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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 20, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “Public Accounts of Canada 2021”.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

There will be another presentation dealing with the report right away.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table the Conservatives' dissenting report on the 2021 public accounts report.

The government misleadingly states that the carbon tax is revenue-neutral. The 2021 public accounts, though, showed that \$100 million of the carbon tax was diverted to spending programs and not returned to Canadians. We therefore recommend that the PBO present an independent and true analysis of the carbon tax, its effect on inflation and the GDP and the claim of revenue neutrality.

Furthermore, for the public accounts, the government for the first time ever ordered the Auditor General to reopen the audited and finalized financial statements in order to stuff in billions of dollars of added spending. Our recommendation would provide the confidence in the public accounts that Canadians and this Parliament deserve.

Should the government again revise the public accounts after they are finalized, we recommend that the secretary of the Treasury Board and the comptroller general report their rationale for doing so to the public accounts committee, that the Auditor General

present her or his views to the committee and that all three appear at the public accounts committee to discuss the matter.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CUSTOMS ACT

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.) moved that Bill S-7, An Act to amend the Customs Act and the Preclearance Act, 2016, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

FISHERIES LICENCES

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand here this morning to present a petition on behalf of the non-core fishing enterprise owners of Newfoundland and Labrador to allow transfer of their licences. At last count, the DFO put the number of these licence-holders at 454. Half of these people live in my riding of Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame. They are people like Roy Morey in La Scie, Bobby Gillingham in Seal Cove, Joe Legge in Twillingate and Bob Jacobs and Perry Sacrey of Baie Verte.

Last year, the federal court ruled that similar class B licences in Nova Scotia be made transferrable. The non-core licence-holders of Newfoundland and Labrador must be treated the same.

I thank Ryan Cleary and SEA-NL for their work in gathering names for this petition.

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

BIODIVERSITY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the Island of Montreal, there is an extraordinary place known as TechnoparcOiseaux or Champ des monarques. A site rich in biodiversity, it is home to 193,000 species of birds and an essential feeding ground for the monarch butterfly, which has been declared an endangered species. This site is also at risk because the Montreal airports authority, Aéroports de Montréal, wants to use and develop the space.

Business of Supply

However, Aéroports de Montréal does not own the land; Transport Canada does. It is public land that belongs to us. Hundreds of citizens, along with a dozen municipalities on the Island of Montreal, are asking the federal government to modify the lease with Aéroports de Montréal in order to create a national park. We need to protect this highly biodiverse natural space, one of the rare wetlands on the Island of Montreal, and preserve it for future generations.

[English]

RAILWAY SAFETY

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply honoured to present two petitions this morning on behalf of the families and loved ones of three men killed in a tragic rail accident near Field, B.C., in February 2019. The three men were Dylan Paradis, Andrew Dockrell and Daniel Waldenberger-Bulmer.

The petitioners draw attention to the archaic practice in Canada of allowing rail corporations to use private corporate police forces to administer investigations of a criminal nature. This is a practice that the petitioners point out is long past its due date and should be abolished. They call on the Government of Canada to repeal sections 44 and 44.1 of the Railway Safety Act and legislate a new federal independent public railway police of Canada, funded by the railway companies but answerable to an independent civilian oversight commission.

The second petition I present is on the same topic. It calls for the establishment of a royal commission to inquire into the nature and extent of the damage that corporate railway policing has had on the criminal investigation of numerous railway fatalities and injuries, plus the political and diplomatic implications of Canadian companies exercising police powers in the United States.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House to present a petition that deals with the ongoing and all-too-slow effort to implement the recommendations and calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The report, of course, was from an in-depth inquiry, and the petitioners reference that in 2013, the Hon. Frank Iacobucci issued his report on first nations representation on Ontario's juries.

The petitioners, recognizing that this place does not instruct things to the provinces, have called on the House of Commons to immediately undertake to encourage the provinces to reform their jury selection systems and make other reforms that are required in order to enact calls to action 25 to 42 to ensure that justice is done and seen to be done for indigenous people going through the criminal justice system.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table petition e-3881, signed by 676 constituents.

They cite that Canada's electoral system, from its very inception, has been a first-past-the-post system, unfairly resulting in either a Liberal or Conservative government. Proportional representation is a principle that says the percentage of seats a party has in the legislature should reflect the percentage of people who voted for that

party. They cite that if a party gets 40% of the popular vote, it should get 40% of the seats. They also cite that under a first-past-the-post system, the current system in Canada, a party can win a majority of seats and all the power with less than half the popular vote.

They are calling on the government to move to a proportional system to bring credible representation to Canadians.

• (1010)

HEALTH

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I table a petition signed by many residents of Winnipeg North that deals with the issue of health care. They are looking at the federal government's important role of ensuring that the health care system is there to support Canadians no matter where they live and, in particular, that we focus attention on issues such as long-term care and pharmaceuticals, along with other issues related to health care, including mental health.

* * *

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

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—TAX EXEMPTION ON HOME HEATING FUEL

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC) moved:

That, given that,

- (i) one-tenth of Canadians heat their homes during Canada's cold winter months with heating oil or propane heat because there are no alternatives,
- (ii) Canada is the only G7 country to have raised fuel taxes during this period of record high global fuel prices,
- (iii) energy analysts have predicted that Canadians could see their home heating bills rise by 50 to 100 percent on average this winter,
- (iv) the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador wrote to the federal Liberal government on September 2, 2022, asking for a carbon tax exemption on home heating fuels and stated: "A year ago today, the maximum price of furnace oil in the Province was 97.91 cents per litre. Today's price is 155.70, which is an increase of nearly 60 per cent. Your proposed federal carbon tax increase on furnace oil would result in an additional 17.38 cents plus HST. Added to today's price, [the carbon tax] would result in a total cost increase of 80 per cent compared to one year ago", punishing rural people in Newfoundland and Labrador forced to heat with furnace oil,

the House express its agreement with the comments of the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, and call on the government to exempt all forms of home heating fuel from the carbon tax for all Canadians.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the cost of living is rising because of the cost of government. The \$500-billion inflationary deficit is increasing the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay. Inflationary taxes further increase the cost to produce those goods and services. The more the government spends, the more things cost. It is just inflation, as my hon. colleague, the member for Calgary Forest Lawn, will explain because I will be sharing my time with him.

The Liberals will say that they had no choice but to add these enormous deficits. However, I will remind them that they had added \$100 billion to our national debt even before COVID-19. That is four times more than the Prime Minister had promised. He had already set out a plan for deficits over 30 years, after saying it would only be three years. Even before the Russians invaded Ukraine, the Prime Minister had already added \$500 billion to the deficit, and the inflation rate was over 5%.

He cannot simply blame the external effects of the current crises, especially since I had warned the government that there would be inflation and, as a result, interest rate hikes. However, the Liberals continued to spend, tax and fuel the crisis we are facing today.

Clearly, much of the money has been wasted. The Liberals spent billions of dollars to send benefits to inmates, employed public servants and people who could have been working because there were a million jobs available. The government was paying people to stay home. It did all of that.

I would add that, during COVID-19, that is to say, in the past two years, the Liberals added \$200 billion in non-COVID-related debt. That means unnecessary expenditures that the government did not have to incur. That was a choice they made.

I had warned them that that would lead to inflation, but they said no, that was not a problem, the Bank of Canada would simply print more money. Now we can see the effects, the same effects we have seen over and over throughout history.

Too much money spent on too few products makes prices go up. That has been true for thousands of years. History does not change. Every time a king, queen, emperor, president, prime minister or anyone at all prints money to pay their bills, the result is always the same: inflation. After inflation come rising interest rates, which is what we are seeing today.

Suddenly, the government is surprised by the consequences of its decisions. No one forced the Prime Minister to add \$100 billion to the national debt before COVID-19 and \$500 billion to the national debt before the war in Ukraine. No one forced the Prime Minister to curb the production of affordable energy here in Canada. The Liberals did that. These were decisions made here in Canada and not imposed by external forces.

Now we are in the middle of an inflationary crisis. The cost of food has gone up 11%, and we are now seeing a crisis in energy costs.

The government likes to blame the entire world for inflation in Canada, but it is interesting to see that the products with the fastest-

Business of Supply

rising prices are those we can produce here in Canada, namely food, gasoline and natural gas. We have an abundant supply of these products here in Canada.

• (1015)

The price increases on these products would have helped our economy if the government had not prevented our farmers from producing more food and our energy workers from producing more energy. Instead of printing more money, we could have produced more of what money buys, like more food and more energy, and we could have built more houses.

We need to get rid of the gatekeepers. That is another word we should find a good French word for, but, since we are going to get rid of the gatekeepers when the Conservatives come to power, we will not even need the English word. We will no longer have gatekeepers, who prevent us from building affordable housing units, block our energy production and make it difficult for our farmers to feed us.

The policies of mayors on the far left, New Democrats and Liberals, are preventing us from building houses. As a result, it takes far longer to get a construction permit here in Canada than in any other OECD country except Slovakia. Here, getting any kind of construction permit takes an average of 250 days. In North Korea, you can get a permit in 28 days.

• (1020)

[*English*]

What has this meant? It has meant higher costs to produce energy, higher costs for our farmers and higher costs for home building. More money chasing fewer goods always means higher prices, so instead of creating cash, we need to create more of what cash buys.

Now, though, in the time when energy prices are rising, the last thing we need is a new tax increase on our people. Look at what is happening in Newfoundland. The Newfoundland premier, and he is a Liberal, said that a year ago today, the maximum price of furnace oil in the province was 97¢ per litre. Today it is a buck fifty-five, which is an increase of nearly 60%. The proposed federal carbon tax increase would mean an extra 17¢, plus HST. He also said, “Added to today’s price, [the carbon tax] would result in a total cost increase of 80 per cent compared to one year ago.” That is from a Liberal premier.

Similar problems are raging right across Atlantic Canada, where 40% of people are living in energy poverty. This is in Canada, a G7 energy-producing country. That is the result of seven years of the Liberal government. Similar crises are emerging across the country. One energy analyst said that Canadians can expect price increases on their home heating of 100%, all to pay for a plan to triple the carbon tax on Canadians.

Business of Supply

By the way, the carbon tax has not worked to reduce emissions. The government has failed to hit a single solitary climate target with its tax so far. Yesterday, the Prime Minister was saying that he knows he has not hit any of his promises, but he promises to hit them in the future and this time he promises not to break that promise.

I can tell members one thing. I am not prepared to gamble on that. I am not prepared to watch Canadian seniors living in rural Newfoundland and Labrador or Nova Scotia, who are forced to heat with oil and propane, pay a 100% increase in their home heating bill because the Prime Minister is promising not to break his promise, a promise he has broken every time he has ever made it before. That is not a bet I am prepared to make.

