protective measures that would ensure not too much cash was pumped into our economy to stimulate inflation? They said they did not know. There was no answer.

Today, I think we know what the answer is. Every single penny of that hundred-plus billion dollars was pumped straight into the economy, and guess what we have today? We have the worst inflation in over 30 years, which was driven by the actions of the Liberal government.

I will be the first to acknowledge that not all inflation is driven just by what we do in Canada. Yes, there are supply chain constraints around the world. Yes, there are spikes in commodity prices around the world that drive up the cost of living. That is consumer price inflation. However, there is something else called “asset price inflation” that covers things like houses, and that is a Canada-made inflation problem.

That inflation, of course, has left millions of Canadians behind. It has left behind Canadians who want to get into the housing market and Canadians who can no longer afford to buy groceries for their kids. They are cutting back. It has left behind Canadians who cannot buy household goods.

We are now in an affordability crisis in this country, and the government has to bear some of that blame. This budget simply makes it worse. It exacerbates the inflationary pressures we have in our country. This is a big-spending budget. What it does is spend, spend, spend. There is more cash being pumped into the economy, which is driving inflation.

Canadians should not, in any way, expect inflation to go down in the medium term, or even in the short term. In fact, the Bank of

Canada governor was before the Standing Committee on Finance not too long ago. He said we should expect that things are going to get worse before they get better. Is that on the Liberal government? Of course it is. The Liberals are the ones responsible for government spending, and this budget represents a massive government expenditure.

I got into the spending part of it. There is \$56 billion in new spending in this budget. That is massive. What is worse is that most of this \$56 billion of new spending is new, permanent spending.

I want to remind members of something. Back in January 2021, just over a year ago, the finance minister received a mandate letter from the Prime Minister. For those who do not know what a mandate letter is, it is simply a long set of instructions the Prime Minister gives either to new ministers or other ministers whose directions he wants to refresh.

• (1020)

He gave her this mandate letter and right there, in the middle of that letter, it said, “Minister, you will not embark on any new permanent spending.”

Period, full stop: There would be “no new permanent spending.”

That was her instruction just over a year ago, in the middle of the COVID pandemic, when the Liberals were spending wildly, and perhaps there were some justifiable reasons for spending a little bit more than we normally would in the budget.

Here we are, in March. Just four months ago, at the end of 2021, for some reason the Prime Minister decided to give the finance minister a new mandate letter. This was some 11 months after the first. We looked at it. We looked at it carefully. I am looking for it, and there is no reference to new permanent spending. The Liberals had purged the document of that directive.

Anyone who thinks that the Liberal government is committed to living within its means can forget it, as my colleague just said. This is not a serious government, as I said earlier, and we cannot take seriously any of the commitments that it makes, because tomorrow the Liberals will change their minds and say, “Too bad. Tough luck. Be happy.”

There is a ton of spending in this budget. Of course, there is the NDP spending on dental care. We see that there is more spending on the failed Canada Infrastructure Bank. In fact, the Liberals have expanded the mandate of the failed Canada Infrastructure Bank, which is finding itself incapable of getting money out of the door and actually making the investments in infrastructure that are required in our country. There is more spending and more wasteful spending, and who pays for it? Taxpayers and consumers do, because the spending drives inflation, which leaves Canadians behind. The taxpayers also have to pay the bill for this spending.

The Budget

Of course, I have not even mentioned the fact that this is actually an NDP-Liberal government. This is an unholy alliance, and guess who the tail is that is wagging the dog? It is the NDP. The NDP is telling the Liberal government how many taxpayers' dollars it should be spending, and it goes on and on. Many of the asks that the NDP had, when it shackled up with the Liberals in their common-law relationship, have not been reflected in the budget. They are coming in the next and the following budget. They are coming. I can tell members that.

There are also promises that this government made in the last election that did not show up in the budget.

There is more spending to come. With regard to the suggestion from the finance minister that, somehow, she was going to rein in spending and discipline spending, and this was all in safe hands, the Liberals' record says otherwise.

In fact, did we know that, since the Liberals came into power, they have increased government spending by 53% in just over six years? Much of that is permanent spending, so future generations of Canadians are stuck with this, and this is spending that is generating inflation in our economy.

Did members know that, even since the pandemic crisis in 2019, government spending has gone up 25%? The minister stands in the House and claims that she is disciplining government spending and that she is reining it in. "Trust me," is what she said.

I also talked about taxes. This budget is full of tax increases, and the Liberals have made them very discreetly. We have to explore the different corners of this budget to find these tax increases.

Of course, there are increases on alcohol taxes because there is an escalator built into the excise taxes on alcohol. What this government did, back in 2017, was something really clever. The Liberals said they did not want to keep going back to the representatives of the people to ask them for permission to spend taxpayers' money. What they were going to do was build into their structure an escalator that automatically kicked in and increased taxes on Canadians every single year. They did that with the excise tax.

• (1025)

Let me talk about GST. We have inflation in Canada, so the GST revenues to the government have skyrocketed because of the oil and gas revenues that have come in. The price of gasoline at the pump has gone way up, which has left Canadians behind. They are unable to fill up their gas tanks, unable to get their kids to school, unable to get to work and unable to drive their kids to hockey practice or music lessons.

On top of the high price of gasoline, the government layers the GST. The more that inflation sets in, the more GST revenue the government collects, which is why it had these windfall revenues this past year. The windfall revenues were not from good management on its part. It was not an underlying, strong economic performance.

This was about the government benefiting from inflation, and the Prime Minister benefiting from inflation through higher GST revenues and through higher excise tax revenues, but leaving Canadi-

ans behind because they have to pay the price for that. That is completely unacceptable. We, as Canadians, are better than that.

There is something in this budget about housing. The minister made a big thing about housing. I asked her a question yesterday after she gave her budget speech. I mentioned that housing was the number one concern facing Canadian families, especially those who are not in homes. They cannot get into homes anymore because inflation and housing affordability have left them behind.

In fact, in Canada, the price of housing has more than doubled since the Liberal government came into power. We did not see that kind of housing inflation under Stephen Harper, did we? There were steady increases, but they were controlled. Prices were stable. Today, prices are no longer stable and families have been left behind.

When I asked the finance minister a question yesterday, she could not respond. All she said was that I was right, and that housing was the number one problem in this country right now, especially for Canadian families. She made a statement and made the suggestion that she was going to double the number of houses she was going to build in Canada over the next 10 years. Do members remember that? She stood up and said, "I promise the House, and I promise Canadians, that over the next 10 years, I am going to double the number of homes". She used the word "we". I am assuming it was the royal "we", and she was referring to the government.

I said to the minister, if she was going to double the number of houses, she must know how many houses she and her government had built over the past seven years since the Liberals were elected. She must know that figure because without knowing that figure, it would be irresponsible to make the statement that the Liberals were going to double the number of homes they would build. I said I just needed a number on how many homes they had built in the seven years they had been in government.

The minister hummed and hawed, and spent about two and a half minutes pontificating and arguing around the question. She never answered the question, even though some of my colleagues were calling out, "What is the number? How many homes did you build in the last seven years?" She could not give an answer, yet she made the statement that she was going to double the number of houses over the next 10 years. It is a number that she does not even know. That is the kind of economic, financial and fiscal leadership we have with the NDP-Liberal government.

There is one way we can address the skyrocketing cost of housing in this country. In fact, there is a way we can address the issue of skyrocketing inflation, broadly speaking, whether it is on gas, household goods or anything else we buy, and on the services we buy in our communities. They have all gone up because of inflation. There is a way of controlling inflation, especially in the housing market. Do members know what that is? It is to control government spending. Thanks for asking. We need to control government spending.

The Budget

● (1030)

Instead, the current government has done the very opposite. It is fanning the flames of inflation. In fact, it has poured gasoline on the flames of inflation and things are only going to get worse in Canada in the short term.

Before I finish, and I do have a motion to bring, I want to mention that, like any budget that is full of bad policies and massive Liberal spending, there are always a few things that we can support. For example, the announcement of enhanced defence spending is something we would support, but the reality is that the current government has allowed defence spending to lag behind. Now it is catching up, but we see this as simply a \$6-billion down payment to strengthen our ability to defend ourselves as a country and to engage in the global community of nations when it is required.

We can support a \$3.8-billion critical minerals strategy as well, because critical minerals are critically important to the electric vehicle industry, which we are trying to get a foothold in. I would love to see Canada become a leader in that.

There is a ban on foreign homebuyers for two years. I think we can support that.

Of course, for small businesses there is a small improvement when it comes to the small business tax rate. Small businesses across the country will be pleased that at least the government has finally, after years of pleading, agreed to adjust the phase-out schedule for the small business tax rate.

This is a budget that is profoundly lacking in vision. I mentioned that at the beginning of my speech. Canadians can do better. We have so much wealth in our country with the natural resources, the human capital and the education we have. We can do so much better than having to always borrow tens of billions and hundreds of billions of dollars every time a government tables a budget. We should not have to be doing this. As we do this, in the process we kick more money into the economy and drive up inflation, leaving millions of Canadians behind. We can do better.

I move, seconded by the member for Simcoe North:

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

“the House not approve the budgetary policy of the government since it fails to:

- a. rein in spending in order to control inflation;
- b. provide Canadians with tax relief; and
- c. take immediate action to increase housing supply.”

● (1035)

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting speech. I will say that much. I would also add that it was a little devoid of reality at times.

The bottom line is this. The member makes reference to it being serious, and it is a serious budget. It is a budget that reflects the interests of Canadians and truly cares about Canadians. We continue

to support Canadians. Here are some basic facts. In 2019, our unemployment rate was at 5.4%. That was at a 50-year low. Today, the unemployment rate is at 5.5%. Canada is doing exceptionally well coming out of the pandemic from an unemployment perspective.

The member spent so much time on inflation. What he does not tell us is that, with respect to world inflation, Canada is at 5.7%, the U.S. is at 7.5% and the average of the G20 countries is 6.1%. Again, Canada is doing exceptionally well. This is a budget for Canadians. It is a budget that is going to make a difference. It is a budget that is going to continue to show that this is a government that cares and has a vision going into the future.

I wonder if my colleague can provide his thoughts as to why he believes Canada continues to make historic gains with respect to unemployment levels, especially following a pandemic.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, that member never has to ask me to answer a question. I would be glad to answer the question.

He obviously did not read the budget, because he just said this budget was in “the interests of Canadians”. That is a direct quote from him. Here is what else he just said, and he repeated it: “Canada is doing exceptionally well”. He should tell that to the millions of Canadians who have been left behind by the cost of living crisis. He should tell that to the millions of Canadian families who cannot get into homes because the price of housing has left them behind. He should tell that to the millions of Canadians who cannot buy groceries for their families anymore.

Is he kidding that Canada is doing exceptionally well? Canada is doing exceptionally poorly, and it will take a Conservative government to correct that course and to do much better.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, health care does not seem to be on the Conservatives' radar until they get on the campaign trail. I did not hear the word “health” once in my colleague's speech. That said, I did hear some interesting things, I must admit.

Health does not appear anywhere in the budget, as it stands. There is nothing about health transfers for the next five years. However, that was a unanimous request from the Premier of Quebec, the Government of Quebec, all the other provincial premiers and 85% of the population. In Canada, only one in 10 people feel the federal government is doing enough when it comes to health transfers.

Despite that, the Conservative party is mum on the issue. It is not as though health transfers will be used to buy random knick-knacks and put them on the walls of hospitals or to plant exotic flowers in hospital gardens. They will be used to provide better health care for patients and ensure the sustainability of the health care system, which has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic and by federal disinvestment in recent years.

The Budget

What does my colleague think about the complete lack of action on health transfers over the next five years?

• (1040)

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, there is a reason why I did not mention health care. I knew the Bloc was going to talk about it, so why waste my limited time here? I knew he was going to ask that question, and I thank him for that question because health care is of critical importance to Canadians. The member is right. This budget has nothing in it that would enhance the health care transfers to the provinces. However, the question I am going to put to the government when I get the chance is this. It did come up with a dental care plan, and dental care is health care.

Did the government actually reach out to the provinces and ask if this was their number one priority? Is the billions they are now going to spend on dental care the provincial priority, or do the provinces have other priorities? My guess is that the answer will be that the government did not reach out because it knew better. Father or mother or whatever knows best. Big government knows best. Ottawa knows best.

That is the failing, again, in this budget. There is very little indication that there were comprehensive consultations with the key stakeholders that would have made this budget much better.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking all the care workers who continue to keep people and the economy healthy. I want to thank the folks in Port Moody—Coquitlam at Eagle Ridge Hospital for their care for all of us.

Yesterday the government did not acknowledge care workers. There was no gratitude for long-term care workers, health care workers, teachers, janitors, personal support workers and all the unpaid workers who volunteered and home-schooled during this pandemic.

Life is about caring for each other, so my question to the Conservative member is this. Which programs in the budget that people would benefit from would the Conservatives cut? Is it dental care for children, quality child care for families or the \$8 billion increase in military spending?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, that is a fair question. What would we cut? That is a question that should be asked. I will start. For one thing, we would cut the failed Canada Infrastructure Bank. With \$35 billion, this is an institution that has not delivered the infrastructure that it was supposed to deliver.

However, I do want to do a shout-out to all of those workers the member referred to. Yes, many of these people, the teachers and the health care workers who have been on the front lines, are the heroes within our economy. They went to work knowing full well the risks involved and they served us so well. The member mentioned the long-term care workers. That is a problem. Long-term care for seniors in this country is a real vulnerability. In a couple of years, 25% of Canadians will be seniors and over the age of 65. Imagine. Who is going to be taking care of them? Will they age at home? Will they be in institutions? Who is going to be caring for them is

something we have to get our minds around. I do thank the member for asking that question.

In terms of cutting, I will say one last thing. It is very clear that the budget does not reflect a triaging of issues, in other words, a prioritization of the issues that matter most to Canadians. Had the government gone through a proper prioritization process and actually implemented and spent on the things that Canadians really need and care about, this budget would have looked quite different and would actually be much more responsible. Canadians want government to live within its means because Canadians live within their means. They have balanced budgets. Without balanced budgets, they go broke. They know that, unfortunately the government does not.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Abbotsford, not only for his public service but also for his giving a shout-out to all those communities still recovering from the floods of last year on which we have seen no action from the government.

The finance committee heard from Statistics Canada that it has not recorded this level of inflation in 30 years, and in fact the main drivers were gas, groceries and housing. This budget is pushing more and more inflation. The purchasing power of everyday Canadians is being lessened every time they go to the grocery store or fill up their tanks.

Could the member talk a little more about inflation and about how the government, this spend-DP-Liberal budget, is going to make it worse?

• (1045)

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, my colleague refers to the government now as a spend-DP-Liberal government and he is correct. It is a spendthrift government. He did mention inflation and the elements of inflation.

The one thing I did not mention in my speech, and this gives me a chance to do that, is the role that taxation plays in inflation. I talked a lot about the spending, spending, spending that is driving the vicious inflationary cycle we are in right now, but that is contributed to by the fact that the government continues to raise taxes. The more taxes Canadians pay, such as GST, carbon taxes and excise taxes, the more that drives inflation because it drives up the cost of everything that Canadians buy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are facing multiple crises, both current and looming, so we expected this budget to put forward concrete solutions to address the risks associated with these crises.

First is the public health crisis. After living with the pandemic for over two years, we are now entering yet another wave.

The Budget

Next is the inflation crisis. For months now, inflation has been higher than expected. That seems unlikely to change for quite some time and will probably even go up. People are very worried.

Of course, there is the war in Ukraine, which is directly victimizing the Ukrainian people, who are being subjected to bombings and unspeakable atrocities. This conflict is impacting the whole planet, and we are feeling the repercussions here too.

Finally, there is the environmental crisis, which is causing all the climate catastrophes we have been witnessing.

As the crises multiply, so do the risks. These are uncertain times, and the budget was the best opportunity to protect us from all those risks. This budget, however, despite listing virtually all the problems in detail, addresses virtually none of them. What irony.

What we see in this budget, as we did in the previous budgets and in everything the government does, is a federal government that is more centralizing than ever. The government is once again using the budget as an opportunity to further centralize the federation's power. This is a real pattern. The bulldozer is moving forward slowly but very surely.

Here is one example. The government wants to tackle the housing issue, but it is making threats. It is telling the municipalities that it will cut infrastructure funding if they do not build enough housing. The federal government is once again infringing on other jurisdictions. It is once again centralizing. Once again, paternalistic Ottawa wants to be the be-all and end-all. They want to make all the decisions and tell everyone what to do. That is unacceptable. It is unacceptable for Quebec.

The irony is that, although the House recognizes my nation with its words, the government is trying to force the Quebec nation into the Canadian mould it has created. We can no longer live in our own way. This budget is a reminder of that. It is becoming increasingly difficult to do things our own way.

The best example of that is clearly health care funding. Ottawa has failed to include in the budget any commitments to review its funding for the next five years. We are in the midst of a health crisis. Our system is under maximum pressure. Health care workers are at the end of their rope, and we have had it. Rather than funding the health care system within its means, know-it-all Ottawa is telling us that we are not doing enough, even though it is not providing adequate funding.

While Quebec and the provinces are asking for increased funding with no strings attached, the feds are telling us that they only want to talk about the strings, not the funding. For instance, on page 155, the English version of the budget document reads, "Any conversation between the federal government and the provinces and territories will focus on delivering better health care outcomes for Canadians".

This means more standards, without funding, even though the Parliamentary Budget Officer points out each and every year that transfers need to be set at 35% to restore the fiscal balance between Ottawa and the provinces. The Conference Board and the Council of the Federation both agree. This is what Quebec wants, what the

provinces want and what the Bloc wants, but know-it-all Ottawa says no. Ottawa says we will get nothing except strings.

Transfers are currently set at 22%, and the Minister of Finance justified her inaction by citing a tax point transfer from the 1960s. She has dismissed decades of cuts and ignored all the serious studies on the subject. This is called being arrogant, in a big way.

Now let us talk about seniors. The cost of everything is going up. The cost of food is going to skyrocket because of the war in Ukraine. Seniors are always the first to suffer as a result of inflation. Seniors often live on fixed incomes that are not indexed to inflation. The budget should have done more to help them out, but the feds decided not to do that.

● (1050)

The Minister of Finance then adds insult to injury. In her budget she presents a graph showing that seniors are much wealthier than the rest of the population and that the feds have already done enough.