Therefore, I am calling on the government to allow its members from these rural communities to vote with us on this motion, to put aside the centralized control of the tax-hungry Prime Minister and vote with us in favour of this motion. If they cannot be disabused of their ideological obsession with taxing Canadians to punish them with the carbon tax, at the very least will they, in the spirit of non-partisanship and compromise, take the tax off of home heating as winter is coming? The cold will soon be upon us, and Canadians will soon be forced into the decision between heating and eating.

Will they at least have the compassion to side with this common sense coalition? Will they break off from their costly coalition with the NDP, stop punishing Canadians and finally end the high-carbon hypocrisy, which sees a Prime Minister jetting around the country in a private aircraft, including flying down to Costa Rica for a sunny vacation right in the middle of the summer?

When the winter is upon us, when people are not even worried about being on beaches, let us not tax them. Let us allow them to heat their homes here in our country.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the leader of the Conservative Party, today's leader anyway, that it was not that long ago, about a year ago, when 338 Conservative candidates were knocking on doors with an election platform that made it very clear to Canadians that the Conservative Party of Canada supported a price on pollution. I am sure today's leader of the Conservative Party would remember that commitment, the promise Conservatives made to Canadians as part of their election platform.

Today we now see the leader of the Conservative Party breaking that promise. He is now telling Canadians that the Conservative Party is going back on that, siding with the climate deniers, and not supporting a price on pollution. Could he explain the flip-flop on this policy?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1025)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I can hear other members trying to answer the question, and I would ask them to hold back. I know the hon. leader of the official opposition is well able to respond to the question being asked.

The hon. leader of the official opposition has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, of course the question is based on a totally false premise, but worse than that, it is based on the worst of Liberal elitist snobbery.

For them to look down on the little old lady in rural Newfoundland or rural Nova Scotia because she is heating her home in February and call her a polluter, while the Prime Minister has forced that same little old lady to pay, through her taxes, for him to get on a gas-guzzling private jet, fly around the country for photo ops, burn more fuel in a single month than 20 Canadians burn all year, and go to Costa Rica on that same jet, is the worst high-carbon hypocrisy. It is an insult to Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am always amazed—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to interrupt the hon. member, because it seems that some other members are under the false impression that it is their turn to speak. I would ask them to stop talking.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, I am rather amazed to see how much my Conservative friends are off the mark when it comes to the economy. They are telling us that lowering the carbon tax will help Canadians live better. However, the opposite is true. The carbon tax is meant to fight climate change. It is not a perfect tool, but it is one of the best tools we have right now, according to the experts.

I would like to inform the leader of the Conservatives of what the UN says about the carbon tax. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the number of climate-related natural disasters has more than doubled in the past decade compared with the 1980s. According to the World Meteorological Organization, between 2000 and 2019, 6,700 disasters cost the lives of more than 1 million people and affected 4.2 million more. In addition, they caused almost \$3 trillion in global economic losses. That is why the carbon tax exists.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, first, I find it funny that the Bloc Québécois, which is supposed to be separatist, is now in favour of a federal government that is imposing a triple tax on the provinces. It is true. Every day, the Bloc Québécois stands in the House of Commons to ask for a stronger federal government. We are the ones who want to give Quebecers the opportunity to be masters of their own house.

Second, the hon. member says that climate change is important. Yes, that is true, and that is why we need to put an end to policies that are not really working. It is not by increasing the cost of traditional energies that we will fight climate change, it is by reducing the cost of alternative energies. That is what we will do by encouraging hydroelectricity, nuclear power and the production of electric batteries here in Canada.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We seem to be having some back and forth. The Bloc Québécois had a chance to ask a question. There was no reason to keep shouting while the hon. Leader of the Opposition was answering.

Business of Supply

The hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, indeed, 40% of people in Canada are living in energy poverty, yet the oil and gas sector made \$147 billion last year. This second quarter alone, profits for the national resources went up by \$3.5 billion. Suncor Energy shows the same trend, with another \$3.9 billion in the second quarter.

Does the leader of the official opposition have the courage to actually tackle the real root causes of this impending recession and the high cost of living?

It is impossible for me to speak with those guys continuing to chirp, Madam Speaker.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1030)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to again remind the members to please hold off on speaking when someone else has the floor.

I would ask the hon. member to please wrap up, because we are out of time.

Mr. Matthew Green: Madam Speaker, does the leader of the official opposition have the courage to tackle big oil and gas profits and support our policy to introduce an excess profit tax to fund the GST rebates on home heating costs?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, if the NDP member is so unhappy with the way things are going in Canada, why is he supporting the Liberal government that is making it so?

He and his costly coalition have supported the government greed that has hoovered up the money that Canadians worked so hard to earn. That costly coalition has caused today's inflation. That costly coalition will make it worse by tripling the tax.

If he is not happy with how badly his people are suffering, then why does he stay part of that coalition?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I understand and respect that there are differing views on this. The hon. member had an opportunity to ask a question and if he has other questions, he should get up at the appropriate time and not yell back and forth when someone is trying to answer the question. I also saw members of the official opposition trying to help out. If a member has not been recognized, please do not yell across the way and do not participate in the debate until it is the member's time to do so.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to add my voice in support of fighting to exempt all forms of home heating fuel from the carbon tax for all Canadians.

This week, we have heard a lot from all sides about the pain Canadians suffer as unjust inflation and the cost-of-living crisis make life absolutely unaffordable in Canada.

From a single mother skipping meals just to be able to feed her kids to a tradesman renting an apartment with his parents and still not being able to afford gas for his truck to seniors living on a fixed income and staring down the triple carbon tax, people are not sure if they can heat their homes or even keep them.

We hear from the Liberals and the NDP that Canada is in a much better position than the rest of the G7, yet the Bank of Canada is tied with the U.S. for the highest interest rates today.

What is worse is that it is widely expected that the bank will raise the key interest rate by another 75 basis points. That means we are looking at the interest rate being 4%. That is a 4% increase Canadians are forced to pay to borrow money or get a mortgage.

Why are there higher interest rates? To combat the unjust inflation created by the government's out-of-control spending. After an over \$300-billion deficit in the fiscal year 2020-21 and an almost \$100-billion deficit last year, the Liberals have been spending non-stop.

In 2021, the Conservative leader warned the government that its spending would cause inflation. Instead of heeding his warning, the finance minister claimed that Canada would actually see deflation. When inflation started spiking, she said it would be transitory. Boy, was she wrong.

The Toronto Star is now reporting that she has started to see the light. The finance minister told colleagues that in order to fund the Prime Minister's additional spending, cuts to other areas of government spending were needed.

Spending is not the only issue though. Yesterday, the finance minister admitted that with more stimulus money in circulation, there would be more demand for a limited supply of goods and services. In short, too many dollars chasing too few goods.

In the context of today's motion, the supply of LNG and other heating fuels are very relevant examples. When the government was elected in 2015, there were 15 LNG projects. Now, seven years later, none have been completed.

The same can be said for the Teck mine in Fort McMurray, the TMX pipeline, the northern gateway pipeline, energy east pipeline and the Keystone XL pipeline.

On this side, we all know the value of Canadian gas. The world needs more Canadian oil and gas. Alberta has some of the most responsibly developed, produced and transported energy products. The oil and gas companies operating in Canada are the most significant contributors and developers of new clean technology to decrease their emissions.

Business of Supply

Their innovation and use of green technology make Canadian oil and gas far more responsible than the dictator oil that the Liberals would instead bring in. Instead of Canadian energy being produced, refined and consumed in Canada, tankers of dirty Saudi oil are flowing down the St. Lawrence.

The government's dependence on foreign oil means that we send our dollars to the very OPEC-plus cartel that colludes with Russia to reduce the production of their energy products to drive down supply. At the same time, demand increases, causing record profits for countries like Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Venezuela.

It is not like Canada does not have other countries needing our oil and gas. For example, just this summer, when the Prime Minister made excuses for not having a business case to ship Canadian LNG to Germany, the German chancellor asked our country to increase shipments.

The Liberals did not even show the chancellor any Canadian LNG projects. Instead, they talked about hydrogen.

Hydrogen is a clean and practical option in which Canada needs to continue to invest. However, replacing LNG with hydrogen is years away and currently impossible.

Instead of capitalizing on economic opportunities to increase the production of Canadian energy and fight the OPEC-plus cartel, the government sided with the "leave it in the ground" left and backed Canada into a corner.

Instead of lowering energy costs for Canadians, we are at the mercy of Liberal-made inflation, reduced supply and foreign dictators dictating oil and gas prices. The cost of groceries, gas and home heating are skyrocketing because the government has created an environment where prices are out of control, supply is lacking and taxes keep climbing.

• (1035)

As the current government prepares to triple its carbon tax, Canadians continue to get hit with numbers like 37% inflation on natural gas and 48.7% on other fuels; 11.4% on groceries; 13.2% on gasoline; and an 8.3% increase in mortgage interest costs.

In a recent report, RBC is expecting that, "Rising inflation and higher borrowing and debt servicing costs are expected to shave almost \$3,000 from average purchasing power in 2023."

Let us suppose families are paying more for utilities, groceries, gas and mortgages. In this case, a \$3,000 hit to their pocketbooks is absolutely devastating, especially with almost half of Canadians being \$200 away from insolvency. Therefore, as we turn to the winter months when Canadians need to heat their homes, people are starting to make tough choices. Do they pay for gas or electricity bills to get heat, or pay for groceries, or even cover their mortgage payments. The fact that people in our country have to make that decision is a disgrace. That is why the Liberal premier of Newfoundland and Labrador wrote to the government last month, asking for a carbon tax exemption on home heating fuels.

Right now, inflated home heating bills are made up of roughly 20% of just carbon tax. After this year of inflation and the tripling of the carbon tax, that portion could increase to almost 60% of

home heating costs per month. That is especially scary for Atlantic Canada, as fuel oils in Newfoundland are already up by 52.8%. According to yesterday's inflation numbers, in P.E.I. it is up 37.2%; 52% in Nova Scotia; and 45.4% in New Brunswick.

Analysts are predicting that home heating bills could increase this winter from anywhere from 50% to 100%, and in some cases around the country even 300%. The Ontario Energy Board also indicated that Ontario natural gas prices could increase by more than 150% this month.

Other Canadian premiers are also calling for the Liberals to cancel their tripling of the carbon tax as provinces fight for a better way to deal with climate change and lower prices for Canadians.

This summer, Nova Scotia submitted a provincial plan to get out of the federal carbon tax, but the federal government outright rejected it.

In Alberta, the province created the technology innovation and emissions reduction program. It puts a price on carbon for heavy emitters and the collected funds get reinvested in advancing technology and innovation to reduce omissions, such as carbon capture and sequestration.

These are the types of advancements that Canada needs to replace the out-of-touch carbon tax. Punishing Canadians for heating their homes, driving to work or just eating is absolutely wrong.

While the government continues to ignore its out-of-control spending and fails to address inflation or the need for development investment in Canadian energy projects, the least it can do is exempt hard-working Canadians from paying the carbon tax to heat their homes.

Canadian energy production needs to be increased to grow the supply and lower prices.

Winter is coming and the pocketbooks of Canadians are in the red. I ask all members to do the right thing and vote for this motion. I call on the government to have some decency, get off the necks of Canadians and cancel its plans to triple its carbon tax.

• (1040)

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, both speakers from the Conservative Party have referenced the letter from the Liberal premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. I do not have a perfect memory, but it is a pretty good one. I remember when a Conservative premier in Newfoundland flew the Canadian flag upside down because of the way the province was being treated by a Conservative government in Ottawa. What makes this leader any different?

Business of Supply

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, let me tell the member the difference between the two leaders today. We have one leader, the Prime Minister, who continues to divide and blame Canadians for his failed policies, cancels energy projects that could provide the world with clean, responsible energy, and punishes Canadians because he keeps missing his own targets and fails to keep his own promises.

Then we have a new Conservative leader who will stand up for hard-working Canadians, who will cancel the job-killing, crippling carbon tax and get clean Canadian energy to the rest of the world, which it deserves, lowering emissions and ensuring everyone has a job in our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, let me start by saying that I truly appreciate my colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn. I really enjoy working with him.

Now I have an idea for today's opposition day. I think I will ask the same question all day, and since I do not think I will ever get an answer, I will make a little video afterwards and post it on social media.

I will therefore ask a very simple question. I have a feeling I will not get an answer, but you never know, I might luck out.

When will the Conservatives speak out against the excess profits being made by oil and gas multinationals?

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I have people who are trying to answer questions and it is not their position to do that at this point. If they are not recognized, I would ask them to hold off on their comments and keep them to themselves.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, I respect the hon. member and have enjoyed working with him on the immigration committee.

It is one thing to keep attacking our energy producers, but where was the government, or anyone else, when they were not making profits? What about when there was a downfall, when Canadian energy was suffering, when it was being replaced by dirty dictator oil? What about all those job losses for the hard-working Canadians who worked in that energy industry, including newcomers to this country, people from the LGBT community and people from BIPOC communities? What about those people? Who was standing up for them? It was the Conservatives and the Conservatives only. That is what we will continue to do.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn mentioned the northern gateway pipeline, a proposed project that was widely opposed by first nations and municipalities. People from all walks of life—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I have mentioned it on a number of occasions this morning. What is

going to happen is that, for those who are constant offenders, I will not be recognizing them if they get up for questions and comments if they continue to do this. Please allow the hon. members who are acknowledged to speak, allow those I am recognizing to ask their questions and allow whoever is responsible to answer those questions without being interrupted.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn mentioned the northern gateway pipeline, a proposed crude oil pipeline through northwest B.C. that was widely opposed by first nations, municipal governments and people from all walks of life. It would have pushed a crude oil pipeline through wild salmon watersheds and brought crude oil supertankers to the B.C. coast.

From his speech, it sounded like it is the Conservative policy to try to reinstate such a project and to bring a crude oil pipeline back to northwest B.C. Could he confirm if that is indeed his party's intention should they be elected?

• (1045)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, that is simply not true. About 80% of first nations along the route wanted the project to take place.

I am proud to stand with our new leader, who actually wants to see real reconciliation by partnering with first nation communities and giving them the sovereignty they deserve: economic sovereignty. This is what true reconciliation in this country looks like. I am proud to stand beside a leader who believes in that too.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say that I am going to be joining—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am going to get the hon. member for Kings—Hants to restart, given the amount of noise coming from this side of the House.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, it reminds me of my time playing hockey in loud barns, and I always enjoyed it.

I will be splitting my with my hon. colleague from Toronto—Danforth.

As the chair of the Atlantic Liberal caucus, I really welcome the opportunity to be here today and to provide some counter-narrative to what I just heard from the member for Carleton and the member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

What disappointed me the most was the fact that I listened to those speeches, which was 30 minutes of my life that I am not going to get back, and there were no solutions. The conversation was so broad. There was barely any talk of the actual text of the motion they put forward, and certainly no talk of Atlantic Canadians who actually need help and support.

Business of Supply

I will use my time here today to do two things. I will critique and offer some comments on the actual text of the motion, which is why we are here today. This is an opposition day motion. It is not binding on the government, but it provides a value proposition for us to debate. Then I am going to talk a little broader about the dynamic between reducing emissions, fighting climate change and supporting affordability, and it is that nuance that I did not hear from the opposition bench a minute ago. The Conservatives do not provide nuance, and they are certainly not providing solutions from what I have heard thus far.

The first provision in the text of the motion reads, “one-tenth of Canadians heat their homes during Canada's cold winter months with heating oil or propane heat because there are no alternatives”.

Let me say that I reject that premise, not that there is one out of 10 Canadians who use home heating oil or propane to heat their homes, but that there are no alternatives. Where is that suggestion coming from?

We, of course, in Atlantic Canada are disproportionately still reliant on home heating fuels of that nature, but I have seen in my own riding where homes have been able to make the transition. They have been able to work with federal programs and some of the provincial energy efficiencies and maybe install a heat pump and take on initiatives, which not only helps to reduce their energy use but reduces emissions and puts more money back in their pockets. Therefore, my question to the official opposition would be this: Where does the narrative come from that there is no alternative, whatsoever? I think that is a false narrative, and it is not very helpful to the constructive conversation that we need to have today.

The second provision in the text of the motion reads, “Canada is the only G7 country to have raised fuel taxes during this period of record high global fuel prices”.

Again, it is a false narrative that is coming from the opposition benches. Yes, we have maintained a price on carbon. We fought an election just over a year ago with that exact plan of moving the carbon price forward, which is going to help return money, in areas where we have a federal backstop in place, to households and businesses.

I reject the idea that a carbon price is a tax. The money and every single proceed that is collected is returned back to Canadians. This is not just simply something that is levied and comes into government revenue to support other types of social spending or programs. This money is returned. It is a price signal and it is a market signal.

The ironic piece of all of this is that the Conservatives, just over a year ago, actually ran an election campaign to put a price on carbon, but here these members stand today saying that somehow that is not a good idea. What has changed over the past year? Why the flip-flop? We have seen it, and that is the trouble that I think many Canadians have. They do not really know what this Conservative Party stands for. I know they will have the opportunity over the next couple of months, probably over the next three years, to find out, but again, an important reflection for Canadians is that it was this opposition party that ran on a carbon price last time.

The other point that is never reflected in the Conservative narrative is that the money is returned. We know that, where the federal backstop exists, eight out of 10 families are coming out further ahead at a household level. However, let me explain why this was all introduced. We introduced a price on carbon to incentivize behavioural change and to actually drive private sector solutions. The way this government introduced that policy in 2018 was to allow provinces and territories to develop their own plans. If they chose not to be a part of the pan-Canadian effort to reduce emissions in the fight against climate change, then a federal backstop would be imposed.

● (1050)

That exists in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and of course we work with the provinces and territories to update plans as we move toward 2030 to meet our international targets. In provinces that have chosen not to participate, that have chosen not to put forward a provincial plan, our plan puts money back into households and businesses accordingly.

I think the biggest flaw in the text, standing here as a member from Atlantic Canada, and I will be interested to see how the member from Newfoundland who sits on the opposition benches, as well as some of the other folks, address this, is that there is no application of carbon pricing on home heating fuel in Atlantic Canada. Let me repeat that: There is no carbon price application on home heating fuels in Atlantic Canada this winter.

I would not suspect the member for Carleton or the member for Calgary Forest Lawn would be misleading the House, because that is not my job to do and I would never suggest that, but clearly they have not done their homework.

The way this works is that provinces are putting forward plans. Those are currently under evaluation right now with the ministry of Environment and Climate Change Canada, and those are ongoing conversations. We do not know the results of those yet. Perhaps, as we have seen in other provinces such as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, there might be a provincial plan approved. I do not have all the details and I do not stand here understanding exactly what the outcomes will be.

However, even if there is a federal backstop implemented in one of those provinces, it will not start to apply to fuel until April 1. Therefore, for this narrative I suspect I will hear from the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame in Newfoundland, he better rewrite his notes because it will not apply to his residents this winter. Any narrative that somehow the Government of Canada is going to make people not be able to afford to fuel their homes this winter because of a carbon price is a completely false narrative. It is also premature, because we do not know the outcomes of those conversations.

As I read the text of this motion perhaps the most disappointing but not surprising part is that there is no vision for transition. Yes, we recognize affordability is a top issue for Canadians right now, but there is no mention of the \$250 million the government announced just a couple of weeks ago to help vulnerable Canadians transition off home heating fuel. I guess Conservatives do not believe in that because they think there are simply no alternatives. On this side of the House, we know there are alternatives, but there are some folks who cannot afford to make that transition themselves. That is why \$125 million of that \$250 million will be going to Atlantic Canada explicitly.

Again, if someone is sitting at home right now listening to the opposition, of course, yes, no one in this House disagrees with wanting to support affordability. However, what is the Conservatives' plan for the longer term? What is the Conservatives' plan to help make sure that, in two years or three years if there is another global event that causes prices to rise, they can augment and stop that and help people make a transition? There is not one single word in any of the text. I did not hear anything from the member for Carleton, and I did not hear anything from the member for Calgary Forest Lawn. Hopefully there is more depth in the Conservative benches and we will hear something more of what they are actually going to propose for a solution for Atlantic Canadians, and indeed all Canadians, in the days ahead.

Let us remind ourselves why there is a carbon price at all. Why are we doing this? We are doing this because the science is absolutely clear. We have a climate emergency. We need to be able to reduce emissions. In fact, we are a part of international agreements that set Canada's conditions to do so.

The OECD says that carbon pricing is the lowest-cost alternative to help incentivize the private sector and households to make changes and to change behaviour to reduce emissions. I know Conservatives are not really fond of global institutions right now, whether it is the World Health Organization or the World Economic Forum. We saw a lot of that during the leadership campaign. It is problematic, frankly, but maybe they believe in the OECD.

At the end of the day, Conservatives are not providing alternatives. They can propose amendments to the carbon pricing. I do not suggest it is a silver bullet, but there are no solutions on the other side. I wish I had more time, but I look forward to taking questions momentarily.

• (1055)

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member from Nova Scotia knows full well that his struggling constituents cannot afford the upfront costs to convert from oil to heat pumps. They have to strip out their oil heating equipment. They have to cut up their oil tanks. It is going to cost them about \$10,000, and they have to pay that up front. How can they afford it, with the Liberal-fuelled inflation that these constituents are dealing with?

To my hon. colleague from over in the Annapolis Valley, can you explain to your constituents and to the rest of the people in Atlantic Canada the inverse relationship between your carbon tax policy and what we are seeing in the U.S., where they are lowering emissions

Business of Supply

with no tax policy? It does not make sense. When is it going to work?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the hon. member that I am not going to answer that question. He needs to make sure that he directs the questions and comments through the Chair. Using the word “he” as opposed to the word “you” would be much more appropriate.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, let me reiterate a couple of things. Carbon pricing is not applying to home heating fuel this winter. We recognize that there are vulnerable households out there, as the member recognized, that need support to be able to make that transition. That is exactly why we put \$250 million into provincial programs, to do just that: to support some of the lowest-income, most vulnerable Canadians who would be in his riding and in mine. I believe the number is somewhere around \$22 million to Newfoundland and Labrador alone to help support that transition.