Groups representing seniors feel betrayed: We now have two classes of seniors and the government is not responding to the needs. The minister presented her little graph saying that seniors have nothing to complain about, they already have plenty of money. That is what we see.

As for inflation, with all the crises that are unfolding, high inflation is especially worrisome. The government should be lending a helping hand to seniors and the least fortunate, but it is doing little to nothing to help.

It should be lending a hand to SMEs, which are the hardest hit by high inflation, including family farms, taxi drivers and bus drivers. There is nothing for them. The feds describe the problem of inflation in the budget, but do not offer any help.

I want to give you a real example showing that Ottawa identifies the problems but does nothing about them. In the budget, there is one paragraph on the problem of the semiconductor shortage. There are specialized businesses in Quebec that we can be proud of and that have existed for several generations. These businesses repurpose trucks into ambulances and armoured trucks, for example, or add custom cargo boxes. That is a Quebec specialty.

As a result of the semiconductor shortage, major truck manufacturers are not getting product out and our specialized businesses are having trouble procuring trucks. We have been telling the minister about this for months.

In December, we even supported Bill C-2 because she told us that the shortage would be resolved imminently, and she would even send us the figures to prove it. We believed her and we acted in good faith. Nothing was done and we never saw the figures. It was completely false. The problem has only worsened since then.

Businesses now run the risk of going bankrupt. We might lose for good specialized industries that have been operating for generations. The government's role is to support businesses and get them through the crisis.

The Budget

Businesses joined forces and reached out to the government. They asked to meet with the minister. The Bloc has been waiting for a meeting about this for months, but we have not heard a peep.

The minister mentioned the problem with the semiconductors, but did not offer any solutions. She is not doing anything to save this sector, which is so important to Quebec's economy. All she said was that the government will look into photonics to see whether Canada could manufacture its own semiconductors. There was no indication of when, however.

That is actually not the problem. The government needs to help the companies that are going to shut down, because Ford and GM are manufacturing very few trucks as a result of the semiconductor shortage. These companies just need a little help until the American giants resume production. Has Ottawa abandoned these specialized industries because they are in Quebec? If they were in Ontario would the feds have stepped in? That worries me.

There has been one crisis after another, but the most important one right now is the environmental crisis. The climate is undergoing disruptive changes and we must now take drastic measures if we want to avoid disaster.

Even as the IPCC is saying that we need to drop any new oil projects if we are to stand a chance of avoiding disaster, know-it-all Ottawa goes and does the opposite. It sends its Minister of Environment and Climate Change to announce a one-billion barrel project. This minister is the same person who founded Équiterre with Laure Waridel and climbed the CN Tower for the environment when he was at Greenpeace.

With one gesture, one decision, he has dealt a terrible blow to the planet. Very few humans will have done this much damage to the climate. With this gesture, he undid all of his past work and turned his back on his values and commitments. He threw all that away to serve the federal government, which is a petro-state and an environmental embarrassment.

Elsewhere in the world, environment ministers have resigned for far less than that. From now on, this is how this minister is going to be remembered. I would like to remind the House that Marshall Pétain is not exactly remembered for winning the battle of Verdun.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change, or the pollution minister, chose to make his announcement the day before the budget, just before the House rises for two weeks. That was intentional.

I thought that the government would include some extraordinary environmental measures in the budget to try to compensate for this terrible compromise, but it did not. Instead, the budget mainly contains measures that are vague and weak, such as a future public-private fund like the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which is a flop.

All the concrete measures in the budget support the fossil fuel industry. The budget allocates billions of dollars for carbon capture projects for the oil sands, a technology that is underdeveloped and that will cost a fortune, if it is ever actually implemented. According to the International Energy Agency, if the private sector were to

cover the cost of such projects, it would quadruple the price at the pump.

• (1055)

Furthermore, the feds have announced that they will support the development of small mobile nuclear reactors to allow the industry to extract more oil and sell the gas they save. This is the government's plan for the environment, despite all the risks and health concerns.

To wit, on Wednesday, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced a project that will extract a billion barrels and, the next day, the Minister of Finance announced more support for the oil and gas sector. That is Ottawa's plan for the environment.

Illustrating just how far Ottawa is going in the opposite direction of the IPCC report, journalist Philippe Mercure, from *La Presse* wrote the following:

This report contains lengthy passages about the risks of “lock-ins”, meaning building new infrastructure that will pollute for decades and undermine our efforts.

One would have thought that UN Secretary-General António Guterres was speaking directly to the Minister of the Environment when he presented the document on Monday.

“Climate activists are sometimes depicted as dangerous radicals. But the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing the production of fossil fuels. Investing in new fossil fuels infrastructure is moral and economic madness,” he said.

Now more than ever, being part of Canada means choosing to be an environmental imbecile in the world's eyes.

The Bloc Québécois had five demands, five unconditional expectations, and called for a suite of more targeted measures. The first four of our five unconditional expectations are not in the budget: health, seniors, green finance and an acceptable transition, and concrete measures to address inflation.

At least the budget addresses first nations housing. That was one of our five demands. It is in the budget, so now all we have to do is hope that, for once, that earmarked money will actually flow and improve the lives of indigenous people. What we have seen to date is that the Liberals vote to put up cash but do not spend it. That causes all kinds of problems, such as lack of access to drinking water, that never go away.

The budget contains housing measures, but the Bloc Québécois obviously does not think there is enough money in the budget for social housing. Housing is a major problem, and the solution is increasing supply. The budget talks about 6,000 affordable housing units, which apparently means a two-bedroom apartment for \$1,200 a month. That does not fit with the Bloc Québécois's definition of social housing. The money is there, but much more needs to be done.

As I said at the start of my speech, we are grappling with numerous crises. The government is aware of them and names them in the budget, but does not actually do anything about most of them. Any solutions it does put forward are poorly conceived. That is a problem.

In addition, what we are seeing is an increasingly centralist state that interferes and wants to impose its own model and make everything fit a certain mould. The feds are taking a father-knows-best approach and telling the provinces and Quebec, “All right kids, here is what you need to do and how you need to be.” That is unacceptable.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)
[English]

EVENTS IN MILTON

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now that we have presented budget 2022, our plan to grow the economy and make life more affordable, it is time to get back to our communities, and I cannot wait to get back to Milton later today.

It is April, and there is so much going on. It is the start of the holy month of Ramadan. It is Sikh Heritage Month and Vaisakhi. It is Passover, Puthandu, and later this month, Easter weekend. There are spring community festivals and local town cleanups, like the one that I am hosting with Sustainable Milton on Saturday, April 16. It might be a little rainy, but I cannot wait for the tulips to come up in my garden. Of course, April is also Daffodil Month for cancer awareness.

There is no question that it has been a really difficult couple of years for all of us, but as we emerge from a dark, long and exceptionally cold winter, I hope everyone in Milton gets the chance to spend a little more time outdoors. Commit to that morning jog, ride a bike to school or work, do some gardening or hiking, or just enjoy the spring weather.

* * *

JUNIOR A HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday night I had the honour of dropping the puck at the Mariners Centre in Yarmouth as the Mariners took on the Valley Wildcats from Berwick.

I am proud to point out that these two great Junior A hockey teams are from my amazing riding of West Nova, and I committed to both teams to congratulate the winner in the House of Commons, maybe wearing a jersey.

On Saturday night, the Mariners won 4-1, forcing a sixth game in the series, and the Valley Wildcats won the next day at home in Berwick, 4-2.

[Translation]

It has been exciting to watch both of these fantastic teams throughout the hockey season, so I thank them for that.

[English]

Let me start by giving a big congratulations to the Yarmouth Mariners players and coaching staff and to the management and fans for a great season, and a huge congratulations to the Valley Wildcats players and fans and organization for all their hard work.

Statements by Members

They move on to a series starting tonight against the Truro Bearcats in the beautiful constituency of Cumberland—Colchester, which I am sure will be a great one.

Go, Wildcats, go.

* * *

NALIE AGUSTIN

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 22, 2022, the world lost a strong and inspirational young woman to stage 4 metastatic breast cancer.

Throughout her nine-year battle with cancer, Nalie experienced some of the darkest times that a human being can possibly face, and yet she always made room for light, inspiring so many others to do the same. She was an example to so many of my generation of what it meant to thrive with cancer.

Nalie's journey and her outlook on life changed the lives of everyone who followed her. Her message to us all remains consistent and powerful: No matter what obstacles life might throw our way, there is always a silver lining. It is about letting the light in and choosing to believe that everything will turn out okay.

What remains is the beautiful legacy that Nalie left behind. She will continue to live on in the hearts of the thousands of people that she touched with her light and love.

To her family and Vee, I offer my deepest sympathies and thank them for sharing Nalie with so many who so very much needed her hope, love and light.

To Nalie I say that I have no doubt that you fulfilled your life's purpose here and that you are in a much better place.

* * *

ANDRINA CALVERT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the life of Andrina Calvert, my constituency assistant in Penticton, who passed away from leukemia last month. Andrina was an assistant to Bob Rae when he was premier of Ontario, and I was so fortunate to be able to hire her as my assistant in 2015.

Andrina was one in a million, a kind person with a bright smile and beguiling grin and an almost infinite capacity to listen to people when they had difficult stories to tell. She was someone who felt an obligation to give back to her community. She loved animals as much as she loved people, and volunteered for many local organizations and events.

I pass on my condolences to her husband, Jim, and to all of her extended family and many friends.

I would regularly meet people on the street who would say, “Please tell Andrina that she is an angel.” She was, indeed, an angel, and I will miss her. We will all miss her so very much.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance tabled a budget yesterday that will invest in the backbone of a strong and growing country: our people.

Sherbrooke is experiencing a serious housing crisis. The measures set out in the budget to increase the number of housing units and speed up housing construction and repairs will help families, workers and seniors find a safe and affordable place to call home.

Here is what we are doing to ensure that more housing will be available and to meet our target of keeping the rental price of at least 40% of new housing at or below 80% of the average market price. We are encouraging cities to build more homes. We are launching a fund tailored to the needs and realities of cities and communities. We are building affordable housing faster. We are extending the rapid housing initiative. We are creating a new generation of co-op housing. Finally, we are continuing to provide doubled annual funding for Reaching Home.

This is good news for the people of my riding.

* * *

• (1105)

[English]

EVENTS IN HASTINGS—LENNOX AND ADDINGTON

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know spring is in the air when rain is welcome, the warmer days are coming and the Masters golf tournament is on at Augusta National. Go Mike, Mackenzie and Corey.

Locally, events are popping up all over my riding: the Loyalist Easter egg hunt, Trinity United craft and vendor sale in Madoc, the Easter market and egg hunt in Deseronto, Easter bunny photos in Erinsville, exciting Easter crafts in Northbrook, an archery competition in Napanee and so much more.

However, it is officially spring when hot cross buns are available at Hidden Goldmine Bakery and the kayakers have arrived in Queensborough. Some of the pictures captured of the impressive jumps over the mill pond dam are fantastic. This weekend is M.A.C.K. Fest in Queensborough. While there, people can have some warm treats on the Black River, all while exploring this beautiful historic village.

I encourage everyone to ask their neighbours, check out local community papers, cable, Facebook groups and, if they have an opportunity, to get some fresh air, support some local initiatives and shop local.

* * *

HARGEISA MARKET FIRE

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I speak about a major fire last week in Somaliland, which destroyed the Waheen market in Hargeisa.

With several thousand businesses destroyed, Hargeisa Chamber of Commerce chairman Jamal Aideded said this market accounted for 40% to 50% of the city's economy. Thousands of people have lost their livelihoods, and this is more painful as it happened in this holy month of Ramadan. This disaster is on top of drought, famine and food insecurity already in Somaliland.

I call on Canada to take steps immediately to help Somaliland and provide much-needed funding support. I would like to recognize the Somaliland Canadian Congress and the Canadian Alliance to Rebuild Hargeisa Market for their hard work in advocating and mobilizing the required support.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to share with this House how excited parents are in my community of Ottawa Centre with the announcement that we finally have a national child care and early learning program in Canada. It is absolutely a game-changer for young parents who want to be engaged in their kids' lives but also participate fully in the workforce.

[Translation]

It is clear that child care is not a luxury, but a necessity for families.

[English]

The Ontario Liberal government introduced full-day kindergarten almost 10 years ago. Now we have this full early learning program for kids at \$10 a day for affordable, bilingual, quality child care and, in the school setting, full-day kindergarten as well.

I want to very quickly thank so many parents and advocates from Glebe Co-operative Nursery School, Andrew Fleck Children's Services, Centretown Parents' Cooperative Daycare and many more who have been advocating on behalf of families and parents. Congratulations to them as we now have \$10-a-day child care in Ontario.

* * *

BREAD MINISTRY IN EDMONTON WEST

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the charitable work of the Saints Church in my riding of Edmonton West. Led by the dynamic duo of Lisa Ross and Linda Lo, a great team of volunteers created and run a bread ministry to distribute bread to those in need.

Every week the team picks up bread donated by the incredibly generous Cobs Bread on Winterburn Road to distribute to local families. The program started in October 2019 and has not once stopped, even during the height of the pandemic. Since the start of the program, the bread ministry has served over 5,000 families in need.

The pandemic has not been easy on our country, obviously, so I am grateful for the many places of faith that have stepped up to fill a void, to bring Canadians together, to simply help because it is the right thing to do. Saints Church and the bread ministry is one such place. I thank Pastor Brett, Lisa and Linda, their ministry and their church for all their service to the people of Edmonton.

* * *

● (1110)

EASTER WISHES

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next weekend, millions of Canadians will be together with their families and friends for the Christian celebration of Easter, which honours the values of sacrifice, faith, renewal and peace. Over the holiday weekend, I encourage all Canadians to take a moment and think about the many Canadians who cannot be home for Easter, including those in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Whether people celebrate by going to church, by giving back to their communities through volunteering or by enjoying the age-old tradition of an Easter egg hunt, I wish everyone in Cambridge, North Dumfries, north Brant and all Canadians a happy Easter.

* * *

SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituency is proudly home to a vibrant Ukrainian community. I want to recognize some of my constituents who have stepped up to support the people of Ukraine.

Locals in Dauphin initiated the Parkland Ukrainian Family Fund to support parents and children fleeing to Canada. Grade 8 students at William Morton Collegiate Institute in Gladstone raised over \$2,800 for the Canadian Red Cross. Minnedosa Collegiate students collected over 200 kilograms of essential items and over \$3,000 in donations. The Municipality of Harrison Park has approved \$20,000 in funding to support Ukrainians fleeing war.

There are many more constituents and communities that are opening their homes and hearts to support the people of Ukraine as they flee their homeland from Putin's war. I want to sincerely thank each and every one of them for standing with Ukraine as Ukrainians continue to fight for freedom.

* * *

SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like many Canadians, I am blessed to have grown up with the descendants of Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada after the pogroms visited on Ukraine by the Soviet regime after World War II. Those families and that culture are integral to our heritage. We all rejoiced when Ukraine joined the realm of free nations more

Statements by Members

than three decades ago. Witnessing the carnage brought on Ukraine by Putin hits home. Friends are asking for help for family and close connections who are doing what every family would in this situation: finding safety and hoping Canada can offer that.

My friend Zsolt Vigh, whose family fled Communism and sought refuge here, has raised tens of thousands of dollars to help Ukrainians find safety. He is also working with Calgary companies to facilitate temporary solutions for those who cannot yet reach Canada. We have everything we need to help: homes, resources, the means and a tight-knit community with the people who need us.

Let us stop the delays and bring these people to Canada now.

* * *

PASSOVER

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Passover, or Pesach, is one of the oldest and most transformative stories of hope. It tells how a powerless people found their way from slavery to freedom through faith and perseverance to become a nation. The story of the Exodus is defining for Jews around the world and a living symbol for communities of hope against adversity.

As Jewish families and communities across Canada gather next Friday, we will be celebrating Passover with family for the first time in two long years. This year, with Ukraine and its Jewish communities fighting for their freedom and their lives, the story of Passover takes on new meaning in this holiday of spring and renewal.

We retell the Passover story every year to remind ourselves that freedoms are never fully won and can never be taken for granted. We must fight for them and cherish them in every generation.

On behalf of my family, I wish the Jewish community of York Centre and those across Canada *chag pesach sameach*.

* * *

SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this moment to acknowledge and thank the people of Edmonton, who are stepping up to support Ukraine and the Ukrainians fleeing Putin's horrible war.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Alberta, along with the Ukrainian Canadian Social Services, the Ukrainian National Federation and the Ukrainian Women's Organization are helping families settle in Edmonton.

Oral Questions

The kids at St. Matthew Ukrainian bilingual school have collected an entire classroom full of essential items for Ukrainian refugees in our city.

The Kalyna Kids child care program, a program that focuses on Ukrainian bilingual education, is offering free child care for new community members in Edmonton.

The Canadian Polish Congress of Alberta hosted a concert in support of Ukraine on March 27 and raised \$20,000.

Belarusians in Edmonton are standing with Ukraine. They are hosting a fundraiser today at this very moment at the Bountiful Farmers' Market in Edmonton to buy first aid kits and medical supplies for Ukraine.

My thanks go to these amazing people and everyone in Edmonton who is standing with Ukraine.

* * *

● (1115)

[Translation]

TEMISCAMING TITANS

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, like you, I have hockey on the brain. The cup is within reach.

Coming off two shutouts by goalie Éloi Bouchard in the first two games of the series, the Temiscaming Titans will host the next games of the Ontario junior hockey championship playoffs as they vie for the General Metro Hockey League's Russell Cup. The last cup champions were the other team from Témiscamingue, the Ville-Marie Pirates.

The Titans' confidence could secure them the Russell Cup as early as Saturday, for the second time in their short decade-long history. The team is led by Godbout, Fontaine, Cypriot, Céré, Lapointe, Shtemke, Badanin, Kornilov, Laniel, Brooks, Lavallée, Collette, Presseault, and the sold-out arena is bad news for the Durham Roadrunners.

Best of luck to owner Pascal Labranche, general manager François Harrisson, coach Sébastien Lacroix and the entire team, not to mention their jack of all trades, Denis Lacourse, and their driver, Ken Richards, whom I ran into in Oshawa on Monday.

I will see the people of Témiscaming at 8 p.m. tonight for game three and tomorrow, Saturday, for the cup final.

Go Titans.