This member opposite is providing no solutions. We are actually helping residents to make that transition and help reduce emissions at the same time. It is quite simple.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, last week in Washington, the Deputy Prime Minister said something a little troubling: “...we must...be prepared to spend some domestic political capital in the name of economic security for our democratic partners.” That is rather surprising. She went on to say, “Canada must...show...generosity [towards its allies] in fast-tracking, for example, the energy and mining projects our allies need...”.

She appears to be saying that maybe Canada is preparing to build infrastructures to send natural gas to Europe, for example. It is rather surprising. We know that there is no social licence for this type of project in Quebec. I would like to know whether my colleague agrees with the Deputy Prime Minister's declaration.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question about the importance of Canada's natural resources sector. I agree with the Deputy Prime Minister. It is important that Canada provide natural resources such as hydrogen, liquefied natural gas and other renewable resources, such as food.

Canada is rich in all of these resources. Given the global situation, it is now more important than ever that Canada supply these products to its allies. I therefore agree with our Deputy Prime Minister's remarks.

Business of Supply

• (1100)

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, people are struggling to feed themselves and to house themselves. The CEOs of big businesses are making big profits on their backs. The profits are so obscene that even the CEO of Shell is calling on the government to tax the excess profits of big oil and gas companies. The Liberals want to help people, but they refuse to force CEOs to pay what they owe. Why do the Liberals refuse to force CEOs to pay their dues to fund the GST exemption on home heating costs?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, the member opposite knows I have respect for him, but the reality is he asked a question about corporate contribution to broader policy objectives and then also CEO pay. If the member opposite thinks we should increase taxation on high-income Canadians, I am happy to have that conversation in a debate in this chamber.

As it relates to oil and gas companies themselves, we are trying to incentivize them to make important investments to reduce the carbon intensity associated with their products, such that the Canadian oil and gas sector will have a future in 2050 for the smaller market that is going to exist globally.

It is important for Canada's competitiveness in this space to be able to reduce our emissions intensity. We are trying to incentivize the oil and gas companies to make that investment, similar to the \$25 billion that was done just this past week.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to have this opportunity to speak today, because we are talking about two issues that are so important to Canadians right across our country. These issues are affordability and climate change. The fact is that our country is warming at twice the global average. The north is warming three times as fast.

We are feeling the impacts of climate change right across this country. It is something that impacts people on a very personal level, as it impacts their homes and their livelihoods. It is also something that impacts our economy if we do not position ourselves to be the leader that we can be and that we are working to be right now, a leader in a low-carbon economy. That is where the world of opportunity lies for us: averting natural disasters and building a strong economy.

That is what we are doing. Along with that, we are building sustainable jobs for the future. That is why we need to invest and make sure we continue to work toward that low-carbon economy. That is where the sustainable jobs, the ones that will be there for generations to come, will be.

The issue is that for a country of 36 million people, Canada is a significant emitter of greenhouse gases. To fight climate change, to be competitive economically, like I have mentioned, we need to take action on climate change across all sectors of our economy, and we have to do it in a way that is fair and affordable for Canadians.

Scientific evidence shows that human-induced climate change has already had widespread and adverse effects. We have seen that in our country. We have seen it with floods, we have seen it with droughts and we have seen it with heat domes. All of these are having impacts right now, right across our country, yet Conservative politicians have been fighting climate action for years. That is literally why we face increased costs in cleanup from all of those disasters that I am talking about. In fact, wildfires right now in B.C. are creating all sorts of havoc. Those are only going to increase if we do not take action now. That is why we are committed to doing it.

As climate impacts intensify, it is all the more important and it is all the more obvious why we have to move to a clean net-zero emissions economy, to protect Canadians and the prosperity of Canadians going forward.

I am going to keep repeating that point, because with Conservatives bringing this motion, I think it is very important that they recognize that this is not just about environment and climate change. It absolutely is, but it is also about our economic future. It is about the sustainable jobs in all of our communities; good paying ones. Those are our opportunities and those are what we are trying to protect and create.

In recognition of these scientific and economic imperatives, Canada has set ambitious climate targets. In 2021, Canada enhanced its 2030 nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement to 40% to 45% below 2005 levels. The government also committed to achieving net zero by 2050, and last June, Canada passed the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act. The purpose of the act is to increase transparency and accountability as Canada works towards net-zero emissions by 2050.

The emissions reductions plan, which I may refer to as the ERP sometimes, just because it is faster and easier to do that, is about achieving incremental GHG emissions to reach Canada's 2030 targets. It is about putting in place foundational measures to ensure not only that Canada's future is carbon neutral, but also that energy alternatives are more affordable and create sustainable job opportunities for workers.

Business of Supply

Now, the Conservatives who have brought this motion today can pretend that they have been on the side of fighting energy poverty, but Canadians have been riding this roller coaster of volatile global oil and gas prices for years and Conservatives have said nothing about skyrocketing profit margins for oil and gas producers. The only way we are actually going to eliminate energy poverty and reduce household energy costs is by having true energy security by fighting climate change and making sure we are helping Canadians to get there, that we are helping Canadians to make the retrofits and to take advantage of energy-efficient measures right across the country. That is what the emissions reductions plan is there to do. It has a suite of mitigation measures based on the foundation of the 2016 pan-Canadian framework and the 2020 strengthened climate plan, considering the best available science, indigenous knowledge and the advice of the net-zero advisory body.

• (1105)

It is about listening to the experts across all sectors, to make sure we get this right.

Achieving Canada's climate objectives will be a whole-of-economy and a whole-of-society effort. When I talk about this, we are going to talk a bit more about the ERP. It includes new federal investments and supports across all sectors. When we are talking about these economy-wide measures, it includes one of the issues that has been raised today, the price on carbon pollution across the country, which is one of the cornerstones of Canada's economy-wide measures.

It is a market mechanism. That is why I always find it so fascinating when I hear Conservatives argue against carbon pricing. It is, in fact, a market mechanism. I am not sure why a party that says it supports market measures would be opposed to us doing exactly that: putting in a piece that works with the market on this.

Let me take it one step further. The part that is important about the federal climate action, our pricing of carbon pollution, is that in a backstop province, the money goes back to the people in that community.

For example, people in a backstop province, like mine in Ontario, actually, just last week, got a climate action incentive payment back. None of this stays with the federal government. Not a penny of it stays with the federal government. It goes back to the province where it was collected, and it goes back to the individuals who were paying it. That is very important, because I think that point gets lost sometimes in this debate.

I want to highlight that the Parliamentary Budget Officer, when looking at this, said not only, as we say all the time, that eight out of 10 Canadians get more back in this system than they paid, but also something else that I find very important, which is that the people who are not getting as much back tend to be the people with the most disposable income. That was the other thing the Parliamentary Budget Officer said. I think this is important when we are talking about affordability. We are talking about the fact that actually, the way the climate action incentive works, more money is paid back.

Basically, when we look at it the way the Parliamentary Budget Officer looked at it, people with the greatest need actually get more back, on average, when we look at the system.

I wanted to talk about some of the other measures in the ERP as we are going through it, and I am sorry that I jumped around a bit, but I get passionate about this issue because I care deeply about it.

The ERP is recapitalizing the low-carbon economy fund. The investment includes the creation of a new indigenous leadership fund to support clean energy and energy-efficiency projects led by first nations, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations.

As for our buildings, we never talk about the building sector enough in this place, but in the city of Toronto, which is my home city, buildings are our largest sources of emissions. We are going to have to tackle that. That is why we are developing a “net zero by 2050” building strategy to support the massive retrofit of the building stock needed to reach our climate targets. It also means putting in place contributions and loan funding to support the low-income stream of the greener homes grant program. I know that in my home city, and I hear about it when I am talking with people in other places as well, people are benefiting from this to make their homes more energy-efficient.

There is also funding to support deep retrofits of large buildings. This was actually support for community housing, social housing, in cities and other locations receiving supports through this kind of a program.

The other part that is really important is that just recently we announced funding to help people move from oil to heat pumps. That is funding that will support, in large part, homes in Atlantic Canada, but it is targeted to people with lower incomes. We recognize that affordability is a top issue for Canadians.

Right now, it is a hard time around the world. It is a hard time for Canadians. That is why we are here to work for them. At the same time, we are not going to lose sight of the need to take action on climate change.

• (1110)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the parliamentary secretary's intervention on the opposition day motion, it seems to me she is having a “let them eat cake” moment. She did not really speak to the motion, which is that the government's policies are creating massive inflation that is causing people in my community and my province to have to choose between heating and eating.

Business of Supply

If members do not know what heating from oil looks like, they can look at my visual here. It costs more than \$1,000 now to fill an oil tank. It has gone up 52% since the summer, and over 53% of Nova Scotians heat this way.

Could the parliamentary secretary actually address the issue of the day, which is why she and her government will not give a break on home heating taxes so people in my province do not have to choose between heating and eating?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that, while we prefer a neutral background, he can be wherever he wants to be. However, when putting a point across, he cannot refer to what is in the background.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, I did talk about the fact that affordability is a key issue for Canadians right now. Inflation around the world is very high, and Canada is below many of the other countries. We are seeing a slight decrease, but inflation is absolutely a top issue. That is why we are putting in extra supports to help Canadians. We are doing that with doubling the GST credit. We are trying to do that now with dental care and rental supports, and I am hoping that on those pieces, the Conservatives are going to stand up to help.

My question for the member opposite is whether he is going to help support people in his community by voting for the rental supports and dental care, so his constituents could take advantage of those programs.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, earlier, my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean asked a Conservative member a question after his speech. He asked him whether the Conservative Party and he himself were going to denounce and condemn the enormous profits generated by oil and gas companies. I would like to ask my colleague across the aisle the same question.

Does the government intend to denounce and condemn the enormous and indecent profits generated by oil and gas companies? If so, what does he intend to do to correct the situation?

• (1115)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, I am glad that my colleague asked me this question.

There is something we do not often talk about here: the fact that there is a fee system in place and that energy companies pay fees. They pay them in their province. It is not true that, when they make more profits, they do not pay more fees. They do.

I think that it is also important to note our government's move to impose higher taxes on banks and companies. We are thinking about that, but our attention is always focused on how we can help Canadians. That is what we do every day, in particular with our bills aimed at giving them tax credits and offering dental care support.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, people need help now. One of the things she said that was really

concerning was about buildings. I agree with her that we need to retrofit buildings to help mitigate the climate crisis, but we also need to help people now. She gave the date of 2050, but people need help right now.