* * *

[English]

CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, April is Cancer Awareness Month.

Janice Goodridge was a loving wife and mother, a successful small business owner and a fiercely loyal friend. She was loved by nearly all. She made it clear that women could do anything they worked for, and she modelled work-life balance and service to oth-

ers. Next week would have been my mother's 62nd birthday, but it is the 13th that we have spent without her. She had stage 4 breast cancer and passed away at 49. There is not a day that goes by that I do not think of her kindness, her smile, her love of shoes and her unconditional love.

Early detection significantly improves outcome, so I will use this opportunity to remind everybody to do routine self-checks, talk to their doctor if they have concerns and get screening and mammograms if they are eligible. It just might save their life.

* * *

2020 SHOOTINGS IN NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago this month, picturesque and peaceful Nova Scotian communities such as Portapique, Wentworth, Debert, Shubenacadie, and Enfield were the scenes of senseless acts of extreme violence and murder. We do not bother to name the gunman. We take time to remember the 22 beautiful lives who were lost and the futures that were stolen, never to come to fruition.

We remember Jolene, Frank, Dawn, Gina, Alanna, Sean, Lisa, Heidi, John, Joey, Jamie, Heather, Greg, Tom, Joanne, Kristen, Peter, Lillian, Corrie, Joy, Aaron and vibrant 17-year-old Emily Tuck. Emily had shared her incredible fiddling skills, bringing joy to Nova Scotians at home during the pandemic and ending her tune with, "There's some fiddle for ya."

I will never forget how folks across Nova Scotia came together in the face of this tragedy. Despite the anger, and despite the pain and the loss, Nova Scotians did what we could to show each other how much we care and to remind each other that we are Nova Scotia strong.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1120)

[English]

THE BUDGET

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tax and spend policies have killed the Canadian dream. Every day we ask the government what it is doing to make life more affordable for Canadians, and every day it tells us how much money it is spending. It is not about how much money one spends; it is about the results one delivers. By that standard, the government has failed.

Yesterday's budget was no different. It is tax, tax, tax and spend, spend, spend, as the Prime Minister stokes the fires of inflation. What happened to his promise to stand up for the middle class and those looking to join it?

Oral Questions

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for asking a question about the results we are delivering. This morning, Statistics Canada announced that we have the lowest unemployment rate in nearly 50 years. We have recovered 115% of the jobs lost during the pandemic. I would like to thank the hard-working Canadians from coast to coast who are rolling up their sleeves, getting to work and creating growth for our country.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of home ownership has doubled. Food prices are through the roof. Fuel costs are at record highs, and yesterday's budget only made things worse. There was no help for those being left behind by the NDP-Liberal government. There is no tax relief and no plan to fight inflation. It is only spend, spend, spend.

Does the minister not realize that her tax and spend policies are driving millions of Canadians out of the middle class? When will the government finally take steps to control the skyrocketing cost of living?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raises the issue of housing, which happens to be one of the themes of our budget of yesterday. Housing is an important way that we are going to help Canadians deal with the increased cost of living.

Housing is incredibly important for us right across the country, and we are the government that has invested the most in the creation of housing. Ninety per cent of the investments in our budget on housing are on the supply side, because we are going to build homes.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the day after the budget was tabled, the price of food continues to increase. The cost of housing continues to increase. The cost of gas continues to increase. Why? It is because the government did not directly tackle the number one problem affecting Canadian families: inflation.

Inflation is now at a 30-year high. That is the Liberal record. Today, in this budget, there is absolutely nothing. Why is the government pretending that there is no inflation when it is affecting the daily lives of all Canadian families?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the Liberal record. Today, Statistics Canada reported that the unemployment rate has hit a 50-year low. We have recovered 115% of the jobs lost during the pandemic. That is our record. Our plan is working, and I thank my colleague for his question.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have to commend the Minister of Finance for her sense of humour, for being able to say the following yesterday with a straight face: "Canada has a proud tradition of fiscal responsibility. It is my duty to maintain it and I will".

Does the Minister of Finance realize that her government has done absolutely nothing in the past seven years to control spending? Spending has doubled since this government came to power, and Canada's debt has doubled along with it, currently sitting at \$1.2 trillion.

That is the reality. Our debt is costing us \$145 million a day, and after four years with this government, it will have cost us \$43 billion a year. Why does the government refuse to do what any responsible government should do and control its spending?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak to our fiscal record.

Before the pandemic, Canada had the best fiscal record in the G7. Now, even after spending to support Canadians throughout the pandemic, we still have the best fiscal record in the G7. We are there for Canadians and we are also fiscally responsible. This budget proves it.

* * *

● (1125)

SENIORS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all remember that shortly before the election, this government infamously invented the concept of two categories of seniors: those 75 and older, and everyone else.

At least there is nothing like that in this budget. That said, there is nothing in it for seniors. I am not the one saying that; it is coming from Gisèle Tassé-Goodman, the president of the FADOQ network in Quebec, who said: "This is a very bad day for low-income seniors who thought this budget would help them cope with the rising cost of living. The government has let them down."

What does the government have to say to seniors, as a government that has done nothing to help them deal with inflation?

[English]

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, budget 2022 has provided great news and will make a real difference in the lives of seniors. Our government has announced the creation of the dental care for seniors program. Starting in 2023, seniors aged 65 and up with a family income of less than \$90,000 will be able to access dental care. We also announced an additional \$20 million for the New Horizons for Seniors program to continue supporting senior-serving organizations and up to \$3,000 through the home accessibility tax credit for renovations and expenses to make aging at home more accessible.

The member and his party have a chance to show, finally, that they support seniors in Canada.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's budget is out in left field. It offers no solutions to the major crises we are facing, like health care.

For starters, there are no increases to transfers, a decision that is completely out of touch after everything we saw during the pandemic. Even worse, the government is poking the bear by writing in black and white that it is not even willing to discuss it.

After everything we have seen in our overflowing hospitals and our overwhelmed long-term care homes, how could the government table a budget that will not allow for even one more nurse to be hired?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, we announced \$2 billion in health care funding for the provinces and territories, with half a billion earmarked for Quebec alone. The budget my colleague is talking about provides for \$43 billion in health transfers. Our government is there to protect Canadians' health, and we are proud of that.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the health care funding set out in the budget does not even cover inflation and is a slap in the face to Quebec, the provinces and especially health care workers. Health care professionals all called for an increase in transfers. Doctors, nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, support staff and others all called for an increase. These people are the ones who are working on the ground, caring for people around the clock. Not only does the budget not include one penny to help them, but the government is also saying that it will not even discuss the situation.

Why not show these people at least a modicum of respect by holding a public summit?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Health, the member for Québec, would be delighted to sit down with provincial and territorial representatives to come to an agreement regarding health transfers.

However, I would like to remind my colleague and the House that the federal government covered 80% of the pandemic-related costs. We did not hear a peep from the Bloc Québécois about areas of jurisdiction when we covered the costs related to the pandemic.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the climate crisis, the Liberals still do not get it. In the same week that the IPCC released a report saying that we need to do a complete 180 in the next three years, the Liberals announced an additional \$2.6 billion in subsidies to oil companies and approved Bay du Nord, a new fossil fuel project. That is the problem with the Liberals. They think they can solve the climate crisis by giving more money to oil and gas companies. It makes no sense whatsoever.

Why do the Liberals refuse to listen to science and invest in new green jobs?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his question.

I would like to remind him that in its report this week, the IPCC refers to carbon capture and storage as a key technology for achieving our net-zero target by 2050. That is exactly what we are doing in Canada. Our latest budget encourages the development of this technology and all technologies that will help us reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

• (1130)

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we will never achieve the government's net-zero plan if we leave Albertan workers behind. Yesterday's budget was an opportunity to invest in Alberta workers, to help them transition to a new economy. Instead, the government continued the approach of giving billions to wealthy companies with no strings attached.

Albertans cannot wait any more. Where is the funding for a clean jobs training centre, and when is the just transition legislation coming?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was significant funding in the budget to work with Alberta, Saskatchewan and other provinces to diversify their economies. There was \$4 billion for critical minerals. There was funding for CCUS, which is relevant to the whole conversation about hydrogen. In the previous budget, there was \$1.5 billion for clean fuels, which is for biofuels and hydrogen.

We are going to be working actively with the Province of Alberta and with industry to ensure that we are moving forward in a manner that will create a clean economy, a prosperous economy and one that will support workers and communities to make this transition.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like everything in this spend-DP-Liberal budget, what they announce is not what we get. Instead of a real ban on foreign ownership and housing like the Conservatives proposed, their so-called ban on foreign buyers is anything but that. Under this policy, a foreign national can still purchase a home. If they separate from their spouse, they can buy another home. If their child turns 18 and wants to buy the house across the street, they still can. This does nothing to help put first-time homebuyers first.

Why is the so-called ban so full of holes that it is like Swiss cheese?

Oral Questions

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, affordable housing is not just good social policy; it is a powerful economic policy as well. Our government will increase housing supply by doubling residential construction across Canada over the next 10 years. We will ensure that homes are treated as a place for families to live instead of as an investment vehicle. We will build new pathways for first-time homebuyers. In Canada, everyone deserves a place to call home, and budget 2022 is going to help make that a reality.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another spend-DP-Liberal housing policy that is not as advertised is the first-time homebuyer savings account. So many millennials cannot go to the bank of mom and dad and instead have to scrimp and save every penny, and they do not qualify today for a mortgage because of the Liberal stress test.

If those who are fortunate enough to have saved today cannot get into a home, how in the world will it be any different for those millennials who will scrimp and save over the next five years in their shiny savings account when the stress test bounces them as well?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the strongest labour market recovery in the G7, having recouped 115% of the jobs lost during the pandemic. This includes 73,000 jobs in March, which has pushed Canada's unemployment rate to 5.3%. That is the lowest unemployment rate that Canada has seen in more than 50 years. Budget 2022 builds on this success by unwinding Canada's pandemic deficits and continuing to reduce our debt-to-GDP ratio, while working to fight climate change and, yes, investing in housing affordability.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government asked young people to lock down for two years and they complied. Their reward is a housing market that they cannot buy into and being saddled with a ton of debt to keep them down. Debt is keeping housing unaffordable and the government keeps spending.

Why are millennials being shut out of the housing market for the Prime Minister's vanity projects?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

As we all know, property ownership is now out of reach for Canadians across the country, and that is unacceptable.

That is why budget 2022 contains concrete measures, including a \$200-million investment to develop rent-to-own projects, the creation of a tax-free first home savings account that would give first-time homebuyers the ability to save \$40,000, and a two-year ban on foreign investors acquiring property.

That is federal leadership. I hope the opposition will vote in favour of these measures this time.

[*English*]

SENIORS

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Carol, a senior in my riding, shared with me her concern that seniors and those with disabilities are at the bottom of the NDP-Liberals' priorities. Seniors and those with disabilities are suffering very real stress trying to afford to live while everything in their lives becomes more expensive. They have already slashed their budgets to account for inflation and they cannot tighten their belts any further.

I care about Carol. Why do the NDP-Liberals not?

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, budget 2022 contains concrete measures.

We will invest \$10 billion over the coming years to increase the housing supply and ensure that everybody, including seniors, has a place to live.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this budget adds about \$1,400 in debt for every person in the country. Why is the answer to the government's problems always to add spending and debt? Canadians are waking up today without relief from higher food or gas prices, and to find out they owe \$1,400 more per person.

Why do the Liberals want to saddle the future generation with this extra debt?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party has already admitted that the extraordinary investments made over the course of the pandemic were necessary to protect Canadian families and Canadian workers. Our plan has worked. In fact, we have maintained the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, while growing the economy and recovering 115% of jobs lost due to COVID-19. Canada was able to do this because of our prudent fiscal management. It is now time to unwind the pandemic deficits and continue to grow our economy while reducing our debt-to-GDP ratio. This is what good fiscal managers do.

Oral Questions

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these good fiscal managers are increasing government spending by 25% over pre-pandemic levels, but guess what? The government is benefiting from inflation. It is making \$170 billion more than it projected just last year, but who is getting the benefit of that? It is not Canadians. There is no relief for food or higher gas prices.

What does the government have to say to struggling Canadians who are seeing no relief in this budget?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before the pandemic, it took only two Conservative governments to accrue more than 70% of Canada's pre-pandemic debt. That is because their fiscal ideology is to cut taxes for the wealthy and cut services for everyone else. In stark contrast, our last Liberal government paid down our national debt significantly.

We have demonstrated that we can be good fiscal managers while investing in Canadians, growing the economy and continuing to fight poverty and climate change. Budget 2022 will lower our debt-to-GDP ratio and help build a Canada where no one is left behind.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 24 hours after approving the Bay du Nord project, the government dealt another blow to the environment in the budget. The main new measure with respect to climate change is another oil subsidy.

Instead of putting a cap on oil production, the government, with the support of the NDP, is giving \$2.5 billion to oil companies for carbon capture, an unproven technology that would let oil companies produce more oil for longer.

When will Canada's political parties realize that the green transition involves producing less oil, not more?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I invite her to reread the budget, because more than \$9.1 billion will be invested in the fight against climate change, \$1.7 billion will continue to help Canadians switch to electric vehicles, and hundreds of millions of dollars will help Canadians and Quebecers lower their home energy bills through the energy efficient retrofit program.

In its most recent report, released this week, the IPCC states that carbon capture and storage technology is critical to achieving our 2050 objectives.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would invite my colleague to reread the IPCC report.

In Alberta, a Radio-Canada headline reads, "Albertan oil companies and businesses pleased with federal budget." They are pleased. That is not good news for the fight against climate change. The fox is pleased with the new layout of the henhouse.

What are Quebecers to think of this Minister of Environment and the so-called progressive coalition of the Liberals and the NDP,

if all Canada can do to fight climate change is please the oil companies?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my colleague that the IPCC report says that greenhouse gas emissions have to be capped over the next three years and decline thereafter. That is already the case in Canada. The IPCC says we have to reduce our emissions by at least 43% by 2030. Our goal is to reduce them by 40% to 45%.

Honestly, my colleague is one to talk, given that her leader, the former environment minister of Quebec, allowed drilling on Anticosti Island without an environmental assessment. I am not sure the Bloc Québécois is in a position to lecture anyone in the House on this issue.

* * *

● (1140)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more and more Canadians continue to struggle to make ends meet. Two-thirds of Canadians say that inflation and the affordability crisis are their top economic concerns. Six years of Liberal governance and inflationary policies got us to where we are today: soaring inflation, a devastating housing crisis and hard-working Canadians struggling to pay for food, rent and their mortgages.

Why do the Liberals continue to spend more and more Canadians' money without getting any result? It is not working.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that global inflation is having a significant impact on the household budgets of Canadian families. That is why we are focused on affordability in budget 2022.

Let me give three quick examples. We are providing dental care for Canadian families that have incomes of less than \$90,000 per year. We will reduce child care costs by 50% this year and to \$10 a day over time. We will introduce a suite of measures to address the cost of housing. This budget, like our government, is focused on making life more affordable.

SENIORS

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my riding has a lot of seniors who are struggling to make ends meet with the rising costs of food, gas and home heating. There is no affordable housing left in my riding, and the government has done nothing to address the rising cost of inflation that is making everything worse.

Why is the government taking from grandma and young people, and when will the NDP-Liberal government give them a break?

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Conservatives say they care about seniors, yet they continuously vote against initiative after initiative for seniors. Budget 2022 provides great news that would make a real difference in the lives of seniors. We have announced the creation of a dental care for seniors program. Starting in 2023, seniors aged 65 and up with a family income of less than \$90,000 will be able to access dental care. Again, there is an additional \$20 million for the New Horizons for Seniors program to continue supporting senior-serving organizations. We have the backs of Canadian seniors—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation is at its highest level in 30 years. The price of literally everything is going up and up. Inflation is squeezing Lucia and her husband, who live just down the road from me. They struggle with everyday essentials while also dealing with debilitating medical conditions. The cost of living is the number one issue facing Canadians, yet yesterday's budget offered no plan. It just digs the hole deeper and adds more \$1.70-per-litre fuel to the fire.

Why does Lucia have to pay the price for the Prime Minister's vanity projects.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, global inflation is having a significant impact on household budgets, so it is good news that affordability is referenced 119 times in budget 2022. We are increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15.55 per hour. We are indexing important programs, like the Canada child benefit, OAS and GIS, to inflation. We are implementing an economic growth plan that creates jobs and grows our economy. We are doing all of this while lowering out debt-to-GDP ratio, because this is what a fiscally responsible government does.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day I get calls about the cost-of-living crisis that Canadians are undergoing. They have raised concerns about the price of chicken, beef, bacon, milk, coffee, sugar, maple syrup, fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, ice cream and potato chips. The list goes on: heating fuel, gasoline, electricity, cellphone bills, home repairs, clothing, alcohol, beer, wine and of course the price of a home. We know the price of everything is increasing at a pace that is much greater than their paycheques.

Oral Questions

When will the spend-DP-Liberals admit they are failing Canadians, which leaves them falling further and further behind?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, budget 2022 is entitled “A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable”. It is a plan that invests in people, and it is a plan that will help build a Canada where no one gets left behind.

The budget addresses some of Canada's greatest challenges, including housing affordability, climate change, economic growth and indigenous reconciliation. Everyone in the House has a duty to help fight for a country that is worth fighting for. That is what we have tried to do in our first seven years, and that is exactly what we are continuing to do with this budget.

• (1145)

TAXATION

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two new reports this week show that while Canadians are struggling to put food on the table, big corporations in the grocery business are padding their pockets with record profits. Cargill alone reported \$5 billion in net income in 2021, over double its net income from just last year. Big companies are taking advantage of economic uncertainty to jack up prices by far more than the increase in their costs.

Instead of condoning this profiteering, when will the Liberals apply the tax measures announced in yesterday's budget to these other industries that are profiting off high prices while Canadians struggle?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in addition to our middle-class tax cuts, budget 2022 proposes additional measures that would make Canada's tax system more fair while promoting economic growth. This includes a permanent 1.5% corporate tax increase on profits over \$100 million for banks and life insurance companies, new measures to prevent the use of foreign corporations to avoid Canadian tax, and a tax cut for small businesses as they continue to grow and create new jobs for Canadians. That is responsible fiscal management. That is fair tax policy.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over 80% of indigenous peoples live off reserve. They are 11 times more likely to use a shelter. The Liberals have promised a “for indigenous, by indigenous” urban, rural and northern housing strategy since 2017, but budget after budget there is no mention of it. Now that the NDP has pushed the Liberals to take action, they are only proposing \$300 million to initiate a strategy over five years. This is not good enough.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberals make the necessary investments for a “for indigenous, by indigenous” urban, rural and northern housing strategy?

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the other side is talking about what is not in the budget, today I want to talk about what is in the budget.

We have historic investments in indigenous housing. We have historic investments in Jordan's principle. We have historic investments in infrastructure. We have historic investments in mental health. Overall, we have invested more than \$27 billion for indigenous issues. On this side of the House, we are committed to reconciliation. We are committed to moving forward on indigenous issues. We are committed to working with the member opposite to make sure that we are doing everything possible for indigenous people in Canada.

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HOUSING

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, housing has been top of mind for so many Canadians, especially first-time homebuyers and middle-class families, like those in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge. Yesterday's historic budget was a housing-focused budget with important investments and initiatives.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and my great friend please share with us some of the key measures that will help ensure every Canadian has a safe and affordable place to call home?

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that very important question.

[English]

All across the country we have seen housing become unaffordable. That is why housing is the centrepiece of budget 2022. We are making unprecedented investments to double housing construction, help Canadians buy their first homes, cut unfair practices that drive up the price of housing and support the construction of affordable housing. We did this through federal leadership, and we will continue to deliver the homes people need all across the country.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is all talk and very little action. The goal for many young Canadians is home ownership. What was once considered a common occurrence for young Canadians is now completely out of reach for many. For months, the current government told young Canadians they were being listened to. This is clearly not the case. Instead it introduced bloated bureaucratic programs wrapped up in red tape.

Why is its only solution to give another \$1,400 of debt per person and fail to get results?

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Canadians across the country are finding it extremely difficult, or almost impossible, to buy a home. That is unacceptable, and it is why budget 2022 presents some tangible measures, such as a \$200-million investment to develop rent-to-own projects, a tax-free first home savings account for up to \$40,000, and a two-year ban on foreign investment in housing.

Our government has taken leadership on housing since 2015 and we will continue to do so, because the Conservatives did nothing when they were in government.

● (1150)

[English]

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's budget will not put money into the pockets of young families in Ivanhoe. It will not build houses for people in Tamworth, and it will not fix the labour shortage plaguing the entire construction industry across my riding. What Canadians want and what Canadians need is a foundational plan from the government to fix our broken housing sector. This means lowering inflation, lowering the debt and letting Canadian families keep their hard-earned money.

When will the government stop holding ambitious home-seeking Canadians back and start helping them?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are lowering the debt. Our net debt-to-GDP ratio is consistently declining, as evidenced by this budget. We continue to have the best fiscal balance sheet among countries right across the G7. I would remind my colleague, when she talks about growth, that she is actually downplaying the incredible growth Canadians are creating in our country. There was 6.7% growth in Q4. I would like the members opposite to acknowledge the importance of our incredible fiscal track. What my colleague is doing is denying—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We have made it to 27 questions. This is awesome.

The hon. member for King—Vaughan.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, using the example in the budget, a couple earning \$90,000 per year would qualify for a home purchase of \$355,000. Using the tax-free savings account in 2027, the couple would be eligible for a \$500,000 purchase price, if all other variables, including mortgage rates, remain constant.

Failing Liberal housing policy has doubled the price of homes to \$816,000. Why is the government continuing to fail aspiring homeowners?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no government in Canadian history has invested more in the creation of housing than our government through this budget. We are there in order to ensure that more homes would be created—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: What I meant was that we made it to 27 questions without a whole lot of heckling, which I thought was really good.

Let us back up a little and let the parliamentary secretary answer the question.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are so excited by our housing policy in this budget that they cannot help themselves.

We are investing a historic amount in the creation of housing in this country, and it is going to help each and every Canadian purchase a home. We have incentives for first-time homebuyers. We have plans to create co-op housing. We have plans to ensure that affordable housing is there so that every Canadian could put a roof over their head.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was very amusing.

The government's first-time homebuyer's incentive program is a bust. I have spoken to home builders, mortgage brokers, realtors and prospective first-time buyers who tell me that the program does not work in Canada's more expensive real estate markets. The average price of a home in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove is now higher than the upper limit permitted under the program.

Why is the NDP-Liberal government doubling down on this failed and discredited program?

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind my hon. colleague that the national housing strategy has numerous benefits, and that it not only helped Canadians pay their rent but also helped many of them buy a new home. The historic investment we have made in budget 2022 will support homeowners and get them their dream house.

* * *

• (1155)

SENIORS

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals betrayed seniors in the budget.

The Liberals not only failed to increase health transfers and continued to deprive seniors under 75 of the old age security increase, but they also broke their own promise, inadequate as it was, to enhance the guaranteed income supplement for the most vulnerable

Oral Questions

seniors. The Liberals promised a career extension tax credit. They promised to improve the tax credits for caregivers. Those are promises that they made.

Why did the Liberals break their promises?

[English]

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning, our government's priority has been to help the most vulnerable. That is why we have worked so hard to strengthen income security and the old age security that they rely on.

Our plan delivers on our promise to increase old age security by 10% for seniors 75 and older. We will continue to deliver for seniors, especially those who need it most, as they age and as their needs increase.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are definitely continuing to create two classes of seniors.

Not only did the government leave seniors' priorities out of the budget, but it is also trying to show that seniors do not need more support, as if seniors were spoiled rotten, as if they were wrong to worry and to want more health transfers to support quality of care at home and in long-term care facilities, as if they were wrong to think it is unfair that some seniors are receiving a bigger old age security pension than others, when the cost of living is the same for everyone.

Why is the government denying the reality of seniors and ignoring their concerns?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are also concerned about the increased cost of living for our vulnerable seniors. That is why all of our programs for vulnerable seniors are indexed to inflation. That means that any amounts they receive from the federal government increase with the cost of living.

I would also invite my colleague to refer to page 189 of our budget, where we talk about expanding and investing more in our community programs specifically for seniors.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy of the Liberal government knows no bounds. After voting against our motion to leverage Canada's energy sector to free Europe from its dependence on Russian oil and gas, the natural resources minister's announcement in France shows Conservatives were right on the issue. Oil and gas is the answer to Europe's energy needs.

Will the minister commit to measures to get energy infrastructure built to Atlantic tidewater?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a time of great crisis in Europe, of course Canada is looking to assist our friends and allies with some of their short-term requirements. That was what the incremental 300,000 barrels was about. That is what some of the conversations we are having with the European Union are about. We are also working with them very actively on their desire to accelerate the transition toward renewables and hydrogen. Canada is committed to working with Europe to ensure that we are helping it in the short term and in the long term to meet its needs.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently to the government 1.5% is the new 2%. Despite supporting the Conservative motion to increase defence spending to 2% of GDP to meet our NATO obligations, newly announced spending only brings us to 1.5%, and 1.5% after a lengthy, drawn-out comprehensive review. Stop the political meddling and buy equipment. There, I just performed the government's comprehensive review for it.

When will the government recognize the threats and get this equipment purchased for the men and women in our forces?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our Canadian Armed Forces must be well equipped and well supported to fulfill the missions we ask of them. That is why our government is building on the smart, critical investments we have made over the past years with a further \$8 billion announced yesterday, which will support immediate investments in our defence priorities, including our continental defences, alliance and collective security and in the capabilities of the CAF, as well as cultural change, cybersecurity and military support for Ukraine. This is good news for Canada and good news for the Canadian Armed Forces.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for a month now, the Minister of Agriculture has known that there will be a shortage of fertilizer from Russia for farmers in eastern Canada. There has been no action, just talk.

With prices already skyrocketing, our farming families cannot afford to pay an extra 35% on orders they placed in 2021. Spring seeding is coming up and farmers need answers.

Will the Minister of Agriculture remove the 35% tariffs for orders placed before March 2?

• (1200)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure my colleague. We are working very closely with the agricultural sector and its representatives on this issue. Thus far, the ships have been able to arrive in Montreal. The fertilizer is going to the farmers. We are also working to see what can be done in the medium and long term.

I would also like to remind my colleague that we changed the rules of the advance payments program this year to ensure that our farmers have quick access to liquid assets so that they can have good yields this year.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in budget 2022, our government is investing \$1.7 billion to extend and expand the federal incentives for zero-emission vehicles program. Our government is also investing \$3.8 billion to implement the first strategy for critical minerals.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change explain how these funds will help us achieve our net-zero targets by 2050?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle for her question and her advocacy for the electrification of transportation.

In order to support the energy transition and position Canada as an economic powerhouse in the future, we are not only investing in making electric vehicles more affordable, we are also ensuring that Canada is a global leader across the supply chain, from extracting the essential minerals needed to manufacture vehicles and batteries, to ensuring that charging stations are available across the country and are powered by clean energy.

Our government is here for Canadians. We are making smart investments to position Canada in the low-carbon economy of the future.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even though no contract has yet been signed to use the milk from its proposed 2,200-goat prison farm, the government continues to build dairy facilities at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions. Given the absence of a contract, it is strange the government continues to act and to spend as if it still plans to use prison labour to produce goat milk for export.

Will the government promise to never sign any contract that involves the use of prison labour for export products?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the penitentiary agricultural program helps federal inmates gain the employment skills that are required for them to find meaningful employment in the community, which enhances their integration. In fact, we know offenders who participate in these programs are three times less likely to reoffend and find themselves back in custody.

That is why I am pleased to announce that the Correctional Service of Canada has indeed awarded a contract in Joyceville, and we will continue to work with my colleague and others in the chamber so that we can see this project to completion. Of course, we will make sure that this contract complies with all of Canada's international obligations.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for it to comply with all of our international agreements, we would have to pay prison labour market wages. We would have to ensure that the workers have all the benefits that are provided to free labour.

The question that arises, now that we have learned the contract has been signed, is this: Has the government guaranteed that prisoners will be paid market wages? Alternatively, has it guaranteed that none of this will be used for export to China, as in its original plan? It must be one or the other, or else we are breaking international law.

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague that, of course, we want to treat inmates fairly and we want to compensate them fairly. That is why I am pleased to share with him, and all members, that we have awarded the contract through the Correctional Service of Canada.

We are going to make sure that those inmates are getting the skills and the experience they require to become positive, contributing members to society, and we will work with all members to make sure that this experience and the training are done in accordance with all of Canada's international obligations.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the prison farm in Joyceville, Ontario, is also the home to a provincially inspected abattoir that serves eastern Ontario farmers. There has been a surge in buying local meat, and farmers have stepped up to meet that demand. The facility operator will be retiring. If we lose the abattoir there, there will be tremendous strain placed on processing capacity in eastern Ontario.

Will the Minister of Public Safety offer that licence to another operator, or will the abattoir be closed?

• (1205)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his advocacy in his community. I have committed to working with him and other members who are engaged in the process of making sure that we have these programs come back to total fruition in the community. As I said, these programs ensure that inmates are equipped with the tools, the experience and the skills that are necessary to safely reintegrate into their communities.

Oral Questions

I know my hon. colleague raises a specific issue with regard to licensing. We are engaging with him, and we will continue to do so.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the world has watched in horror over the past few weeks as Russia continues its unprovoked and horrific full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Ukrainian people are not just fighting for their own freedom; they are fighting for all of us. Canada has taken strong action to support the Ukrainian people in that fight. Before Russia's invasion began, Canada began providing military support to Ukraine and has continued to provide significant military support.

I am proud that budget 2022, which was introduced yesterday, includes additional support to Ukraine.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence update Canadians on the support that was included in yesterday's budget?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his incredible work and commitment on this file and on this crisis throughout. Canada is one of the lead countries in NATO when it comes to supporting Ukraine, and now we are stepping up even more with an additional \$500 million to provide further military aid to Ukraine.

As the Ukrainian Canadian Congress said yesterday, this is a crucial and timely decision. Our government will continue to give our Ukrainian friends the tools they need to win this war and, like the member for Etobicoke Centre, we will not rest.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

In yesterday's budget, there were no new funds to help stop the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. This is extremely disappointing. Under the government, the genocide against indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people continues.

New Democrats have been fighting for funding to implement all of the calls for justice to help stop the violence.

When will the government finally provide funds to save the lives of indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people? *Qujannamiik.*

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her passion and her dedication. I sit with her on the indigenous and northern affairs committee, and I know the member opposite has heard me say that we have \$2.2 billion put aside over the next five years to address the missing and murdered indigenous women calls to justice. I also want to talk about the important work that we have currently done with that money, including \$85 million for indigenous women's shelters across Canada. Also, we are continuing to move forward on cultural spaces in communities.

This week, our minister announced \$16 million for funding for cultural spaces in Ontario and Quebec to address the cultural importance for indigenous women to continue practising their culture, continue practising their language and continue being proud of who they are. Our government is committed to indigenous women across Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: That is all the time for question period today.

Since some members may not be sticking around for the rest of the debate, I want to wish each and every one of them a happy Easter, and I hope they enjoy connecting back into their ridings for a couple of weeks.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1210)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

UKRAINE

Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition on behalf of residents of Winnipeg South Centre who are outraged at the Russian Federation's unlawful and unprovoked war against the people of Ukraine.

Ukrainians are living with the gravest humanitarian and displacement crisis within Europe since the Second World War. My constituents and all Canadians are witnessing scenes they once hoped had been relegated to the past.

The petitioners would like Ukrainian refugees to find safety and security in Canada, and are asking for this to be made possible by lifting all visa requirements and granting visa-free travel to Ukrainians.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind folks to take their conversations outside so that we can keep on with petitions.

The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

[*Translation*]

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to present a petition today on behalf of the members of Development and Peace in Quebec, but also across Canada.

This petition is signed by several hundred people who are calling on the government to ensure that Canadian businesses that invest in the mining sector in developing countries prevent adverse human rights impacts and environmental damage throughout their operations.

Development and Peace is an important organization that invests in developing countries to improve people's quality of life.

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to table today.

The first petition has been initiated by Brenda Morrison, a human rights activist. She is calling for the government to take action with respect to the Afghan community. She notes that, for decades, after risking their lives to help the Canadian Armed Forces, many Afghan interpreters, other collaborators and their extended families were left in a highly precarious situation and were being targeted by the Taliban. With the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, many are desperate to get to safety but are unable to do so.

The petitioners are calling on the government to immediately undertake an emergency immigration measure that grants a temporary residence permit and temporary travel documents, while suspending the usual documentation requirements until people are safely here in Canada. That would apply to all Afghans and their extended families who served the military, those who are human rights activists and those with immediate family members here in Canada. They call to expand the stream to extended family members, as well. They are also calling for the government to open up spaces for sponsorship-agreement holders and to waive the refugee determination requirements.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition that I am tabling was initiated by my constituents, Marie Urdiga and Nick Petrovitch.

The petitioners are calling on the government to enact a just transition legislation that reduces emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels by 2030 and to make a significant contribution to emissions reductions in countries in the global south. They further note that there needs to be action on winding down the fossil fuel subsidy and related infrastructure, to end the fossil fuel industry and related infrastructure.

The Budget

The petitioners are also calling for the transition to a decarbonized economy, the creation of new public economic institutions, and the expansion of public ownership of services and utilities across the economy to implement the transition. They note that creating good, green jobs and driving inclusive workforce development are key, and that we need to respect indigenous rights, sovereignty and knowledge by including them in creating and implementing this legislation.

Finally, the petitioners are calling for the government to expand the social safety net and to pay for the transition by increasing taxes on the wealthiest people and corporations, and financing them through a public national bank.

The third petition is the same as the second, and has been initiated by my constituent Lea Anderson.

I hope the government will take action on these petitions.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, and of the amendment.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to be said about the budget; my colleagues will say more when we resume debate. Unfortunately, I have to call out the government's tradition of systematically presenting the budget just before a parliamentary break. It prefers to tour around selling its version of the facts than to face the criticism of every elected member and every legislator in the House, and I strongly object to that. We will have a great deal more to say.

For now, I move, seconded by the member for Saint-Jean:

That the amendment be amended by adding the following:

“(d) increase health transfers as unanimously requested by Quebec, the provinces and territories;

(e) increase the old age pension for those aged 65 to 74;

(f) take concrete action against climate change;

(g) offer solutions to the rising cost of living for individuals and their businesses; and

(h) consult and respect the jurisdictions of Quebec, the provinces and territories.”

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment to the amendment is in order.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing that I think members from all sides of the House should be supporting is the government's ambitious commitment, through budgetary dollars going into the hundreds of millions of dollars, to double the number of housing starts over the next decade, something we all know is critically important. We also know that it is not just the federal government that has to play a role. In fact, what we will see is the municipalities, the provinces and other potential stakeholders working with the national government to ensure we see a dramatic increase in housing starts in the country.

I wonder if the member could indicate whether the Bloc party supports the government's efforts to double the number of houses being constructed. That support would imply that we will continue to work with the municipalities and provinces to make it a reality.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, Canada is short 1.8 million housing units. The government's plan is to provide 100,000 more units. It is true that we need to build more housing units, but saying so and doing so are two different things.

I also want to raise the issue of social housing. Even though the budget does mention it indirectly, the government chose to use the expression “affordable housing”. That is not at all the same thing, and it could turn out that a two-bedroom apartment for \$1,200 per month is considered affordable housing. The government says it is going to build 6,000 units, which is really not enough. We need clearly defined social housing, not affordable housing.

I also criticized another aspect of the speech. In the budget, Ottawa is threatening municipalities by telling them they will get their infrastructure transfer if, and only if, Ottawa thinks they have built enough social housing units. It is not up to Ottawa to tell municipalities how to do things and play father knows best. We expected much better.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my friend.

• (1220)

[*English*]

I very much liked my hon. colleague's speech. I thought he did very well, especially in the first half of it.

I would like him to expand a little more on the paternalism that we saw in the budget. We could be excused for thinking that the Prime Minister might want to be a premier of a province after reading the budget. He is getting involved in the jurisdictions of our provinces, and I would like the hon. member to give us his insights on this topic.

The Budget

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I, too, wish to greet my friend from Simcoe North. It is truly a great pleasure to work with him on the Standing Committee on Finance. Even though we are not in the same party, it is always a pleasure to listen to his proposals, which are always constructive.