I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary will support the NDP, which is the only party willing to state it, in going after CEOs and big oil companies to get them to pay their share so we can pay for retrofits now. Families need help now.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, we are working on a green building strategy that would provide supports to Canadians right now as some first steps, and we are going to continue to build on that. Environment Canada announced a program that will help Canadians who have lower incomes to retrofit their homes from oil heating to heat pumps. There is a greener homes grant, as well as other programs. In fact, other programs are being delivered not directly through the federal government but through cities, and I would be happy to work with the member opposite on more of that.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to indicate that I will be sharing my time with the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

Today's motion is yet another attempt by the Conservatives to address a real problem that is of great concern to our fellow Canadians, inflation, through solutions that are not. The Conservatives are very good at proposing false solutions by promising that they will relieve the public of inflation.

On their last opposition day, they outright proposed suspending the carbon tax. That proposal would not help Canadians deal with a global inflation issue. In proposing to suspend the carbon tax, they are trying to help a single sector, oil and gas. Meanwhile, the recent spike in the price of crude has greatly benefited oil companies.

The Conservatives use the problem of inflation, which affects all consumer goods and has repercussions on all households, to achieve a single goal, that of discrediting the polluter pays principle and eliminating the carbon tax. As soon as the Conservatives see an opportunity, they try to seize it, always for the same goal, to eliminate the tax on pollution.

It was disheartening to see that the Conservative motion introduced on a recent opposition day distorted the results of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's analysis. Let us make one thing perfectly clear right off the bat: The tax is not currently causing a loss for 60% of households.

Business of Supply

Today's motion quotes the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador and alludes to a total increase of 80%. However, that increase is for 2030, not for right now. By that time, our behaviours will have changed, evolved and progressed, and the economy will be more stable.

In addition, the tax is still progressive because of the rebate. Low-income families will see a net gain. The fact is that four out of five Canadians will receive more money than they will have paid in carbon tax. Maybe the reason the official opposition is proposing this is that the real solutions are more complex and require some thought about how to create wealth while respecting the environment, and especially about how to share that wealth.

Most of the Conservatives' solutions would deprive the government of revenue. It is taxpayers' money, the people's money, that we are managing. At the end of the day, the Conservative motion will not give people a stable increase in income, force companies to pay their fair share of taxes, or make banks and multinational corporations pocket less money.

One of the Bloc Québécois's goals is to ensure that multinational corporations pay their fair share. We do not deny the fact that inflation is real, rampant and widespread, affecting every sector, including housing, food and transportation. These times require more comprehensive measures than today's populist motion.

Rather than looking for positive solutions for the months and years to come, the Conservatives are taking advantage of Halloween and trying to frighten people. On September 7, the Bank of Canada increased its key rate for a fifth time, to 3.25%. For consumers, we know that this new key rate increase will result in higher interest and mortgage rates. At the same time, wages are catching up to inflation, a sign that the labour shortage is increasingly forcing employers to loosen the purse strings. We are seeing that some of them can afford to pay their employees higher wages.

It was mid-September before the Liberal government decided to actually talk about inflation. There was nothing concrete in the budget last spring to address the main concern of Canadians, nor was there anything new in the Deputy Prime Minister's speech on June 16 before the Empire Club on Bay Street in Toronto.

On September 13, the government came back to earth and announced an increase in the GST credit, doubling it for six months. Better late than never. The government also announced that it would pay \$500 in support to less affluent renters.

Inflation related to COVID-19 revealed weaknesses in the economy that must be corrected. The current inflation is largely caused by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine and many imbalances in supply and demand are cyclical. I will name just a few: demand going up and down, with very strong recovery following the lockdowns; changes in consumer behaviour to which production is struggling to adjust; production interrupted by outbreaks; dysfunction in the global supply chain, and more.

• (1120)

The global supply chain is struggling to adjust and, in many cases, regional outbreaks and lockdowns have amplified the problem by interrupting production. These events alone reveal the weak-

nesses of our commercial systems, their failings. When the links of a supply chain are completely relocated and there are lockdowns and slowdowns in production, repercussions will be unavoidable. Families now need to make sacrifices at the grocery store.

Some of these causes are environmental. Yes, there are supply issues associated with COVID-19 that have piled on to an already fragile situation, but there are also droughts and fires that have led to poor harvests in western Canada and the southern United States, driving up prices. Heatwaves lead to major agricultural losses, threats to aquatic life, water shortages, fires and, as a result, larger grocery bills and a decrease in river trade. All this is attributable to the climate crisis and, of course, the war in Ukraine.

All the conditions have been in place for several months for energy costs to explode around the world. Demand had fallen before the pandemic, driving prices down. The current increase is a form of catch-up, but oil prices are chronically unstable. There is a lot of speculation about oil prices, which causes endless crises. The best way to prevent this is to reduce our dependence on oil and gas.

Quebec is not currently subject to the federal carbon tax, in effect since April 1, 2019, because Quebec was proactive and imposed a form of price on pollution by taking part in the carbon market with California. As a result, Quebec is not affected by the Conservative motion and, let us be clear, no new federal tax will apply to heating invoices for Quebec households. However, that has not prevented thousands of citizens from reflecting on their dependence on oil and gas.

I would like to talk about Ms. Thériault in the Eastern Townships, who is lucky to be in good health at the age of 92. She lives at home, never owned a car, always got around by public transit and decided six years ago to remove the heating oil tank from her property. In doing so, she saved money. In less than two years, the cost of the transition was covered. The savings are enormous. No more dependence on the oil market.

I will say it again. I know that it will probably make some colleagues sick and that their skin may crawl a bit, but we need to work to get away from oil. Why? Because climate change is the greatest threat to our lives. The government must encourage the transformation of heating systems in businesses and private residences.

François Delorme, a professor of economics at the University of Montreal, said, "The harms of pollution in terms of public health and respiratory diseases have been well established. There is a public cost to our private decisions to use gasoline.... No one likes paying taxes, but people need to understand that this particular tax funds public services and renewable energy."

Business of Supply

By taxing gasoline, we obtain resources to encourage people to turn to greener solutions. In 2019, studies already showed that a carbon tax similar to Canada's had allowed some European countries to increase the size of the economy and the number of jobs. That contradicts a number of preconceptions. The purpose of this tax is to influence people's behaviour. With gas prices rising, we want to see a reduction in consumption, just like for junk food or tobacco. That is what Mr. Delorme reminds us of. Ms. Thériault lives in Quebec and, for her, simply seeing the heating oil bill go up pushed her to act.

Right now, the Bloc Québécois is proposing real solutions to relieve the main victims of inflation. It is proposing long-term solutions: increase old age security to maintain the purchasing power of seniors, offer financial support to people on low incomes, implement programs to support those most affected by sudden price increases. I know my colleagues will give other examples as well.

It is possible to make the economy more resilient if the structural weaknesses that cause inflation are addressed. To that end, we need to reduce dependency on oil and gas, address the labour shortage, encourage more local production, and begin major construction, particularly for social housing.

If the members truly want the government to help Canadians, we encourage them to approve the solutions put forward by the Bloc Québécois.

• (1125)

These are more equitable solutions that would in turn best distribute wealth. Let us set aside the demagoguery and avoid misleading the public with false truths. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but certainly not to their own facts.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, back in 2015, governments all around the world went to Paris, where an agreement about climate action was achieved. At the time, the idea and the principles of a price on pollution were widely accepted throughout the world. Even here in Canada they were widely accepted.

Today, when I reflect on how important it is to recognize the principles of a price on pollution, I see them as really good, not only for our local communities and our nation, but for the world as a whole. However, we have the official opposition party here in Canada reversing its position from the last election, saying it no longer supports the principles of a price on pollution.

Could the member provide her thoughts on how that statement has a profound impact here?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, personally, I would like the Conservative opposition, and this is not the first time I am appealing to its members, to join the 21st century. We cannot keep doing what we have always done, because we know the damage it causes to our health, to the public and to biodiversity.

I am appealing to the Conservatives yet again to join the 21st century and move forward to ensure that the people, but especially

the businesses, who pollute are finally taxed under a polluter pay system, starting with businesses.

• (1130)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, my home region is very rural. What would my colleague say to a family father or mother who needs to travel every day? There is no public transit for people to get to work, or go the grocery store or attend activities with their children.

What would she say, in light of the increased costs associated with the current taxes?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, first of all, no one has any power over transportation and the price of oil. It is decided in London and New York, and it fluctuates up and down. There was even a book published to try to explain oil speculation. No one can understand it. On that point, the price of oil is not up to us and it is out of our control.

That being said, the Bloc Québécois has solutions. I talked about a few earlier. For example, the government needs to increase old age security to preserve seniors' purchasing power. That would also enable them to get around. We need to give direct financial support to people with low incomes and provide a support program for those who are most affected by the sudden increase in gas prices, namely farmers, taxi drivers and truckers. The Bloc Québécois came up with all of these solutions because it has a more long-term vision.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have so much respect for my colleague. I work with her on the all-party climate caucus.

One thing the Conservatives do not want to talk about is the record profits of the bank industry, of grocery chains and of oil and gas. To interpret that for the Conservatives, it is called triple, triple, triple greed. That is just to help them understand what I am talking about.

I am going to talk about the motion. I agree with the member that the polluter pay model is absolutely critical for tackling climate change, but maybe we can relieve some pressure on Canadians by removing the GST portion on home heating. Would my colleague agree that this is a good step forward to help people tackle the pressures they are under right now with inflation?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, that does not affect Quebec. Our heating costs are not going to increase, because we have a carbon exchange.

There is something else or another element that could be relevant, and that is energy efficiency. In Quebec, we have Hydro-Québec's innovative projects program to develop high-performance energy-efficient real estate projects. That is another way to move away from oil.

Business of Supply

We also have the energy transition master plan, which will make \$12.7 billion in investments by 2026 to help people transition away from oil. Those are some solutions we could think about when looking to the future.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, long-time members are used to seeing the parties, when tabling bills or presenting motions on opposition day, do a sort of brief reading as a preview, to give an idea what it will be about.

Unfortunately, when I looked at the motion today, I thought that the Conservatives had to know that a lot of members tend to do that. The motion lists all kinds of things that are much like half-truths. They thought people would repeat all of them, one after the other, and would present the information. I may be wrong, but this time, for that reason, I will not do that.

In fact, I find it unfortunate that the facts are being somewhat twisted and situations exaggerated. I am not saying that no one is having problems with the cost of heating. Mainly, what I find is that the Conservative Party seems to be increasingly interested in blowing things out of proportion. Instead of wanting to debate substantive issues, they want to find anecdotal topics.

Another thing I deplore is that the Conservatives constantly revisit the same topics. It seems like every question period is the same. That is pretty much the case today. Every time we have an opposition day we feel we have gone through it before. In 2022, the Conservatives are still stuck in the same place. Maybe they will evolve in 2023. I hope so for their sake.

I think the debate is about the last part of the motion, not the long preamble that might take half my speaking time to read. The motion asks that “the House express its agreement with the comments of the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, and call on the government to exempt all forms of home heating fuel from the carbon tax for all Canadians.”

Here, in the wording of the motion—and this is just the last little bit—things are being twisted a bit. We can see that the Conservatives are using the fact that the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador wrote to the Liberal Prime Minister of Canada as a confrontational tool. It is not the worst we have seen, but I would say it is not exactly a very subtle tactic.

A little further into the motion, there is a mention of an exemption for home heating fuel. We understand that, when Conservatives talk about “home heating” and “carbon tax”, they are talking about heating oil and gas. As we know, there are Conservatives who defend one industry, and that can only be the oil and gas industry.

This is what really needs to be understood from the motion. The Conservatives have found another way to put forward a proposal to support the fossil fuel industry, the oil industry, which, unfortunately, is effectively an industry of the past. It seems that the Conservatives just cannot wrap their heads around that.

That is sad, because they seem to be obsessed with oil and gas. It seems like that is all they can think about when they get up in the morning. I think that they put oil in their coffee and have lunch and dinner with oil; I do not know. It really seems to be an obsession. I

was elected in 2015, seven years ago, and I cannot remember a single question period when there were no questions from the Conservatives about oil. I think that is their only topic.

For example, take the war in Ukraine. Russia invaded Ukraine. As a solution, the Conservatives began saying more oil was needed. Right now, there is an inflationary crisis and the Conservatives are trying to find ways to say that we need more oil. When we have a recession, because a lot of economists are predicting a recession—hopefully it will not be too severe—I am convinced that their solution will still be more oil.

Earlier, I said that it seemed like the Conservatives eat oil, but unfortunately, most of us breathe it. We breathe the fumes from these fossil fuels in our daily lives. Because the climate is also affected, the entire planet is grappling with global warming.

We do not hear much from the Conservatives on that. It would be interesting to hear them talk more about it, because it has a real impact on people’s lives. This costs billions of dollars. True, when we pay our bills at the end of the month or receive our paycheque, we never see anything saying “climate bill”, unfortunately.

• (1135)

Maybe we should find ways to say it more so it will be clearer. Maybe that would help the Conservatives understand that this phenomenon really exists and has a real cost for our society. When there are people with respiratory issues, I do not think it is a good idea to put more money into the oil and gas industry and encourage it even more. When there are species going extinct and our biodiversity is threatened, I do not think it is a good idea to cut down more trees and smother nature.

I have not been to Alberta yet, but I am really looking forward to going there one day. However, I have seen pictures and news reports, and it did not look like very joyful. I wonder what we will have to do in the future to fix all the damage and clean up the mess that has been created there. For example, bodies of water that are used for drinking water have become completely toxic and are now off-limits to the public. That really worries me. Animals are being poisoned by that water. The contamination will also end up in the water table, and people will be poisoned. When the green transition is complete, there will still be problems from the past to deal with.

I wish the Conservatives would offer up solutions and proposals that are look forward, not backward. For example, they often say we need to find a way for people to have more money in their pockets in the short term. However, the Conservatives’ solutions for achieving that always revolve around encouraging dirty industries. Could they come up with suggestions that involve funding or supporting clean industries instead?

Business of Supply

That would be nice. We would be more open to listening to proposals like that. As members know, in Quebec, we rely heavily on hydroelectricity and increasingly on wind energy. We are also looking at other modes of energy production, but we are trying to avoid fossil fuels as much as possible.

The Conservative motion mentions the Premier of Newfoundland. Historically, we have seen Newfoundland take legal action and start feuds with Quebec to prevent us from fully executing our projects. For example, rather than use Hydro-Québec's lines, they demand a line funded by the federal government. Then they end up on the brink of bankruptcy with their projects, instead of trying to collaborate with us. It is sad.

It is sad, considering that there are solutions out there. For instance, we have electricity that we could supply to people in other parts of the world. It is very likely that we will be supplying electricity to the United States. We already do, but we will supply more. We supply some to Ontario, but perhaps we would like to supply more. The Conservatives do not talk about it, but the Ontario premier who is showing less and less appetite for Quebec hydroelectricity is not a Liberal. He is a Conservative. That is sad, because hydroelectricity is a much greener solution than oil and gas.

It might be worth looking into solutions like these, where Quebec could play a role and maybe even help the Canadian provinces decarbonize. Would that not be amazing? Quebec could help the other provinces and the planet, instead of watching the constant push toward gas, oil and the oil sands that will end up poisoning us all. I do not think the Conservatives' solution is the right one.

I also have not heard the Conservatives talk about the increases in gas prices. They are talking about possible tax hikes, but those hikes do not exist in Quebec. Gas prices are going up because the oil companies are lining their pockets. The Conservatives have never suggested investigating the oil companies, their profits, or the oil cartel that is going on.

Unfortunately, we should really be asking why all prices are going up at the same time everywhere. Why is no one able to explain the relationship between the price at the pumps, the price of extraction and international phenomena? What we often see is that prices go up at Christmas. They go up at the start of vacation season. Sometimes, prices go up on Monday mornings too, and there is no good reason for that either. All of this is to say that it would be nice to see the Conservatives come up with some useful, meaningful ideas, instead of backward-looking suggestions.

In closing, we see that the Liberals seem inclined to support them. Countries often base their policies on their interests, and unfortunately, Canada is an oil-producing country.

• (1140)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely right, Quebec has, quite frankly, led the way when it comes to clean energy.

Ontario, Quebec and California signed on to the first cap-and-trade deal. It is extremely unfortunate that the first thing a Conser-

vative premier did in Ontario when he was elected was to bail on that agreement. However, what we have seen in the last four and a half years since that happened is that Quebec has continued to innovate and look at more creative ways to deliver and provide electricity, while Ontario has literally been stagnant for the last four years. We see the results in the electrification of the EV grid in Quebec, for example, which is light years ahead of Ontario.

Could the member provide further examples of how Quebec could demonstrate to the rest of the province how to produce electricity and share that technology throughout our country?

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I would like to add a few things to what my colleague opposite has just said. I think he made a comment rather than ask a question, but I am pleased with what he said.

In my view, it is not enough to say that we have to turn to the future, we also have to be enthusiastic about it. Often, when we take the initiative and choose to engage collectively in a promising project, people lift their head, smile and want to be involved. When that dynamic is created, it increases the desire to create that change.

On the other hand, when the members from the Conservative Party continue to encourage frustrations and an outdated view of things, they unfortunately reduce the possibility of looking to the future and create resistance to what needs to be done anyway. It is sad, because there is no enthusiasm and, instead of being economic precursors and winners, we run even more risk of being losers.

• (1145)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am concerned because the member seems to be really out of touch with reality.

It is estimated that the oil and gas industry in Canada has invested \$48 billion in public services in Canada. The members seems to not want to talk about one fact related to inflation. The two main causes of inflation are labour and energy. In my opinion, the member seems to agree that the cost of living is rising because of this government's desire to increase the tax on energy.

Does he support the government's decision to increase the cost of living for Canadians?

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I do not think we are out of touch with reality in Quebec. The motion is related first and foremost to the carbon tax, which we are not overly familiar with in Quebec because it does not apply there. Perhaps the member was not aware of that.

Business of Supply

Since the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec, its effect on inflation is quite minimal compared to what it could be elsewhere. However, there are several other structural mechanisms for combatting inflation that would help the people who really need it. The measures proposed today simply fund people who drive Hummers, for example, a very nice vehicle. There is even an electric version of it now; I encourage the member to buy one.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech.

Once again, the Conservatives seem to be missing the boat on the issues before the House. They have promised many times to cancel the GST on home heating. Today, instead of presenting a motion that would have limited the repercussions of rising heating prices, they are presenting a motion about the carbon tax.

Does my colleague think the Conservatives are again missing the boat by avoiding cancelling the GST on home heating?

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, my colleague just asked a good question.

As Quebec separatists, of course we want federal taxes like the GST to be as low as possible. I do not see why we would oppose removing the GST from home heating fuel. That would be a good start.

However, if the government ever moved forward with that, it would be nice if it applied to Hydro-Québec too. The problem is that the federal government subsidizes oil. It invests billions and billions of dollars in the oil industry, yet Quebec has never received a penny for Hydro-Québec. Even so, when we get our Hydro-Québec bill at the end of the month, it includes a federal tax.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have another Conservative opposition day and it is presenting, for the third time, roughly a similar motion. I find that disingenuous for the Canadian public, as Canadians go through so many difficult times right now. We know this because we have seen “greedflation” from the oil and gas industry and from the grocery industry that has raised prices unnecessarily, and I will come back to that in a moment.

The fact is that the NDP's motion on Monday had a greater impact on freezing prices than anything the official opposition has done for years in the House. We have seen that as well with “greedflation” in the grocery sector and the rise in food prices.

We have also seen it in the banking industry, which has received, under Conservative and Liberal regimes, hundreds of billions of dollars in liquidity supports. Canadian families have been left to the side in all of this, as wages stagnate, as prices increase and “greedflation” takes hold, with companies profiting off Canadian families at this critical time.

We have seen both Conservative and Liberal governments unwilling and seemingly paralyzed to act. That is why the 25 members of the NDP caucus have gotten to work.

The NDP achieved a lot in the previous COVID Parliament. We forced investments that would actually make a difference in peo-

ple's lives and provided supports. Tens of thousands of people in my riding of New Westminster—Burnaby benefited from the COVID supports that the NDP forced through the House.

The NDP also forced through the House supports for small businesses. The NDP and the member for Burnaby South also forced through the House a wide variety of other measures, like supports for people with disabilities, for students, for seniors and sick-leave provisions. All of those things in the past Parliament had a profound impact on the lives of Canadians in a positive way.

We went right back to work after the election that was called by the Prime Minister. Rather than dealing with the crisis, he threw it out and as a result of that—

● (1150)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to interrupt the hon. member because somebody's microphone is on. We have to make sure it is off.

I would like to remind those members participating remotely to make sure their microphone is off when they turn their screen on or decide to connect to the virtual network.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the NDP has gone to work in this Parliament and has pushed the government to put in place supports for dental care, a historic expansion of our health care system, and it is about time. Canadians believe universal health care is our most cherished institution. Our former leader, Tommy Douglas, was instrumental in bringing that about. Now, under the leader from Burnaby South, we have expanded it with dental care this year for children. Right across the length and breadth of our country, parents will be able to provide dental care for their children 12 and under. Inexplicably the Conservatives voted against that measure to help kids. They will have to explain that to their voters whenever the next election is held.

We also forced the government to provide supports to nearly two million Canadian renters through the renter supplement, hundreds of dollars that will make a difference to people in my riding.

Of course, the member for Burnaby South had been pushing for a number of months to get the doubling of the GST credit. That will mean anywhere from \$200 to \$500 that will go out in the next few weeks. Thankfully, the Conservatives, after initially opposing this NDP position, rallied. I think they finally understood the importance of providing those supports. As a result, we know those cheques will be on the way soon.