Unfortunately, since arriving in the House in 2015, I have seen the Liberal government bulldoze and crush what used to be federalism. We now have a centralizing, hyper-interventionist state where the provinces, and thus Quebec, my nation, have no freedom to exist.

The historic compromise of the federation was that Quebec could have a place in Canada while being different from it. We do not believe it and that is why we are sovereignists, as it will be far easier for us to be good neighbours than bad roommates.

Unfortunately, what the budget shows us once again is that Ottawa is going to tell us what to do in health care. As I was just saying, Ottawa is going to impose conditions before going ahead with the transfers. Ottawa is making funding for infrastructure contingent upon the creation of social housing. The Liberal government is telling everyone what to do.

This stands in contrast to the recent article by Francis Fukuyama, who states that liberalism can exist in small nations such as Quebec, Scotland or Catalonia, where people are proud of who they are and where they can do things their own way and not just for the sake of doing it. However, this multiculturalist government, which wants to force everyone into the same mould, does not endorse this view.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people have been struggling since the beginning of the pandemic because our health care system is underfunded. The federal government has been reducing its share of funding to the provinces for many years. Instead of paying its fair share, this government chose not to announce an increase to health transfers in the budget.

Can the member explain why it is important for the government to increase health transfers to the provinces and get back to paying its fair share?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I salute my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith and congratulate her on her excellent French. We always appreciate being asked questions in French in the House. I commend her and I thank her.

Indeed, there is nothing in the budget. In 2015 the government said that there would be consultations with the provinces the following year to come to some sort of agreement. We were told the same thing in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. Yesterday we were told that there was nothing in the budget but the government would sit down and negotiate with the provinces next year. That is what the government told us during question period.

We do not believe it. The health care system in Quebec, much like others across Canada, has been under a great deal of pressure for a little over two years because of the pandemic, and people are burned out. The system needs more funding. This is urgent. Quebec

has been calling for more funding, but the federal government is missing in action.

I humbly encourage my colleague to join us in saying that this is unacceptable and to vote against this budget.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the member for Joliette and his Bloc Québécois colleagues for their strong opposition to the Bay du Nord project. Today, I am disappointed that this budget contains a \$7.1-billion subsidy for fossil fuels when we are talking about eliminating them.

[English]

Could the member share with us the implications of adding a new fossil fuel subsidy at this time?

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Kitchener South-Hespeler. I completely agree with him.

On the very week the IPCC released a report stating that there should not be any new oil projects, the former environmentalist who climbed the CN Tower announced that Canada is going to launch a new one-billion-barrel project.

The next day, the government presented its budget. We were hoping that the Liberals would counterbalance this historically unacceptable compromise. We know that environment ministers around the world have resigned over much less than that. This dishonest compromise makes no sense.

However, what do we see in the budget? Fossil fuel subsidies. We are cutting our emissions, so now we can produce more.

There is an urgent need for action, but it seems as though the government is not there at all. For the government, the industry is the most important thing. The government is extremely short-sighted when it comes to fighting climate change.

The Bloc Québécois will continue to put pressure on the government because this is unacceptable. I am very disappointed that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change compromised on this. It is historically unacceptable.

• (1225)

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the subamendment just introduced by my colleague from Joliette strikes me as a fairly reasonable social and progressive measure. It proposes increasing health transfers, increasing the old age security pension, taking action on climate change and offering solutions to the rising cost of living.

The House will have to vote on these issues. I, for one, am a socialist. However, am I to understand that someone who considers themselves a socialist might vote against this subamendment because the obligation “to consult and respect the jurisdictions of Quebec, the provinces and the territories” would bother them?

I am just speculating. I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that.

The Budget

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, in this subamendment, the Bloc Québécois is essentially proposing the expectations it had for the budget, which it had previously expressed to the Minister of Finance and at the Standing Committee on Finance.

In order to prepare our proposals, we looked at everything that is happening in Quebec, what the expectations for the federal budget were, and what needs to be done. That is what we have put in this subamendment and what the people of Quebec all agree on.

Our proposals should be welcomed by a left-wing party like the NDP. There is, of course, the temptation to centralize. If the Sherbrooke declaration is any indication, things should be fine, aside from the fact that the NDP has vowed to vote for the budget along with the government, so that it will not lose a vote of confidence.

My guess is that the NDP will vote against our proposal, even if they are in favour of it.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to participate in the debate on the budget. I am sure it will come as no surprise to members in the chamber that I have a lot to say on the subject. It is an interesting budget, indeed.

Lest I be accused of burying the lede, I want to start by saying that I think the most important element of the budget is the new dental care plan. This is the first major expansion of medicare in over 50 years, since Tommy Douglas first introduced medicare and took it across the country, getting it passed here in Ottawa. It is something Canadians have been waiting generations for now, and it is going to make a really big difference, at first, in the lives of children 12 years and under, who should have access to basic dental care services this year. It will then expand to children 18 years and under, then seniors, then people living with disabilities next year. There will then be a full implementation of the program, so all Canadian households with a household income of \$90,000 or less should have access to basic dental care by 2025.

This is a big deal, and it is going to make a difference for a lot of people. That is why I wanted to start off by reminding folks about it. Sometimes, in the media commentary around the budget, journalists and others have been quick to move on from that point, saying, “The NDP got dental care, but what have they done for us lately?”

This is in the budget. It is new. As it rolls out, Canadians will see and appreciate what a massive difference it could make for so many of our friends, neighbours and the people living in our communities. Just like medicare in its day, once Canadians see how this works, and as people experience the benefits and see people they know benefiting from the program, it will be something Canadians would be very proud to say is part and parcel of being Canadian. Having a right to dental service would be part and parcel of being Canadian. I strongly believe that it is something Canadians will not want to give up.

For me, that is the really big news in this budget, and it is the overwhelming reason why New Democrats are proud to support it. It is why we undertook negotiating with the government to get

something out of this Parliament, which Canadians elected just six months ago.

Having spoken a little about dental care, I now want to talk a little about the state of politics and what has been happening, not only in this place but also outside of this place, and why New Democrats felt it was important to take a constructive approach to this Parliament to deliver real results that are going to make a difference in people's lives. I do not think it is news to anyone in this chamber, who are all involved in politics in one way, shape or form to a very high degree, that the nature of political discourse has been getting really nasty, nastier and nastier, over the course of many years now. This started even before the pandemic. There is no shortage of things to be angry about in a time of rising inflation and uncertainty during the challenges of the pandemic.

It is appropriate for people to feel concern, anxiety and anger at the changes that are happening around them and the impacts they are having on them in their lives. However, as elected people, as public officials, as leaders in our community, we have a choice to make. We could double down on that strategy of polarization, anger and division to drive a wedge between us and get as much political benefit as we can by going to people in their anger and ramping it up, taking advantage of that to elect more of those the people see as the best flag bearer of that anger, or we could recognize that things have been getting worse as our politics have gotten more polarized.

As gratifying and as satisfying as that anger can be, and there is an important element in politics of giving expression to people's legitimate frustration, it has not been getting us to solutions. It has not actually been heading off the real problems that are the source of that anxiety and anger. We are called to try to do something different, instead of doing the same old thing. We know, in the NDP, if people want to double down on that strategy of anger and polarization, there is no shortage of places they could go for people who are going to encourage that.

However, they want to see their politicians get down to work and recognize that there are real differences between, for instance, the NDP and the Liberals, just as there are real differences between the NDP and the Conservatives. Perhaps there are fewer differences than we are sometimes led to believe between the Liberals and the Conservatives, but they certainly like to ramp up the contrast on the differences that are there.

● (1230)

I think Canadians do want to see us get down to work. They do want to see us move forward on constructive proposals. That message was very clear in the last election when Canadians elected a Parliament that looks very much like the one before, after telling us in no uncertain terms that they did not want an election. In fact, in the lead-up to the last election, just in June before we recessed for the summer that turned into the election that no one wanted, every opposition party in this place pledged to not cause an election because they recognized that it was not what Canadians wanted. It was not going to be the solution to our problems.

The Budget

When we came back here after the election, we asked ourselves how we could try to do politics differently. We did this not to disregard the important differences between us and other parties in the chamber, but to ask how we could work collaboratively.

The first instance of successful collaboration for me in this Parliament was when I worked with members of the Conservative Party and the Bloc Québécois at the finance committee to pass an amendment on the new pandemic benefits program that the government had introduced. The amendment was to make sure that, unlike in the first iteration, in the new program, companies that were accepting wage subsidy money would not be able to pay dividends to their shareholders. We agreed that was something that was important to do. That is an example of New Democrats being willing to work with people in other parties to get things done that would matter for Canadians.

In recent weeks, we managed to reach an agreement with the government to make sure that certain priorities that we fought for and believe are important, and that we think will serve Canadians well, would be in the budget. We are going to continue to work under the framework of that agreement to deliver on more, but there has been the beginning of delivering those priorities in this agreement. I want to talk a bit more about what some of those items are.

I will start by talking about revenue because it is a big part of the conversation about how the federal government gets on a good fiscal track. Our contention here, and why we opposed a Conservative opposition day motion that called for no new taxes at all, is that revenue has to be part of that conversation. There is no credible path to balance without talking about the revenue side of the equation. That is why there was work done in the agreement between us and the government on moving on revenue. There were a few measures, but I am going to talk specifically about is the permanent increase of 1.5% on the corporate tax rate for banks and insurance companies

In addition to that, there was a pandemic dividend, another tax on banks and insurance companies, which was a one-time tax of 15% extra. That sounds like a lot. We have to bear in mind that it is 15% extra on their earnings over \$1 billion. This is not about going after all of the mom and pop businesses that struggled in the pandemic, the ones that needed help and are still trying to get back on their feet. This is about giant companies that did very well during the pandemic and should be pitching in to help pay for the ongoing support needed to get Canadians the rest of the way through this pandemic. This is also about starting to get serious about tackling the climate crisis, which is something that, unfortunately, this budget does not do. I am going to come back to that in my remarks.

We got started on revenue, but we were just talking in question period today about the fact that two reports came out this week, showing that a number of other giant companies in other industries have made record profits. Cargill alone, in 2021, made \$5 billion in net income, which is over half again what it had made in 2020. That is a giant increase, and it is an increase that goes well above and beyond its rising costs, or it would not be an increase in net revenue but an increase in gross revenue.

What we know is that a lot of companies are using this time of economic uncertainty to raise their prices much higher than their

costs are going up. That is why we believe the government has not gone far enough in this budget. We believe that pandemic dividends should be applied to many more companies that have made much more money during the pandemic, as a result of the pandemic and the permission it appears to have given the companies to raise prices. They should not feel that permission is legitimate. There is a way to stop that or curtail it, which is by taxing that extra profit and reinvesting it in the things we need.

● (1235)

That is a little on the revenue front, and I could go on. We have talked about having a wealth tax on fortunes of \$10 million and greater. We have talked about serious action on tax havens, which we do not see here. After successive Liberal and Conservative government have made cozy tax arrangements with tax haven nations, we know Canada is losing about \$25 billion a year in revenue, and that is revenue that would well be spent here at home, if only our governments would stop allowing the wealthiest among us and the biggest companies to shelter their wealth from those legitimate taxes.

This budget also brings measures the NDP fought for that are about value for money. Dental care is about value for money, because we know that when we do not get access to preventative oral care, it creates health problems that cost more to fix later, once they have gotten worse, than it would have if we could have nipped it in the bud. That is despite all the other benefits to people's quality of life, and from having access to timely preventative oral health care.

Value for money comes from the initiative on housing, and particularly the change in definition under the national housing strategy of what counts as affordable. For instance, prior to this budget and prior to the agreement with the NDP, the definition of affordable housing was 30% of the median household income in an area. That means that in many cases so-called affordable units could actually be rented out at higher than the market rate, and I will give some examples. In Edmonton, where the average market rent was \$1,180 a month, under the definition of affordable in the Liberals' national housing plan, someone could charge up to \$2,627 a month.

The Budget

We got the definition changed, so that it is no longer about the income of the people who we happen to live next to, but is actually about having units rented at 80% of market rate. That would mean that in Edmonton, that unit, which public dollars helped to build, and which could have been rented out at over \$2,500 a month, under the new definition would have to be rented out at \$944 a month. That is just one example, and there are comparable examples from many different markets across the country.

That is about getting better value for public money, because we can announce as much money as we want to build new housing, but if we are contributing to new housing under the pretext of making new affordable units and those units are rented above market rate, we are never going to get out of the hole we are in, and we are not going to create affordable housing for Canadians. The New Democrats care very much about ensuring that when public dollars are spent, we are getting value for that money. We were not getting it under the national housing strategy, and we are now going to get it because of this important change in the definition, which does not cost Canadians an extra dime, but it will get a hell of a lot more value out of the money they are spending on housing.

On the rapid housing initiative, we heard earlier about the importance of social housing beyond simply affordable housing. The rapid housing initiative is the only program under the national housing strategy that delivers any social housing units. There is no question that we need to do more, but that is why it was a priority for the NDP to see a year's extension of the rapid housing initiative. It is under that program that we are seeing some social housing units built. There is no question that we need to do more, but that is how we get value for money.

I would add that we see reference again to pharmacare in the budget. I am very glad, because the reference to pharmacare in the Liberal platform was dropped altogether in 2021, and that reference to pharmacare would not be in the budget but for the NDP's negotiations. We used the leverage of our 25 seats in this place to get the government to do the right thing, which it said it would do.

That is about value for money as well as better service for Canadians, because a national pharmacare plan, while it will cost \$20 billion on federal books, costs less than the \$24 billion that Canadians currently spend on prescription drugs through various provincial and territorial programs, individual payments, and company benefit plans and the premiums they pay on those plans, so pharmacare is a way to get better value for the money Canadians already spend on prescription drugs, and actually would lower the overall cost by \$4 billion.

- (1240)

The NDP is very much concerned about having good books, but not at the expense of individual Canadian households. We are not here to talk about how we take the real deficit, a deficit in services and the ability of Canadians to pay for the things they need, off the public books, transfer it onto individual Canadians and tell them to sink or swim on their own, particularly when so many are close to drowning financially after all the effects of the pandemic. We are here to ask how to pay for these things together, how to raise the revenue we need to pay for them and how we get the value for

money that we need so that we are not paying more than we should for the things we need. That is what we are here to talk about.

I know my time is running out, which is too bad as I have many more things to say, but I want to talk about some of the deficiencies in the budget, and I will zone in particularly on climate.

The fact of the matter is that we do not have a lot of time to act. We do not have a lot of time to get it right. For decades now, Canada has been running a bet on the fossil fuel industry. We have been doing it in terms of revenue for government, hoping that it works out. We have been doing it on climate, hoping that it works out, and we have been losing on that bet. We have been losing on the climate side for sure. To the extent that eventually the floor is going to fall through on that bet, we have not been doing what we need to do to make sure that we have diversified our economy for the sake of workers who are going to feel it when the fossil fuel industry is not what it once was. We have already experienced some periods of that recently.

We have also been failing to diversify the sources of government revenue that will also have to be made up when the fossil fuel sector is not the same cash cow for government that it has been. The problem with this budget is that it doubles down on the bet, hoping that carbon capture and storage is going to allow the fossil fuel industry to continue. We saw that not only in the budget but also in the recent approval of the Bay du Nord project.

The government continues to hope that some new technology, as yet unproven at scale, is going to reduce emissions for fossil fuels adequately enough that we can pretend the fossil fuel industry is not the problem that it is in respect of the climate crisis. That is not the approach we need. We cannot continue to double down on the bet. We have to change tracks and start diversifying. That means investing in renewable energy.

There is a proposal out there for a western regional power grid, for instance. That is a major nation-building infrastructure project that can put people to work who have a lot of transposable skills from the oil sands to build something that is going to be of massive benefit to the country, that can generate massive revenue for the country and that will actually displace fossil fuels as one of the sources of electricity generation in Canada. That kind of project is a good thing. I raise that as just one example of the kind of innovative, big-thinking projects that could go a long way to changing Canada's emissions profile. Instead, we see \$2.9 billion, or thereabouts, for carbon capture and sequestration, which gives back to oil companies that currently are making a lot of money with high oil prices. That is a miss.

The Budget

Of course we know that when it comes to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, which we heard earlier in question period, we need action. It has been years now since that report was released, and indigenous women and girls are still the object of violence. They are still disappearing. They are still being killed. Their families are still grieving. The bureaucratic kind of inertia of this place is not an excuse to deprive those families of justice or an excuse not to protect indigenous women and girls who are currently in danger just by virtue of living in our communities. That is completely unacceptable. We need to find a path forward. I know the member for Winnipeg Centre has been doing excellent work, pushing the minister and the government to get action. New Democrats look forward to supporting that work as best we can and seeing a much more definitive plan for how we make immediate progress as we move forward.

• (1245)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this budget has been described as modern supply-side economics. The traditional supply-side economics, as brought forward by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, went for deregulation and big tax cuts for big business so that it would expand. It worked, except it worked in Asia and not in North America, and we lost a lot of good middle-class jobs.

According to Janet Yellen, the U.S. treasury secretary, modern supply-side economics prioritizes labour supply, human capital, public infrastructure, research and development and investments in a sustainable environment. I would like the hon. member's comments on whether he sees this budget in the same light.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I think I would be more inclined to see it in that light, first, if we recognize that indigenous people are a large and growing segment of the Canadian population, particularly in Manitoba where I am from, and that we need to invest in indigenous people. We need to make sure they have the housing they need so that they are not concerned about overcrowding where they live or mould in their homes while they are trying to get an education so that they can participate in the labour market.

I would be more inclined to feel that way about the budget if it gave a meaningful timeline for employment insurance reform, which is a really important part of helping workers navigate a difficult labour market at the moment. Despite the fact that there are a lot of jobs available, it does not mean that every worker is the right match for the job that is available. We need to do more on that.

I was remiss in not mentioning the Canada disability benefit and I hope I am going to get a question on that so we can talk a bit more about that. Certainly, when we talk about a limited supply-side economics focusing on workers, there is a lot more focus we need to put on workers for this budget to earn that title.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his intervention and his comments, especially as they relate to greater co-operation in the House and the tone that we take. I think that is very important. I would like to mention that I have enjoyed working well with my colleague on the finance committee. As he referenced, we did make an amendment to government legislation. I hope I can look forward to some potential co-operation in the future with respect to legislation as well.

With respect to the budget, the question I have for this member is this: The government has put forward, in part of its housing strategy, a marquee new account for young people to save for a home. I wonder if he could let the House know what his thoughts are on the housing strategy in general but in particular this marquee savings account that this government will be touting all across the country.

• (1250)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to get such a thoughtful question on housing policy. I think the issue I have with that and that I am concerned about is that, in the absence of an aggressive initiative by the government to address the financialization of housing, efforts like this to make a little bit more cash available to first-time homebuyers are just going to get eaten up in the bidding process. If we had a relatively stable housing market, without the kind of year-over-year price increases that we have seen, this kind of thing might be helpful, but in a context where bidding wars continue to drive up the price year over year in incredible ways, my concern is that this is simply going to contribute to higher bids on houses. The winners there are developers and real estate agents, not the homebuyers.

That is why we need to see the government take action like, for instance, what they have done in New Zealand, where they have an incrementally higher down payment for every subsequent property. We need to cool the investment activity before a policy like this can really make the difference all members would want to see it make.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would agree that a significant piece of this budget is the national dental care plan. This is essential, I think, for all of our health. It is one step toward completing Tommy Douglas's dream from 60 years ago, and I know the seniors in my community would welcome it. Starting this year, children will begin to get dental services, so that is a key piece with regard to which 25 New Democrats were able to leverage our power to bring such services to Canadians.

With that being said, he commented on a variety of other issues. I know that the people in Vancouver East are particularly concerned about the lack of action on the climate emergency. In British Columbia, we have experienced extreme weather from wildfires to floods and so on. I would like to ask the member to elaborate on this piece and the shortcomings within the budget.

As well, for people who are faced with disabilities in our community, I would like to hear his comments around what the government needs to be taking action on to address that.

The Budget

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, on the question of the Canada disability benefit that the Liberals promised in the last Parliament and promised again in their platform, I was hoping to see something on that. It was not an item we appeared able to get into the agreement, but it is something we really do need to move forward on quickly. People living with disabilities across the country, who have been legislated into poverty for far too long, deserve to see swift action on this. I know our disabilities critic has written the minister on this issue, calling for the introduction of legislation quickly, and that is important so that we can get the details right. I do not think it should be a rush job.

With respect to climate, as I was saying earlier, they are really not on the right track in this budget. We need to be looking at how we diversify our energy sources into far more renewable energy. They were willing to spend tens of billions of dollars on a pipeline, and then they turn around and say public investment is not the answer on renewable energy and that we need private capital to step up and do that. I cannot, for the life of me, figure out why it is acceptable to spend almost \$20 billion on a pipeline and then plead poverty when it comes time to invest in renewable energy.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is such a pleasure to see you in the chair.

[English]

I know the hon. member and I can agree on a lot of things that are in the budget, and I am delighted because that is what Canadians want us to do. They want us to work together to do what is best for Canadians, so I am delighted we can find some common ground in budget 2022.

One area he did not discuss in his speech that I would like to get his opinion on is the additional \$8 billion in defence spending on top of what we have already committed to with “Strong, Secure, Engaged”.

As the member knows, I am the mother of two serving members and the mother-in-law of a serving member. There is a joke on the Hill that I am the force generator. As the force generator here on the Hill, I would like to get the member's opinion on the increase in defence spending, given what is happening in Europe right now, given the fact we need to modernize NORAD and given the fact we need to look at “Strong, Secure, Engaged”. We wrote it almost five years ago and a lot of things have changed. I would like the member to elaborate.

• (1255)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I talked a little earlier about the polarizing nature of political debate. In the last week or so, there has been a tendency to think one is either on board with spending 2% of GDP on defence spending, which would represent about \$25 billion a year every year going forward, or one is not in favour of any defence spending at all. That is a false dichotomy.

What New Democrats have always said is that our men and women in uniform need the equipment and skills to do what they are asked to do. We saw them deployed during the pandemic to our long-term care facilities. We have seen them deployed domestically and internationally in response to natural disasters or humanitarian

crises. These are things they need the equipment to be able to do. It is no secret to anyone that there has been an incredible inability by governments of both stripes to be able to procure new equipment for our defence forces.

We do support some spending in order to get them the equipment they need. We are very skeptical about 2% of GDP as the right amount. Clearly, we have priorities like dental care, pharmacare and other things we think should take precedence over that much of an increase in defence spending. We are not opposed to some increases in defence spending, but we are adamant that 2% of GDP is more than we ought to be affording for defence spending at this time, given all the other pressing demands on the shoulders of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to see you in the chair.

[English]

I am starting to see you in the chair so often, in fact, that I am wondering about your ambitions. I know you take great pride in being on the opposition side, but maybe you are trying to tell us something. In all seriousness, the fact that folks are kidding along speaks to the fact that you are very well liked in the House and well respected. I had the pleasure of working with you at the finance committee over the years and wish you well.

I will tell you at the outset that I am sharing my time with the member for Saint Boniface—Saint Vital.

Like any budget, budget 2022 is ultimately a statement of values. Of course, there are details: there are nuances, the technical side and numbers, but it is a statement of values. In this budget, we see a number of issues addressed. I want to speak about the budget from the vantage point of a member of Parliament from the community of London, Ontario. It is a community like so many others where people are focused on, and concerned about, housing.

I also look at this budget and see, and am thankful, that the government has continued to take a layered or nuanced approach to housing. It is not understanding it as just one thing, but separating it and understanding that there are challenges that come along when dealing with the continued issue of homelessness in Canada. London is like all other cities in the country. It is certainly plagued with that challenge. However, there is also the issue of supply and pricing and what those mean for young professionals especially, but also for others. The budget certainly takes a view that separates those two.

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The first category deals with individuals who have real social issues and challenges. They have experienced homelessness and perhaps are also dealing with alcohol or drug addiction, or could face those issues of deep poverty that prevent them from realizing their best selves, or they have mental health issues that are standing in their way. The extension of the rapid housing initiative that we have seen in this budget speaks to that ongoing issue. The extension would see, in the next few years, an additional 6,000 affordable units built. This is a hugely important outcome for these individuals: the members of our community who unfortunately fall into this category.

I would hope, and I would expect, that as part of that we would see a continued partnership among the government, the CMHC and not-for-profits to realize a good outcome. While the government is very good at identifying the problem, it is in no position, and nobody expects it to be in a position, to understand and have expertise on the ground. That varies, of course, from community to community. Not-for-profits in communities have that understanding, that knowledge and that background.

In my community, where the rapid housing initiative has been implemented, we have seen continued partnership among the federal government, the CMHC and not-for-profits to ensure that the rapid housing initiative comes to fruition. Certainly this is in municipalities as well. We are going to continue to work with them to ensure the quick construction of units.

On the other side of the ledger, there is the new housing accelerator fund. This is \$4 billion over five years beginning in 2022-23. It will be operated by the CMHC, and the focus is on supply. I mentioned before that we have to divide housing. We have to understand it for what it is: an inherently complex area of policy. There is no silver-bullet solution, so to speak. We need to understand that, while the rapid housing initiative will deal with the problems that I spoke about just now, the issue of affordability and of rapidly escalating housing prices is something that needs to be dealt with through other policy mechanisms.

For example, in London, we have seen the average cost of a home that was around \$400,000 just a few years ago double to in excess of \$800,000 by last count. This is affecting the city. This is affecting the wider region. We have had many individuals drive until they qualify. It is no fault of their own. They are going to do what is best for their families. They have left the GTA, for example, and have come and settled in London.

● (1300)

A program such as this speaks to that challenge because, as more people have come and as our population has increased, we see supply challenges. London is one of the fastest-growing communities in the entire country. A program like the housing accelerator fund puts assisting municipalities with issuing permits as quickly as possible, and cutting down on other red tape and delays, at its very core.

It is great to see that the government has listened to the home builders, for example, across the country. Certainly, I want to thank home builders in London, Ontario. The London Home Builders Association does great work. I have engaged with its members over the years on this issue.

Realtors have brought this up. I want to thank the London-St. Thomas Association of Realtors, or LSTAR, for its work.

This is something that will deal with the issue of supply and ensure that Canadians faced with the challenge of home prices will hopefully, in the near future but not immediately, see an effect and a downward trajectory in overall home prices.

The other thing I wish to talk about, still focused on housing because it does remain the top issue in my community, is the announcement by the government yesterday of the creation of the tax-free first home savings account. This is something that I spoke about at great length during the election campaign. I was going door to door and engaging with constituents, not just young people, for example, who were having a tough time in terms of being priced out of the market right now in London. Their parents were also deeply anxious about the prospects for their kids going forward, in terms of being able to afford homes.

This is a program that would allow first-time home buyers to save up to \$40,000 tax-free. The funds would be contributed. They would go in on a tax-free basis and be withdrawn again tax-free. No tax would be applied on any investment gain.

As I have said, it is great not just for young people, but for anybody facing the challenge of getting into the market right now. The top concern that I hear constantly is about putting together the money for a down payment. A tax-free account such as this, modelled on the TFSA but also on the RRSP system, would go a long way toward helping families.

For the last thing that I will talk about, I will go in a different direction. I do so in my capacity as the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Revenue. It is an enormous honour to work with her on issues relating to revenue in general and specifically the CRA: the Canada Revenue Agency.

As we saw yesterday, budget 2022 proposes \$1.2 billion over the next five years beginning in 2022-23. This would go to funding the audits of large entities and non-residents engaged in aggressive tax avoidance. It would also increase the prosecution of those engaged in tax evasion.

We have seen great efforts in this direction over the previous four or five years, beginning in budget 2016, in fact. We saw a very significant increase to the CRA by way of this government's commitment and the recognition that investing in the CRA does yield a result. In fact, for every \$1 invested, \$5 is returned.

I want to thank the officials and the public servants of the Canada Revenue Agency for their work over the years. Of course, there is much more work to do on the issue of avoidance and evasion, but we are certainly seized with that on this side of the aisle. We take the ideas of the opposition on this as well, but there have been gains in this direction. I would expect those gains to continue, certainly building on the investments of the past few years and yesterday's announcement as well.

The Budget

I look forward to engaging with colleagues so that we can see these measures fully passed and dealt with so that they can benefit the country.

• (1305)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk specifically about an area of the budget with respect to a private member's bill, Bill S-216. Bill S-216 is a piece of legislation that seeks to remove the archaic "own activities test". The budget said that it wanted to have the spirit of Bill S-216 brought into effect.

First, will these changes be made in the Budget Implementation Act? Second, a big part of Bill S-216 is removing the "own activities test". This is an archaic provision that forces Canadian charities to directly supervise the behaviour of other organizations they may choose to partner with. This is particularly challenging in areas that have had a long history of government misuse, such as indigenous charities and otherwise. Because of that, they often have mistrust. It is almost colonial or patriarchal in scope for Canadian charities to have to take over. To sum up quickly, will the changes appear in the BIA, and will the "own activities test" be removed?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Speaker, it is good to get a question from a colleague who I have the pleasure of working with on the public accounts committee. While we do not know each other terribly well, it has been good to begin to get to know him over the past few months.

I know there is interest in Bill S-216. I have heard it from other members of Parliament on the government's side and from colleagues in opposition. We shall see. The budget does talk about the spirit of Bill S-216. What that ultimately means in terms of how that will manifest is something to be discussed among colleagues in the House.

I would also be very happy to engage with the member opposite by way of a phone call, a coffee or whatever it might be to hear his thoughts on why this reform is needed and the best ways to go about it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague from London North Centre. One thing that is missing from this budget is help for seniors. There is absolutely nothing.

On page 188, it says that seniors are not doing so badly and are not really living in poverty. However, I would remind my colleague that last August, during a totally useless election campaign, the Prime Minister promised seniors he would increase the guaranteed income supplement by \$500 for people living alone and \$750 for couples, but there is nothing for seniors in this budget.

The government continues to discriminate against seniors by dividing them into two classes. Old age security will go up starting at 75. There is nothing for people aged 65 to 74.

I would like my colleague to explain how the government can claim that drugs, rent or any consumer goods cost less for people 65 to 74 than for people 75 and up.

• (1310)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

[*English*]

I would simply tell my colleague to look at the actions of the government during the pandemic. Seniors certainly were a major focus for the government, and we will continue to make seniors a priority. There are a few things I could, by way of specifics, look at in the budget in speaking to the needs of seniors. They are areas where Canadians would benefit in general terms. One is the issue that I spoke about at the outset of my speech: the rapid housing initiative. I can tell the member that so many seniors in housing need have benefited through that program. The pharmacare and dental care will go a long way to support seniors, as well.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo my Conservative colleague's interest in Bill S-216 and how important that is. The question I have today for the member is regarding foreign aid.

We did see an \$8-billion investment in our military. One of the things that I have mentioned in the House is that an increase in military aid is tied to an increase in humanitarian aid, because war is a failure of development and it is a failure of humanitarian action.

Would he be supportive of a call to tie our amount spent on defence to our amount spent on humanitarian aid?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Speaker, this is the party of Lester Pearson, so any time the issue of foreign aid comes up, I am always going to be receptive to suggestions. I would also encourage my friends in the NDP to recognize the fact that the international environment on security issues and on issues of war and peace has changed, and I would encourage them to look at what most Canadians are calling for, which is more military spending. I am glad to see that the budget moved in that direction yesterday.

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to be here on behalf of my constituents in Saint Boniface—Saint Vital.

[*Translation*]

I want to acknowledge that I am on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

It is a great honour to rise here and talk about our government's ambitious plan to make life more affordable for Canadians, protect our environment, continue to grow the economy, and create new jobs and opportunities. We are working hard to create a better future where everyone has a real and fair chance at success, and that includes northerners.

It is very clear that budget 2022 builds on the momentum of our government's previous budgets.

The Budget

The past two years have been tough on all Canadians. In the face of a pandemic, businesses and families have looked to their governments to help protect their livelihoods, ensure their health and safety, and support our economy to ensure that it comes back stronger than ever. That is exactly what our government has done.

[*English*]

In fact, we have recovered more than 112% of the jobs that we lost due to the pandemic, and our unemployment rate today stands at 5.3%, the lowest ever recorded in the history of recording unemployment rates in this country. However, the pandemic further exposed the vulnerabilities of northern communities and highlighted the unique challenges many northerners face related to climate change, food insecurity, infrastructure, lack of housing and remote-ness, so we were there to help fill those gaps.

To build more inclusive and resilient communities, in total, since March 2020, our government has made over \$850 million in targeted COVID relief and recovery measures in the Arctic and in the north. Our government is promoting an inclusive economy and supporting the economic participation of groups facing barriers in the Prairie economy, such as indigenous people, Black Canadians, women and young people. Budget 2022 continues to support economic development and growth in the north and in the Prairies. Whether it is cutting taxes for small businesses, investing in tourism, which has been hit hard during the pandemic, or making new investments in carbon capture, utilization and storage or investments in zero-emissions technology, we are creating good jobs in the north and in the Prairies that will green the economy and make Canada a world leader in clean ag tech.

When it comes to agriculture, our government is investing over \$1 billion in clean ag tech, on-farm climate action, carbon sequestration and post-secondary research for a net-zero emission agriculture. All of this is done as we prioritize the implementation of the Arctic and northern policy framework, together with indigenous, territorial and provincial partners, to ensure that Canada's northern and Arctic residents, especially indigenous people, are thriving, strong and safe.

The top issue I hear when meeting with northerners both virtually and in real time is infrastructure and housing. Access to safe, quality, affordable housing has been a top issue for too long for far too many people in the north and in the Arctic.

We know there are gaps, but we are responding. With partners, we have created intergovernmental working groups in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories to find innovative solutions to address housing shortages. Building on past investments, budget 2022 makes historic new investments in northern housing. The north faces unique housing needs because of higher construction costs, shorter construction seasons, infrastructure gaps and the effects of climate change, which are increasing as the north has been warming at roughly three times the global warming rate. Last year, we invested \$50 million and now, in budget 2022, we propose to invest \$150 million through Northern Affairs over two years to support affordable housing and related infrastructure in the north, with \$60 million for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and \$30 million for Yukon.

• (1315)

More than that, we recognize the need to expedite the rollout of distinctions-based housing funding to help communities build much-needed infrastructure. That is why budget 2022 provides \$4.3 billion over seven years toward improving and expanding indigenous housing in the north, which includes first nations housing on reserve, housing in self-governing and modern treaty holder first nations communities, \$845 million for housing in Inuit Nunangat, housing for Métis communities and launching and co-developing an urban, rural and northern indigenous housing strategy.

Few regions are impacted as seriously by climate change as the north, so our government is also providing support for hydroelectricity and clean energy development in the north and contributing to Canada's strengthened climate plan. We have provided investments to support green energy projects in the north to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and promote renewable energy in growing northern communities, like the Inuit-led Kivalliq hydro-fibre link project to Manitoba. Budget 2022 also includes \$32.2 million over two years to support the Atlin hydro expansion project, which will provide clean energy to Yukon and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is on top of the over \$83.9 million our government has previously invested. Transformative projects like this will help Canada meet its climate objectives. They bolster indigenous participation in the Canadian economy, provide clean, green jobs and directly support reconciliation with indigenous nations.

Many of the clean energy sources of our present and future are found north of 60, and budget 2022 provides up to \$3.8 billion in support over eight years to implement Canada's first critical minerals strategy. This significant investment will focus on priority critical mineral deposits, while we work closely with the affected indigenous nations and through established regulatory processes. We have earmarked \$40 million to support the critical minerals northern regulatory processes. The budget also introduces a new 30% critical mineral exploration tax credit for specified mineral exploration expenses incurred in Canada and renounced to flow-through share investors.

We recognize the importance of access to water and clean fresh water across western Canada. Just last week, I was in the north, alongside the Prime Minister, to announce \$214 million for a new Iqaluit water infrastructure system. Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$43.5 million over five years and \$8.7 million ongoing to create a new Canada water agency this year. It provides \$19.6 million to sustain the freshwater action plan. This funding will support cleanup efforts in Lake Winnipeg. The budget also proposes to provide \$25 million to support the experimental lakes area project, which is critical to fresh water across Canada.

The budget also includes many important measures for the Prairies, the north and the Arctic: a renewed commitment to modernize NORAD and defence, including in Canada's north; \$2 million to address the historical impacts of the Giant Mine on the Yellowknives Dene First Nation in the Northwest Territories, one of the most shameful historic events in our country's history; \$4.8 million for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada to support its operations; important supports for doctors and nurses in rural, northern and remote communities; and \$14.5 million to support the completion and operations of the Canadian High Arctic Research Station, or CHARs.