Business of Supply

Canadians are living in difficult times. They are struggling for affordable housing. They are struggling to pay their health care bills. They are struggling because their wages have not kept up. In this corner of the House, Canadians know they have an NDP leader and an NDP caucus that is resolute about providing supports, and we have the track record to prove it.

Over the course of the last two Parliaments, almost every measure that has had a net benefit to Canadian families has come from the NDP caucus, leveraging in a minority Parliament our 25 voices, and 24 voices in the last Parliament, to make a difference for Canadians.

The fact that we have one leader in the House who has a laser-like focus, ensuring Canadians benefit from decisions made in Parliament, has made a difference in the lives of so many Canadians, but we have so much more to do, and we are going to continue to push. The reality is that we have had seven years of a Liberal government that has basically been paralyzed when it comes to the important decisions that would make a difference in the lives of people.

When we look at the disability benefit, it still does not have any substance behind it. We are going to be pushing, with Bill C-22, to actually have a disability benefit that makes a difference in the lives of people. However, to date, we have not seen the substance or the meat that actually will make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

These are the kinds of measures the NDP will continue to push.

On housing, we were able to force the government, in the last budget, to finally start to reinvest in affordable housing, and over the next couple of years 150,000 new affordable housing units will be built. That is a result of the efforts of the member for Burnaby South and the NDP caucus, again, to leverage our 25 members to make a difference, to push for change for a better life for Canadians.

We are pushing to have put into place all the calls to action on truth and reconciliation. We are pushing for measures that would stop the spread of hate and right-wing extremism that we are seeing. We will continue to push all those elements, because we believe fundamentally, as New Democrats and as members of Parliament, that our responsibility is to make a difference in the lives of people.

We did not see that in the dismal Harper decade, an incredibly dismal period in Canadian history, or in the seven years of paralysis that we have largely seen from the current government, until, with minority Parliaments, the NDP started to leverage and get things done in Parliament. We saw over the course of the Harper dismal decade a massive expansion of overseas tax havens, valued by the Parliamentary Budget Officer at \$25 billion a year, now over \$30 billion a year. This is taxpayer money going off shore. The ultrarich, profitable corporations are taking their money offshore rather than providing those investments that would make a difference in the lives of families, students, youth, children, people with disabilities and seniors.

• (1155)

Under both the Conservative regime and the Liberal regime, the immediate thought when a crisis hit, whether it was in 2008 or with COVID in 2020, was what they could do to help the banks. We saw under the Harper government a record \$116 billion in liquidity supports given overnight. The Harper government wanted to shore up bank profits. That was its first and foremost priority. It cut pensions and eviscerated a wide variety of services for veterans, seniors and people with disabilities.

It cut a whole bunch of important programs, including, inexplicably even today, the crime prevention programs that reduced crime right across the country. For the Harper government or any person connected to the Harper government, like the member for Carleton, to pretend that it took initiatives that reduced the crime rate when it destroyed the crime prevention centres strikes the heart of rampant hypocrisy. It eviscerated the most important tool in fighting back against crime.

This was the record of the Harper government: destroying services and ensuring that the banks, the ultrarich and the oil and gas industry had record profits. That was its first and foremost objective. Sadly, the new Liberal government has done the same, continuing those practices. We have gone from \$25 billion a year under the Harper government to over \$30 billion in overseas tax havens under the new government. In the banking sector, it was \$116 billion.

We saw the Liberal government, in March 2020, step up in 96 hours with \$750 billion in liquidity supports for the banks. This is while people with disabilities were struggling to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table. They are still waiting years later, and we have a bill that does not do anything yet. However, the NDP is going to fight like hell to ensure that it does do something to actually make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

What we have had over the last couple of decades is a government that has been focused on the needs of the banking sector and bank profits and that has allowed the grocery industry, the big giants of the grocery sector, to profit from Canadian families, without putting any measures in place to restrict that. With the oil and gas sector, of course we have seen the rampant profiteering, with the price going up on old stock as soon as there is any sort of crisis, as the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has pointed out so many times. Both at the beginning and at the end of every crisis, the oil and gas sector reaps record profits.

These are the decisions we have seen from both Conservative and Liberal governments, but now we have an alternative. I want to point out why it is so important for folks in Canada to recognize that. We have a choice between the current government, the official opposition and the NDP. In the coming election, whenever that is, whether next year, the year after or in 2025, at some point this Parliament will come to an end and Canadians will have a choice to make. We have seen what the Liberals and the Conservatives do. They cater to the wealthy, the ultrarich, the banking sector, grocery chain CEOs and the grocery empires rather than dealing with regular people.

The NDP, this week, in our only opposition day of this cycle, brought forward a motion that ultimately forced all parties to support it. It recognized that “Canadian families are struggling with the rising costs of essential purchases” and asked the House to “call on the government to recognize that corporate greed is a significant driver of inflation”, or greedflation, as members know, and to take action, which includes:

(a) forcing CEOs and big corporations to pay what they owe, by closing the loopholes that have allowed them to avoid \$30 billion in taxes in 2021 alone, resulting in a corporate tax rate that is effectively lower now than when this government was elected

● (1200)

This is an important point. It was bad under the Conservatives. It is even worse now under the Liberals.

The motion continued:

(b) launching an affordable and fair food strategy which tackles corporate greed in the grocery sector including by asking the Competition Bureau to launch an investigation of grocery chain profits, increasing penalties for price-fixing and strengthening competition laws to prohibit companies from abusing their dominant positions in a market to exploit purchasers or agricultural producers; and

(c) supporting the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in investigating high food prices and the role of “greedflation”

When we introduced this motion, the CEOs of the big grocery chains and big food immediately stepped up to say they were not going to increase their prices anymore; they were going to freeze prices. The NDP had an impact with that motion. This is an important part of what members of Parliament should be doing.

This motion passed unanimously, as members know, because it was good sense that we pushed back as members of Parliament knowing the impact that greedflation has had right across the length and breadth of this country. It has cost Canadians a terrible price. As a result of that, the member for Burnaby South brought forward this motion, which had an immediate impact.

I contrast that with the Conservatives, the official opposition. This is the third time now that they have brought forward essentially the same motion. They did it on June 7, they did it on September 28 and they are doing it today. It is for tackling a price on carbon, as if climate change and the climate crisis do not affect Conservatives. It is quite the contrary. We know that climate change is impacting people right across the country. We know that putting a price on pollution actually helps to alleviate that, yet we have this obsession from the Conservatives where on three opposition days in a row they essentially bring forward the same motion.

Business of Supply

The motion does not deal with the issue of affordability, in the same way that the Conservatives in the House and the sound and fury from the member for Carleton do not in any way help Canadians. In fact, the Conservatives cannot really point to anything they have done over the last few years that has helped Canadians.

The NDP can. We can point to dental care. We can point to the housing supplement. We can point to the affordable housing that we forced in the last budget. We can point to the doubling of the GST credit. We can point to all of the COVID supports that we forced in this House. In a minority Parliament situation, we are using the weight of our members of Parliament to make a difference for Canadians.

What can the official opposition point to in the last few years? They can point to nothing, nada. It is so much the worse that it is a repudiation of the commitments made by the former Conservative leader in the election before last. It is important to point out that back in 2019, the Conservative leader, to quote the CBC website, made an “election promise to remove GST from home-heating bills”. To quote Global News, he said he would “cut GST from home heating bills as prime minister”.

Given the opportunity to actually put that forward, the Conservatives failed, and they brought forward the same motion a third time, as if somehow it is a magical third time. It is that triple, triple, triple of putting together the same motion and putting it out to the House again as a rerun rather than dealing with the fundamentals of removing the GST on home heating, which the Conservatives previously promised to do and did not and which the member for Burnaby South has been promoting.

● (1205)

What I am offering today is the opportunity for the official opposition to actually keep a promise. The Conservatives promised in the election campaign that they would take the GST off home heating, so I will be offering an amendment shortly that would do just that. The amendment, which the Conservatives should support because they committed to it, would replace the carbon tax in their opposition motion. Rather than for the third time dealing with the issue of climate change as if it is something that does not exist, we would instead put in place the removal of the GST from home heating. The Conservatives promised that, so they should support this amendment. It would actually have a meaningful impact on Canadians' lives. We know the impact of the GST on home heating, so it would make a fundamental difference.

[*Translation*]

We have seen that the NDP is really making a difference in Canadians' lives. We have seen it with dental care, housing assistance and affordable housing, measures that we forced the government to include in the last budget along with the doubling of the GST credit. All of these are a win for Canadian families.

Business of Supply

Today, we will give the Conservatives the opportunity to keep their promise to eliminate the GST on home heating. We will propose an amendment that will make a real difference in people's lives.

That way, the Conservatives will finally be able to say that they did something to help people, that it was not just talk, that they actually did something. They need to help people instead of just going around in circles.

[*English*]

It is therefore with pleasure that I offer the following amendment on behalf of the NDP, and if good sense and good judgment take place, the Conservatives will support it. I move that the motion be amended by deleting the words “from the carbon tax” and substituting the following: “from the goods and services tax”.

● (1210)

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

The hon. member does not have the support of the opposition; therefore, the amendment cannot be accepted.

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

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, one thing that I think is extremely disingenuous, and I am curious if the member would agree, is that every time the Conservatives talk about the price on pollution, they conveniently neglect to talk about the rebate that Canadians will be getting. They say the price on pollution will triple, triple, triple, but the reality is that the rebate will triple, triple, triple.

I wonder if the member for New Westminster—Burnaby could provide his input on whether or not the Conservatives, when making that claim, are being quite disingenuous given the reality of the program.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, “disingenuous” seems to be the middle name of the Conservatives these days. They should recognize that the price on pollution is reimbursed for lower-income people, but the GST, which they promised to take off home heating if they ever formed a government, has a direct impact on consumers and Atlantic Canadians who are hoping to heat their homes.

This is where I note the rejection of the NDP amendment. It would have made the opposition day motion different from the last two reruns and would have fundamentally helped people in Atlantic Canada and right across the country. This is why it is so perplexing. They were given an opportunity and the NDP did all the work. We said we were going to hand it to them on a silver platter, but the Conservatives said no. They just want to make an ideological point and do not want to help anybody.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his revisionist history on the banking crisis of 2008.

As I sit here, I see a shell game, a carnival, with the way the carbon tax is being laid out and always being proposed by the Liberal government and the NDP. If it was so good, why wouldn't the government give the refunds ahead of time? While people are struggling to make ends meet, their budgets are going up and people have gone into debt, the Liberals come in afterwards with cheques that do not quite meet the challenges the people of Canada are facing.