We are listening to northerners, we are listening to westerners, we are listening to indigenous partners and we are acting. This is an ambitious budget, one that is fiscally responsible and will lead our country out of the pandemic for many years to come.

Meegwetch. Qujannamiik. Marsi.

• (1320)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question will again be directed toward the potential implementation of the spirit of Bill S-216, as included in the budget act.

As we have seen, the existing charitable law, or the transfer between charities and non-qualified donees or non-charities, is extremely archaic. In fact, some would say it is colonial in structure, which makes it very difficult for charities to have the right type of operation. For example, if a charity wants to give money to an overseas project, it cannot, as it is physically impossible for it to oversee every single judgment. Bill S-216 was put in place to make sure those tactical decisions could stay on the ground while there was still lots of accountability.

The challenge is in the budget document, and I have a quote from a professional in the field. He says the examples of accountability requirements set out in budget 2022 are extremely detailed, highly prescriptive and operational in nature, which will make things extremely challenging if this is implemented in this method. We want to make sure that charities are, of course, accountable and transparent to their donors, but we also want to make sure that charities have sufficient autonomy to do their work to help people, particularly in the indigenous context. Unfortunately, indigenous people have been mistreated by governments since the very beginning of our country, and some of this has been quite egregious, including the residential schools.

Instead of adopting a colonial method, why would we not give charities more autonomy, as in Bill S-216?

The Budget

• (1325)

Hon. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for putting this on my radar. I could certainly talk longer about our reconciliation objectives and actions than I could about the actual details of the charity aspect in the budget. However, I thank the member for putting it on my radar and I endeavour to get back to him. I will do the research and find out about the particular issue he is referencing, and I will speak to him.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I just listened to my colleague's speech, in which he talked about the need for housing, which is pressing in Quebec and especially in my riding.

The vacancy rate in the city of Rimouski is 0.2% right now, and that is unprecedented. The city has the fourth-worst rate in Quebec. The national housing strategy announced by the Liberal government in 2017 allocated \$40 billion over 10 years. We are halfway through that time frame, but the government has not yet invested half of that amount. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer predicted that the targets set by the government would not be met.

Yesterday's budget announced \$4 billion over 10 years to create 100,000 new homes. We need 100,000 new homes in the next five years just in Quebec.

Can my colleague explain to me how the money announced yesterday is really going to help address the housing crisis?

Hon. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that important question.

I can say that yesterday's budget really does focus on residential housing. It includes over \$4 billion in new money over six years. We are addressing this issue through our residential housing policy, which will inject about \$70 billion into affordable residential housing by 2025-26.

In addition, we will invest \$4.3 billion over seven years in residential housing for indigenous communities across Canada. The money will be distributed among Inuit, first nations and Métis peoples. This is extremely important for our country, and we will continue to work with the territories, the provinces and indigenous nations to achieve these goals.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what about housing for persons with disabilities? We see some small investments in this budget for housing co-ops, but CMHC used to be a leader in building co-operative housing, which is critical to the disability community.

Private Members' Business

Today I ask this: Will the Liberals commit to immediately restoring CMHC's former role in spearheading social development housing, expanding co-ops and building more co-ops, and protecting current co-ops from being scooped by REITs?

Hon. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, this is really a budget that is focused on affordability and housing. There is over \$14 billion of new investment over six years for non-profit housing. There are significant amounts for indigenous housing, co-developed in partnership with Métis, first nations and Inuit groups. There is \$845 million for housing in Inuit Nunangat alone.

We are working very closely with indigenous nations, territories and provinces. I do know there is an important sum for co-operative housing, and we will work with our partners to build good projects.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the minister for his interventions and members for the questions that went into that.

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1330)

[English]

COPYRIGHT ACT

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.) moved that Bill C-244, An Act to amend the Copyright Act (diagnosis, maintenance and repair), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand here today in the House to speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-244, an act to amend the Copyright Act, which would allow Canadians the right to diagnosis, maintenance and repair. This bill was tabled previously by the member for Cambridge, and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge their work.

It is a great privilege to be drawn so early for Private Members' Business on such an important bill. This bill is part of the mandate letter for the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. In the last Parliament, all parties in the House unanimously supported this bill. It was discussed in the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology before the House rose.

Bill C-244 would fundamentally change the way consumers interact with the products they purchase with their hard-earned money. Introducing the right to repair would allow for wide-ranging solutions to some of the world's most pressing environmental issues. It would better inform Canadians of the environmental impacts coming from the products they purchase. This bill is non-partisan and would benefit all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

It would create a pathway for a right-to-repair framework to be implemented within our provincial and territorial governments. The right-to-repair framework is a multi-dimensional issue. It is an important consideration for consumer protection, for competition and for intellectual property. The right to repair takes a user-friendly approach and responds to some of the most common consumer prob-

lems in allowing repairs to be made locally while also driving technological innovation. It is my sincere hope that this bill will be supported by my fellow members of the House.

The lifetime of electronics has diminished dramatically over the past decade, with consumers finding it to be more cost-effective to replace their broken items rather than repair them. This means that Canadians are not only paying more for the products they are using; they are also using them for less time. Ever-increasing numbers of products are ending up in landfills. There are over 20 million tonnes of electronic waste across the world right now as a result of the lifespan of devices being limited by planned obsolescence.

Planned obsolescence refers to the shortening of a product's useful life and making it out of date within a short period of time. This practice is costing thousands of dollars every year for middle-class families, many of whom are already feeling the effects of rising inflation due to the pandemic. This practice is creating a significant environmental impact, which Bill C-244 proposes to address.

This bill would protect consumers, create a positive impact on their savings account and contribute to a sustainable future. By introducing a limited scope of change to allow the diagnosis, maintenance or repair of a product, we would be reducing waste to our landfills and extending the lifespan of a product. The introduction of a right-to-repair framework would reduce the detrimental mining currently required to produce new products and conserve the country's precious natural resources.

Activists and organizations around the world have been advocating adoption of the right to repair. This movement began during the infancy of the computer era in the 1950s. I am pleased to bring forth this bill today in the House.

The Copyright Act prevents repairs to copyrighted products, although nothing is being copied or distributed. This is beyond the scope of the purpose for which the legislation was intended. This practice could be considered anti-competitive in nature, which brings into question the legality of the Copyright Act. Industry players and lobbyists have suggested that intellectual property rights, security and safety concerns should limit a consumer's right to repair, but it should not be that way.

• (1335)

Years ago, products were made with simple parts without the use of smart technologies. Now everything from washing machines to video game consoles are customizable. While this brings a huge advantage to the informed consumer, the cost of repairs associated with smart devices can add up quickly.

This can cost the average Canadian more time and money in the long term. The right to repair can extend the life of a product by allowing manufacturers to supply information and spare parts and to facilitate replication after the part is no longer produced. Without the proposed right to repair amendment, if consumers decided to circumvent a technological protection measure, also known as a TPM, they could face legal consequences, simply for trying to repair their own product.

TPMs are put in place by the manufacturer to control and limit the use of a product, preventing the modification of the original work. Currently, it is illegal to circumvent technological protection measures in Canada. TPMs can restrict access to the basic information needed for diagnosis, maintenance or repair. They can also prevent repairs from being completed at all.

I believe the owner of a product should have the right to repair it. Copyright exists to protect the intellectual property and the original work of its creator. It ensures that programmers, developers and artists are fairly compensated for their contributions. As technology becomes more important in our daily lives, the use of our digital devices will become more relied upon for everyday services. Under the Copyright Act, the costs associated with ownership are significant and reoccurring. The right to repair can provide a road map to address these concerns.

Bill C-244 ensures that everyone has fair access to user manuals and software updates for their products. This bill will pave the way for making more parts and tools available. In the future, products can be designed in a more sustainable way and these repairs can be made easily by a third party. Providing these options is crucial, which we have seen during the pandemic, as Canadians rely on their digital devices to do their jobs and communicate safely with their loved ones.

Within the technology sector, reuse is the best green policy. Some of the most common repairs can cause malfunctions due to TPMs embedded within the product. A local repair shop could be making these repairs with a right to repair framework. Repair shops have access to replacement parts for limited products, but many businesses are avoiding this option due to the legal challenges that are placed on them. This means higher costs for Canadians, with more items being sent to landfills before they need to be. Bill C-244 seeks to avoid future problems with the Copyright Act by ensuring that repairs can be completed safely and efficiently.

Canada employs a voluntary exemption in the automotive industry, and Canadians can bring their vehicles to a local repair shop for this reason, supporting a local business in the process. Within the agriculture sector, farming equipment has different requirements. The Copyright Act can prevent farmers from repairing their equipment safely. As the cost of living continues to increase, this becomes very important to consider. Our country's farmers have been hit hard by the lack of a right to repair framework. It is my hope to provide Canadians with the replacement parts they need for a fair price and close to home. Offering secure options for repairs will provide peace of mind when something goes wrong.

• (1340)

In the medical sector, equipment became critical for many hospitals. Some of the most expensive equipment can make emergency

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repairs difficult. Repair technicians have been denied access to repair information and medical equipment since the pandemic began. Technicians should be allowed to repair equipment and perform diagnostic tests. We simply cannot leave hospitals and patients stranded during the worst pandemic we have experienced in our lives. We should allow the repairs hospitals need to care for our friends and family.

Many countries are committed to a sustainable future. The United States government also supported a right to repair framework, and 19 states now have their own right to repair measures. European countries are also legislating in this area as of 2021, where manufacturers can provide spare parts for simple and safe repairs. This legislation also requires that manufacturers can make other parts available to repair shops across Europe.

Clearly, it is time to address the limitations of the Copyright Act in Canada now.

Bill C-244 would change the definition of a technological protection measure; apply it to the software and computer programs within the product; allow circumvention of an encrypted program under section 41 of the Copyright Act; allow for the transfer of devices to service providers solely for the purpose of diagnosis, maintenance and repair; and most importantly, allow Canada to be a leader in sustainable consumerism.

Individuals will seek out the most cost-effective option when considering the repair or replacement of a product. The right to repair framework works within the free market system, allowing consumers to choose the best option for them. This provides continued innovation and growth when bringing new products to the market.

Let me be clear on the limitations of this bill, to address any pressing concerns of the members of the House. The circumvention of the TPMs would be allowed for the sole purpose of diagnosis, maintenance and repair only. Any other circumvention would be considered illegal. This would not rewrite the Copyright Act. The protection of the original work would remain, with legal options available against those who would violate the copyright illegally.

By creating a limited scope of change, Canadians would have the power to repair their own products. This change is designed to put a measure of control back into the hands of Canadians. Let us give hard-working Canadians repair options and save them money in the process. Let us work together in building a greener future for everyone and for our future generations to enjoy.

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It is my sincere hope that fellow members in the House see the benefit for Canadians in the proposed amendment and will vote together in support of the right to repair. I urge all members of the House to join me in supporting this bill, and I look forward to any questions and debates from my colleagues.

We must ensure Canada is a global leader in sustainable consumerism and a strong champion for consumer rights.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, right to repair is definitely a very important topic. When most people envision right to repair, they are thinking about their cellphones, TVs and trying to get smaller parts and knickknacks repaired. One part of the member's speech I found particularly interesting was with respect to farmers and the repair of machinery. On our farm, it quite often meant a four- or five-hour drive one way to get a part or to find somebody from a specific dealership or manufacturer who had the special ability to repair. That is a very important part to bring up.

However, there is one element that needs to be addressed. I wonder if the member has thought about the potential safety impacts, which are concerns within the industry, of allowing non-OEM-certified repairmen to repair machinery. I am wondering if you have any comments on that.

● (1345)

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind the member I did not allude to anything. I know the member was talking about the bill.

The hon. member for Richmond Centre has the floor.

Mr. Wilson Miao: Mr. Speaker, this bill addresses the right to repair for diagnosis and maintenance. It is important for us to carry out this framework so that we can help farmers in rural areas and allow them to have their equipment repaired within a close proximity so they do not need to travel far distances. Concerning safety, it would be difficult for farmers to not repair the expensive equipment they have purchased.

I look forward to this bill moving forward to committee, where we can further discuss this topic and hear the member's recommendations.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Richmond Centre for his speech and his Bill C-244.

I see that he is sitting next to the member for Cambridge, who introduced a similar bill, and I just want to say hi because we both sit on the Standing Committee on National Defence. That member's bill was passed unanimously at second reading. Unfortunately, there was an election, and the bill died on the Order Paper.

Is the member for Richmond Centre hopeful that we will be able to pass this bill quickly, given that members not only reached a consensus about it but were unanimously in favour? Here in the House of Commons, we have to take advantage when that happens.

[*English*]

Mr. Wilson Miao: Mr. Speaker, my French is not very good at the moment, so I will answer in English.

As we all know, the bill was tabled previously by the member for Cambridge, and it was unanimously moved forward to committee before the House rose. I look forward to the support of the members of the House for the bill so that we can further study this topic and, if necessary, create amendments to the bill to perfect it, so that we can carry out the right to repair for all Canadians.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member for Windsor West, has done a lot of work in this regard. In fact, he is the dean of the NDP and, prior to my time in the House, he moved forward the right to repair in the automobile sector. Ever since, we have been pushing to bring the right to repair to other products as well. In fact, we campaigned on this in the last election.

To that end, I am curious why people would be against this. I can only think of the industry, which wants to oppose the right to repair for its own profit margins. Is that the sense of the member as well, that this is the key reason why there is opposition to the right to repair by consumers?

Mr. Wilson Miao: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-244 addresses the right to repair for all Canadians. I know the member for Windsor West previously tabled a bill similar to this for the auto industry. I understand that it was at a point where voluntarily the automotive industry had exemptions for the right to repair. However, it is not mandatory, and right now the right to repair framework has yet to address this issue further. I look forward to more discussion and also debate with members of the House to better improve the bill.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, based on my study of copyright over the years, it tends to be a zero-sum game, someone wins and someone loses, unless they hit the sweet spot, in which case it is a win-win for everyone. We can see how the bill will probably create a new industry, a new repair industry employing some people with important skills.

Could the member comment on how the bill might also spur innovation at the level of the original equipment manufacturers?

● (1350)

Mr. Wilson Miao: Mr. Speaker, the bill actually addresses and creates a lot of economic opportunities in our nation. It would also expand on a new industry with repairs, spare parts and aftermarket parts, potentially OEM products. This is why it is important for us to discuss the bill together to see how we can fine-tune it to that sweet spot so that all Canadians can benefit from the bill.

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[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my role as critic, I rise today to speak to Bill C-244, which was introduced by the member for Richmond Centre. As we mentioned, this bill is a carbon copy of Bill C-272, which was introduced in the last Parliament by the member for Cambridge, who sits beside the member for Richmond Centre. The House studied the former bill before the election was called, and members will recall that the Conservatives supported Bill C-272 up to clause-by-clause consideration.

Therefore, I wish to inform the House that the official opposition will support Bill C-244 at second reading so that it may be studied clause by clause at a parliamentary committee, where all viewpoints will be heard, which is logical and part of our job. There are some exciting, interesting and appealing views on this bill, as well as other views that provide a different perspective and a better understanding of the situation, and that also reveal flaws that can be corrected by a parliamentary committee, if necessary.

Bill C-244 is essentially about copyright, but in simpler terms, it is about the right to repair.

We have all developed new habits as consumers. We buy electronics. Usually, if there is a problem, we open the case and try to figure out what is going on. If we cannot figure it out, we throw out the item and buy a new one.

In the not-too-distant past, whenever we ran into a problem with a household device or appliance, such as a toaster or washing machine, we would open it up and, with a little imagination, we might be able to repair it or at least find a solution. Now, though, these things get thrown out.

One positive outcome of Bill C-244 would be that people would be allowed to repair things themselves. In addition, the bill would prevent broken devices and appliances from being sent to landfill because the owners are not able to repair them themselves. This is an environmentally friendly approach.

The study of Bill C-244 is part two of the debate that took place in the House two years ago. In preparing for this speech, I read what my colleagues said at that time, and I want to point out that the members for Cypress Hills—Grasslands and Peace River—Westlock made some very good observations based on their own personal experience.

Earlier, my colleague from Saskatchewan, a very young man, reminded the House that he grew up on a farm and that his father, his grandfather and his family worked directly with machinery. When the machinery broke down, they repaired it. In those days, we repaired things. In those days, people helped each other. They would get on the phone and call the local store, which would suggest another local store where the replacement part could be found, and then they would replace the part themselves.

Today, it is much more difficult. When we look under the hood or check out a part, there is often a computer, an integrated circuit or microchips. Not everyone can repair those things themselves or reprogram the equipment.

Many people will bypass this computer or high-tech device and try to repair the item, but doing that could potentially create even more problems.

This is why there must be a good framework surrounding the practice of the right to repair, not only for citizens, for consumers, but also for businesses in our communities. They do not necessarily have a direct connection with the product manufacturer. That is where the nuance lies, and the devil is in the details. This is why we must ensure that Bill C-244 is drafted properly.

We understand that the digital world of the 21st century presents new challenges, but we must allow people to continue to have the right to repair and not always be held hostage to the original manufacturer by having to send the product back for repair at the consumer's expense. The manufacturer can assume total control by permanently sealing its product, but this choice takes away the consumer's first recourse and hurts regional or local businesses that could help fix the problem.

• (1355)

This is the second time the subject has come up in the House. It is the second time because there was an election. I will not get into that because we are trying to be positive, constructive and non-partisan today.

I should point out that the House of Commons in Ottawa is not the only place people are talking about this. As the member for Richmond Centre, the bill sponsor, said earlier, nearly 20 states in the United States are also bringing in legislation about this and European countries are doing likewise, so Canada really needs to look at the best way legislation can address this issue.

It is also important to understand that right to repair is a provincial matter. That is why it is important to be careful here. We must ensure that we are not interfering in provincial jurisdiction. Rather, we need to make it possible for provinces to change their laws to allow the right to repair if that is what they want to do. We are opening the door for them to do that in accordance with the framework set out in Bill C-244, so it is important to make sure the bill says exactly that.

Now let us talk about the impact this will have on warranties. By law, when someone buys a product, it must come with a warranty. To what extent does the warranty apply if the consumer takes the item apart, especially if they take the computer apart? We need to ensure that the impact on warranties is carefully considered, that the impact on provincial laws is examined and that there are no adverse effects on people who tinker with the insides of a product.

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Obviously, there are many concerns that need to be clearly defined in this bill. That is why, when we were debating this in the previous Parliament, it got a little heated at times because not everyone agreed, which is just fine. That is a good thing. That is called democracy, and that is what it means to get to the bottom of things to avoid problems in the future. Without wishing to make a pun on the bill before us, once a law is passed and locked down, it has to come back to the House if it needs to be changed or amended. Once it is voted on, we have to live with it, so we have to make sure we do not need to fix it too often along the way.

That is why, over the past few years, some people have spoken out against the approach of the previous bill, Bill C-272. Representatives from the equipment manufacturers association, a very powerful group in the agricultural sector, said that it was a fundamental issue for them and that the bill was far too vague. I presume that, during clause-by-clause consideration, we will have the opportunity to hear these dissenting voices, which are telling us that the bill is too vague and that there is too much room for interpretation. We will have to fix this and ensure that the bill is not too vague.

[English]

I want to quote the CEO of Brandt Tractor. He said that this is a terrible legislation and that this kind of legislation kills all dealers like Brandt Tractor and hurts manufacturers.

[Translation]

Certain industry groups directly affected by this bill have also warned that it is a little too vague and that it will have a direct impact on all the small businesses currently working in this area.

I repeat that the official opposition agrees with the principle of this bill at second reading. We will move forward because we understand that there are positive impacts for Canada's rural communities if farmers, among others, are allowed to continue repairing their equipment without any fear of repercussions. We also understand that this has environmental benefits. It is preferable to repair equipment than to throw it away. This can give an item a second, third or fourth life instead of it being thrown in the garbage right away, with all the environmental impact that can have.

We are also aware of the impact the bill will have on industry, on how things are done and on local businesses, and we must consider that. If we see that certain clauses of the bill need to be amended, added or removed, we will be open to doing that.

• (1400)

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-244. Today we are indirectly talking about planned obsolescence, the opposite of which is the circular economy. Funnily enough, we are engaging in a circular economy with this bill since we are recycling it from another Parliament.

As members have mentioned a few times already, the old version of this bill received the unanimous consent of the House. The Bloc Québécois will be no exception this time around and will again support this version of the bill.

To put it simply, this bill seeks to recognize the right to repair.

These days, consumer products contain a lot of electronic components. There are even smart fridges. The problem is that many companies include digital technology in these electronic components that prevents the product from being repaired without approval from the manufacturer and access to the source code. A repair person who circumvents the digital lock placed on the product without the manufacturer's consent would be committing an offence under the Copyright Act. That is what this bill seeks to correct.

I have been talking about planned obsolescence, but what does that mean? Planned obsolescence refers to a series of techniques, including software, employed by manufacturers to deliberately reduce the lifespan of a product. There are many ways to reduce a product's lifespan. This happens in the fashion industry, for instance. An item of clothing that is still wearable can, unfortunately, be considered outdated, even though that is sometimes just psychological. One year, stilettos are all the rage, then chunky heels are in the following year, and so on.

A product that is still usable can be considered outdated. If it breaks, it can easily be repaired. However, products are being rolled out so quickly these days that they are lower quality, which means that they are not kept as long.

Another aspect of this problem is that the goods being manufactured these days are really flimsy, so we end up having less control over what we are buying. Over time, the lifespan of manufactured goods has gotten shorter and shorter, in order to encourage us to buy more. At the turn of the century, it was thought that this would be a good way to get the economy going postwar. Now, however, we need to take the environment into account, since this kind of consumption has a significant impact.

The Quebec National Assembly is already looking at the lifespan of consumer goods. Bill 197, which is still being examined, aims to introduce a sustainability rating for goods indicating the mean time to first failure. A label would be affixed on each good, whether it is offered for sale or rent, and the consumer would know in advance how long it is meant to last.

I will be interested to see how this bill evolves, as it will certainly affect legal warranties. There are two types of warranties when you make a purchase. The legal warranty covers the normal use of a good during its average lifespan, while the conventional warranty is a protection agreed upon between the buyer and the seller.

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When I was in high school, I loved reading Garfield comics. This morning, I remembered one particular strip, which I managed to find on the Internet. It shows the gears in Jon's watch popping out, an electric mixer going up in flames and ejecting its beaters, smoke billowing out of the TV and all the appliances exploding at the same time. Garfield runs to the dresser where Jon keeps his papers, starts reading the warranties and discovers that they all expired the day before.

It would be interesting to see how a sustainability rating might affect legal warranties.

Quebec's bill covers all the bases because it will also state that replacement parts, tools, and maintenance and repair services must be made available to consumers. In addition, the bill will prevent retailers and manufacturers from refusing to honour a warranty on the grounds that the item was repaired by someone other than the retailer, as long as the repair was carried out by a repair person certified by Quebec's consumer protection bureau.

• (1405)

That reiterates what I just heard from the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, who wanted to make sure that we work with the provinces to ensure that the two bills align. From what I understand, that will already be the case in Quebec. What is more, it is even better that the House is considering this type of bill. These bills are not contradictory. In fact, they are complementary. People in Quebec will not be able to invoke the Copyright Act to thwart the Quebec National Assembly's plans to implement Bill C-244. That is really good, because it is not very often that the two governments complement rather than contradict each other.

I talked about planned obsolescence, which is psychological, as it relates to the fashion industry, and about the lifespan of objects, which we have a little bit less control over. However, the aspect that really interests us is the digital lock that prevents repairs from being done. Sometimes it is not really worth it for consumers to get things repaired because they have to go through the manufacturer, which can easily control how much the repairs will cost since it has a monopoly. In the end, it is sometimes cheaper to just throw the object out and get a new one.

Bill C-244 states that "a person who circumvents a technological protection measure that controls access to a computer program if the person does so for the sole purpose of diagnosing, maintaining or repairing a product in which the computer program is embedded" is not violating the Copyright Act. The same goes for individuals who make a program, tool or device, also allowing them to circumvent the Copyright Act. The aim is therefore to protect these two categories of people, to make it much easier to repair an item without being subject to a form of control and monopoly by the manufacturers.

If we look at this in very concrete terms and think about objects designed for planned obsolescence, it could have an impact. This was mentioned earlier. The member for Windsor West was working on a bill to ensure that cars would not be subject to the same kind of problem. This was not done through legislation, but it finally worked through an agreement. This is a good example of one way in which repairability was improved.

We know that cars are increasingly incorporating technology. Drivers can now leave their key with the dealer and the mechanic can run diagnostic tests on the car from that key. That is a clear example of getting around the repairability problem.

The Conservative members talked about this. I remember an anecdote I heard in the last Parliament, about a farmer who had to drive four or five hours to get to a specific manufacturer to get a repair done. There is already an environmental cost associated with planned obsolescence. Add to that the travel for getting a part repaired, and it starts to get completely ridiculous.

That is a problem we have seen with John Deere. It has embraced the concept of programmed obsolescence so completely that when it manufactures and sells tractors, it sells the tractor, but not the technology that goes with it. There is a specific clause in the sales contract saying that the farmer is buying the tractor, but not the operating software, which remains the property of the company.

Speaking of John Deere, I want to take a moment to share my four-and-a-half-year-old niece's favourite joke: "Honey, why are John Deere tractors green?" "I don't know. Ask John, Deere." I want to give a shout-out to my niece Jeanne and her parents, my sister Karine and her partner Alex.

John Deere has this problem, and so does Apple. Almost all of us have a phone, computer or other device from Apple. Not only does Apple have the audacity to prohibit owners from having their devices repaired by a competitor, but it also patented all of its parts and components to ensure that no one could duplicate them to repair an Apple product.

This bill could impact a large number of sectors. Bill C-244 will help address the unfortunate fact that far too many products are being thrown away instead of repaired.

• (1410)

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join the debate today on Bill C-244. I was able to leave committee and jump in here. My colleague from the Bloc who spoke prior to me made a very good analysis of the bill, as well as of the efforts of the legislature in Quebec to deal with the situation over the right to repair. Part of what we are doing here is following up on work that needs to be done.

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I am really pleased that the member for Richmond Centre has tabled Bill C-244. I had a good conversation with him. The intent of the bill is to make things better, not only for consumers, but for the environment and for competitiveness. In the years I have been in Parliament, I have tabled bills a couple of times on the right to repair for the automotive aftermarket. About 10 years ago, my bill passed through the House of Commons. It went to committee and, at the end of the day, a voluntary agreement was reached that is still in place. That was done by then minister Tony Clement. It is decent, but it has some issues.

I subsequently tabled another bill on the automotive sector because, since that time, automation and electronics information have changed quite significantly and not everyone is participating in this voluntary agreement. A good example is Tesla, which is not providing the information. This bill would amend the Copyright Act to allow consumers to adjust, fix or deal with an electronic device in a state of disrepair. In some instances, young people like to do that for their own innovation and usage. It does not allow for the commercialization of enhanced devices, but it is very serious. I will outline a little about the automotive sector, but one thing that is different about this bill is that it would give the provinces jurisdiction to bring in their own legislation. There is some benefit to that and there is some detracting from that, but it is another process.

I wholeheartedly support this bill going to committee, and so do New Democrats. We have had a long history on the right to repair on many fronts. I focused on automotive because others are looking at this type of legislation that would be done through the provinces. The reason I focused on automotive was because the federal legislation under Transport Canada requires a pan-Canadian strategy.

I am speaking right now from Windsor, Ontario. The situation had become so absurd that my vehicle could not be fixed in the aftermarket because information would not be provided, for example, for a simple software update, tools or equipment. I could drive to Detroit, Michigan, two miles or three kilometres from here, and get the same vehicle that was built in Canada fixed in the aftermarket.

The United States has used environmental protection and other types of legislation to provide a fair system. We are asking for fair competition and an accountable process to share that information, so that technicians can get the proper training and have the proper equipment to fix vehicles. On top of that, there are hundreds of thousands of people employed in this sector, and it would be impossible for dealerships in the general market to service all these vehicles. There are also the consequences of not fixing these devices. I will focus a little on cars in a moment, and I will switch to other devices in a second.

When we think about it, not allowing us to have this type of repair system for cars would cause all kinds of shops and places to close across Canada. Not only that, but people would be required to drive their vehicles, which are not in the best state, for sometimes hundreds of kilometres. There would be higher emissions, there would be greater safety issues and then there would be a number of shenanigans taking place. In one situation, simply updating a computer would stop a car from being fixed at an aftermarket garage, such as Canadian Tire or somewhere else. It would have to be towed to another location to get a simple adjustment to make it a working vehicle.

• (1415)

We also have municipalities and provincial service vehicles that are affected by this. These vehicles, having been amended for public service, actually require different types of servicing from complementary places, whether it be different types of market OEMs or others. It is really important that we have this taken care of.

To be quite frank, since I tabled my bill, some in the automotive sector have reached out to me, and they are looking back at that. The aftermarket organizations are looking at it. Hopefully, the volunteer agreement we have will get a good, thorough review for the automotive sector, so we do not have a further conflict and we can work on operations to be better.

Quite frankly, if we have car companies like Tesla that are opting out of this with no consequences, I do not know how we would go about a voluntary agreement. That is not fair for anyone, let alone the owners of the Tesla vehicle or the other companies that are doing the right thing. Some companies have been very forthright on this and are working very hard and diligently to be supportive and fair, again, in a way that is accountable, but others not so much. That is the challenge we face with a voluntary agreement.

To move specifically to the member's bill, it is much more broad with regards to the consequences that it would have, and I do not mean consequences as a negative thing but as a significant thing, on everything, such as electronic waste, which could be reduced. There is clearly a lack of regulation in Canada when it comes to some of our electronics in general.

Most recently, there has been some movement among some electronic providers to allow for their devices to have a third party fix them. I mean, how many times do we see kids or adults walking around with broken computer screens on their phones? It seems like either a hopeless cause or having to spend hundreds of dollars on a simple fix for something that should be done quite easily. On top of that, sending it in is a process that is so demanding, takes a long time and is basically being predicated upon in terms of pricing.

Now, in my view, a mobile personal device is an essential service. We use it for a number of things, not just as a phone, but for everything from work to play and staying connected to family and loved ones. As well, we pay premium for it, and there is no doubt about that, especially in Canada, as we have some of the highest costs in the developed world for these types of equipment.

There is no doubt that we need to do better on this. The lack of standards for charging these devices worldwide and the amount of electronic waste we have are simple examples to show that there is a real problem.

The member has put forth a number of suggestions here, and we are looking at the possibility of people being able to work through digital locks. These are simple things that can be done to allow people to have the convenience of fixing their devices or experience that in a different way. Again, there are no commercialization rights to this, and there is no infringement that can take place of the Copyright Act. There are a number of issues, and it will be very helpful when we get to committee to bring them forward.

In conclusion, I want to thank the member for bringing this bill forward. I appreciate my colleague's interest, for many years, on this subject matter as we wrestle through it. The United Kingdom, Europe, the United States and a number of other countries are grappling with how to deal with this right now, and I think that it is very appropriate to bring the bill to committee.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak from the beautiful riding of Don Valley East.

I want to first thank the member for Richmond Centre for bringing forward Bill C-244. It is very timely. The right to repair, as all the speakers have said in the past few speeches, is something that Canadians are looking for. It makes complete sense. Often lawmakers do not keep up with technology changes at the pace that they should, and it is nice to see that everyone who has spoken so far in this House agrees that this piece of legislation is needed.

Recently I got a letter from a gentleman from North Perth. He is an owner of a small independent theatre. He was telling me about the motherboard on the projector. Projectors are around \$50,000 to \$100,000, and the motherboard is about a \$5,000 piece of technology. The technology was built in such a way that when the battery, which is basically a \$1 watch battery, dies, the entire motherboard resets and becomes useless unless one pays \$5,000 to fix the device.

That was a recent letter, from February 16. It came to me because I introduced a piece of proposed legislation when I was at the Ontario legislature that dealt with the right to repair as well, and to this day people are still calling me about this issue.

There are many Canadians who agree that we need to move forward on making some changes, and I think this proposed piece of legislation, this bill, is exactly what the people of Ontario are looking for. To change the Copyright Act to prohibit the use of technology protection measures or technological protection measures, or what are sometimes referred to as "digital locks", is a good step in the right direction.

Things are changing so quickly on our planet. It is important for us to be able to fix our devices when necessary. People have talked about agricultural machinery and personal hand-held devices, and from washing machines to fridges, everything is integrated with software today. The technologies speak to each other, and it is important that people have access to fixing those pieces as quickly as possible.

I read a story a while back about people having to put their tractors onto trucks and move them hundreds of miles to get them fixed because they were not given the codes to access the software for updates that were necessary. This slows down production in agri-

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culture, and it does something else: It takes away from the local economy. We should think of repair people in this sector as comparable to a mechanic's shop. If somebody's car is broken, they are not going to travel hundreds of kilometres for a repair. In most cases, if they live in a town, there is access to some type of mechanic who can fix their car.

That is not necessarily the case with technology today. We have cellphones that are very costly to fix. Motherboards are so integrated that the entire piece needs to be replaced, which becomes very expensive.

My first experience with the right to repair was when my cell-phone broke. It was a Samsung S8 at the time. My daughter dropped it and the screen broke and I went to go fix it. The bill was \$330 plus tax. A replacement phone was just a bit more than that at the time.

I was shocked that a screen could cost so much. The phone was working perfectly. It just had a crack on the top right of the screen. That opened my eyes to the world of right to repair and the advocacy that was out there.

● (1420)

In fact, around the same time, the member for Ottawa Centre, who was not a member of Parliament at the time, sent me a clip from CBC. It talked about the right to repair and the growing concerns in the sector around how companies were protecting their diagnostic software, manuals and schematics, specific tools and parts, and not making them available to people. I thought that we needed to make some changes in order to create more accessibility to these products.

The proposed legislation and working with the provinces is actually the perfect balance to have the right to repair movement continue to grow here in this country. I want to thank the member for Cambridge who, I believe it was in February 2021, brought forward the initial bill, the right to repair, and brought some national profile to this issue. There have been many other members across the country who have been advocating in their provincial legislatures for years, fighting for the right to repair, and I just want to mention a couple of those. I think it is important to recognize the work that is happening at the provincial level because it is complementary to the work that is happening federally, and vice versa.

Daniel Guitard from New Brunswick has been doing some incredible work, as well as Gordon McNeilly from P.E.I. I want to give a special thanks to the work of Guy Ouellette, who I would have to say is probably one of the original legislators across this country and has actually put in a lot of time and effort, not only here in this country but right across the world, in North America and at the international level, fighting for the right to repair. He introduced a bill back in April 2019, Bill 197 that amended the Consumer Protection Act, like my Bill 72 did in Ontario.

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His bill focused on planned obsolescence, in addition to those areas like access to parts, schematics, etc. The bill was the first of its kind in Canada that looked at planned obsolescence and really put in place the European model for protection of products by giving them a rating system that allowed people to know exactly what they were buying before they actually purchased it and to see how long it would actually last.

Right to repair is more than just making sure people have the ability to fix their products, like many of the members have said. I am so happy to see that all of the previous members, from the impression I got, are on board to support this proposed legislation. It is very rare to go into a chamber like ours when it seems like everyone is agreeing that this is something that should go forward. Again, I want to compliment the member for Richmond Centre for bringing this forward and having a lot of people support this moving forward.

There is the environmental piece that is connected to this. There is having the ability, the right, to take a product and actually improve it or fix it. I often think about the early days of Microsoft, Apple and all these big tech companies, such as Steve Jobs in his garage taking parts from one computer and putting them into another computer or updating software. If strict right to repair laws were in place back then, we probably would not have a company like Apple today. We would not have companies like Microsoft.

Having the ability to go into a device and actually update the software or replace parts is all about innovation. It helps create a

more innovative sector as well. It is important to note that this is not about compromising copyright law. This is about protecting intellectual property while at the same time allowing people to move forward to improve the products that they own.

I will be supporting this bill. I want to thank the member for the work that he has been doing to advocate for this issue. I hope that we can move forward to work with provincial governments to ensure, at the end of the day, that both federal and provincial governments can make the necessary changes to build a better country.

• (1425)

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

Once again, I wish everyone a happy Easter, and a happy Passover as well. Enjoy your two weeks reconnecting with constituents and we will see you here in a couple of weeks.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, April 25, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 24(1) and 28(2).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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