Yesterday I stood and said that GST was being charged on top of the carbon tax on heating bills and the Prime Minister said that was misinformation. I would ask my colleague if he has looked at his heating bills, if he could confirm or deny that GST is actually being charged on top of the carbon tax and what his thoughts are on that.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I have two answers. First off, why would the Conservatives say no to an amendment that would take the GST off home heating? Why did they do that? They just did that in front of the entire country as witnesses. They said no to taking GST off home heating. I have no idea where the Conservatives are on this at all.

I do know that the member for Carleton is rapidly become the Liz Truss of Canada. What we have seen over the course of the last few weeks since he became leader are the despicable ties to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, this is a point of order. It is not debate. The member constantly said that there was no motion put forward by the opposition that involved the GST. I will read from the March 22 Hansard when the opposition motion was, “(i) Canadians are facing severe hardship due to the dramatic escalation in gas prices, (ii) the 5% collected under the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), and the Quebec Sales Tax (QST) creates increased revenue for the federal government”.

This is not debate, Madam Speaker. This is the actual information. The member from wherever he is from is—

● (1215)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This is entering into debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, the member from “wherever he is from” is actually from Burnaby South, just so my Conservative colleague knows.

A point of order references the order of procedure. It is to call to the attention of the Chair that the order of procedure did not happen. Clearly the member is debating. He is not bringing forward a point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are entering into debate.

Business of Supply

The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I thought it was unbecoming of the member across the way to correct a Conservative member and incorrectly refer to the member for New Westminster—Burnaby as the member for Burnaby South, so I hope he gets—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This is definitely entering into debate.

I will allow the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby to finish his answer.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, for the record, I am very proud to be the member of Parliament for New Westminster—Burnaby and to represent both of our communities proudly.

As I was saying before I was interrupted, the member for Carleton is the Liz Truss of Canadian politics. We saw that with the despicable tagging of misogynistic groups on his website. We have seen this with the inexplicable call by Conservatives to stop providing the supports to provide payments around EI and pensions. To cut back on those kinds of supports is unbelievable.

Then we saw the disgraceful promotion of Bitcoin. At a time when Canadians were struggling, to say they should invest in something like Bitcoin, and now we know the value has collapsed, was simply irresponsible. I do not know where Conservatives come from. I think they need to come clean. They could have—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. We must move on to another question. The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, this morning, I once again find myself in some kind of bad theatrical production where people keep repeating the same lines. They are the only ones who do not realize that this is getting really ridiculous. Everyone is talking, but at the end of the day, they are not talking about the real issue and how to help people deal with inflation right now. The Bloc Québécois has proposed very simple solutions, which include increasing old age security at age 65. We have been saying this for months, but we have yet to hear a response from the government.

Can the member explain the government's inaction? Can he explain why the government is turning a blind eye to the fact that, because of inflation, seniors are having a hard time paying for groceries, heating and everything else?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, that is why the NDP pushed for the dental care program. It is important. This is going to help seniors starting next year. We know that seniors everywhere, in Quebec, in British Columbia, need access to dental care. The NDP did the work so they could have access to it next year.

Then there is the help for renters. In Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, people need more support. The NDP also got that help for seniors who are renters. Also for seniors in Quebec and elsewhere, the GST rebate has been doubled, thanks to the efforts of the member for Burnaby South. This will go a long way toward helping people throughout Quebec and Canada.

The reality is that the NDP gets results. That is why next time, the people of Quebec should vote for the NDP instead of the Bloc Québécois.

[*English*]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague for his tremendous work, particularly around greedflation, which is something the Conservatives are not willing to call out. It is really going on the theme of being disingenuous. Although they are talking about helping people across Canada, every time the NDP puts forward something to help Canadians, such as dental care and doubling the GST credit, they vote against it. The current Conservative Party is not there to help Canadians. I wonder if my colleague agrees with me that one of its biggest failures in this is not being willing to cut the GST on home heating.

• (1220)

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for her always relevant and pertinent questions. She does a fabulous job in the House of Commons and has made a real impact on the lives of people in Winnipeg Centre and right across this country, so I thank her for her service and her work.

This is what is inexplicable about the leadership of the member for Carleton. The Conservatives recycle a motion they have already brought forward numerous times rather than saying that the reality is that they have not done this. They have not asked, despite the fact they have multiple opposition days, to take the GST off home heating. That is what the NDP is proposing today. We did the work. We did all the background. We presented it to the Conservatives on a silver platter. All they had to do was say yes. We have done all of the work for them, and they said no. As a result of that, their constituents are going to pay more for home heating than they would have if the Conservatives had simply agreed the NDP was right in its approach.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is my first opportunity to rise today to speak on the opposition motion. I want to make it clear that I am agreeing with the official opposition that Canadians are facing some serious energy pricing problems this winter, but I am making clear I will have to vote against the motion because I do not believe it addresses the real problems, nor is it as effective as the amendment just put forward by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

I want to ask the hon. member if he would agree with me that we really need to focus on energy poverty as a specific issue and resolve it, not with a one-time only band-aid solution but by getting at the problem. In preparing for this debate today I found an excellent report on energy poverty from the local energy access project, which is within the Canadian urban sustainability program of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The focus should be on those particular homes that have not been properly insulated, not just a one-time band-aid but something that would work for the lifetime of that property, moving more quickly—

Business of Supply

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby 20 seconds to answer.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives had a program when they were in government called ecoENERGY and thousands of Canadians wanted to join it and deal with that energy poverty. What did they do in the dismal Harper decade? They had just one program that worked and they cut it. They slashed it. They eliminated it. They put thousands of Canadians out of work. There were hundreds of thousands of Canadians in the waiting line who were unable to deal with that energy poverty and efficiency—

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

The hon. member for Beauce.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

I rise today to discuss our party's opposition motion introduced by my colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn.

Since the Liberal government is so out of touch with reality, our party felt it was essential to present this motion today to give Canadians a break during this very important period, when inflation remains high and interest rates continue to climb.

The current government likes to boast about its latest announcements, such as day cares and dental care, but it fails to realize that it will literally leave many Canadians out in the cold this winter. Some of my fellow citizens will need to choose between heating their home this winter and putting food on the table.

As we noted in our motion, one in 10 Canadian homes is heated by propane or oil. These Canadians actually do not have the financial means to choose another option, but the government will continue to treat them like second-class citizens, tripling the carbon tax over the winter. What a wonderful Christmas gift from our Prime Minister.

The gap between urban and rural areas has only grown under the leadership of this Prime Minister. He does not seem to understand that Canadians in rural areas are not second-class citizens. They want to prosper too, but his government is letting them down every time, whether a lack of cell coverage, defective Internet or this irrational tax that will triple during our country's coldest season. In the regions, there is no choice but to use a vehicle, whether to go to work, do grocery shopping or drive children to various activities. This tax is stifling them even more.

When housing prices have never been higher, food prices have not been as high since 1981 with an inflation rate of 11.4%, the government thinks it is the time to increase the carbon tax even more. I suppose these inflationist policies were passed on from generation to generation.

Do members know who the prime minister was in 1981? It was Mr. Pierre Elliott Trudeau. I remember it well because my spouse

and I were a young couple with three young children. With high interest rates and inflation above 10%, we had to make difficult choices. Luckily, we had our parents to help us make ends meet. They were very difficult times. We can see the cycle repeating itself.

We all know that government members will stand up and say that inflation is a global phenomenon, but this made-in-Canada inflation cannot be blamed entirely on Putin and COVID-19. Decisions are being made at the Liberal cabinet table. It is obvious to me that those folks are completely out of touch with reality and what is really going on.

I can assure this House that the numbers would be a lot better if a Conservative government were in power. The Conservatives have been proposing solutions all along, but none of our suggestions have been taken seriously, because they do not revolve around taxing Canadians in order to recover funds to pay for the reckless spending and deficits the likes of which we had never seen before the current Prime Minister took office.

The costly coalition with the NDP has turned into a nightmare, as the New Democrats continue to prop up the government and try to convince Canadians to support it. A government that stands up for Canadians would never triple a tax in the winter or raise taxes on Canadians' paycheques.

● (1225)

Canadians work so hard. Why take away even more purchasing power at a time when they need it so much?

In my riding, residents have a hard time making ends meet. In Beauce, like everywhere in Canada, people work hard. They own and operate businesses and help their neighbours. In my riding, the unemployment rate is currently 1.8%. People are exhausted. They are tired of seeing the federal government dig deeper and deeper into their pockets at a time when they need their hard-earned money the most.

Surely the government will tell me about its \$10-a-day day cares or the dental care they are currently imposing on us. First, I must say that Quebec has had its own day care system for many years now. Second, I can guarantee that a single mother in my riding would prefer to keep the heat on in her home or put food on the table to feed her family than have her children's teeth cleaned right now.

All that is part of the agreement of convenience with the NDP. Before the costly coalition was established, I had never heard the Liberal Party talk about dental care. It is all just a scheme to continue undermining democracy with this coalition that no one in Canada asked for.

Business of Supply

As indicated in the text of our motion, the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador wrote a letter to the Prime Minister asking for this same exemption, and our party has worked to do the same. This government's carbon tax makes no sense, particularly in relation to home heating. No one will turn down the heat in their home in the winter when it is bitter cold to reduce carbon consumption. I think people instead need to heat their homes to survive.

Our party tabled under private members' business a bill similar to Bill C-206, which was not passed due to the needless election call last year. Bill C-234, which is currently in committee, will help farmers keep their livestock and animals safe and warm during the winter. That bill has the support of all the parties, except one. We can guess that it is the Liberal Party.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my opinion: This winter, Canadians should not have to choose between heat and food. The Liberals must open their eyes and see the damage they are causing. Maybe they should listen to several of their colleagues in the House, and our party, because they are about to commit a serious mistake on January 1, 2023.

The leader of the Conservative Party and our united caucus will not stop until the Prime Minister has heard us. We are here for Canadians, and even more importantly, I am here to protect Beauce. I hope that the government will both hear and understand my message today.

• (1230)

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague from Beauce's speech.

I have been asking the Conservatives a question for three years now, but no one is ever able to answer it. Today, that question is even more important.

Do members know what has never been so high? The record profits of oil and gas multinationals. However, I have never heard one Conservative rail against these obscene profits in the House.

Does my colleague agree that oil and gas multinationals are making obscene profits and that we need to do something about that?

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

We are here today to talk about the effects that inflation is having on the population in general and particularly on people in the regions of Quebec. I think my colleague will agree with me on that.

I think that what is important is that we take real action to find an immediate solution to this very serious problem for all citizens.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my question for the member is in regard to a commitment that he was no doubt a part of in the last federal election. I raised this earlier today with the Leader of the Conservative Party, but the leader chose not to answer the question.

As candidates, they campaigned on the principle of supporting a price on pollution. Today, the Conservative Party is sending a message to Canadians that Conservatives do not support a price on pol-

lution. That is emphasized once again with the motion we are debating.

Does the member not believe that he and his party made a commitment to Canadians to support the principles? What does he think of that commitment today?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I think it is very clear that we made those promises in a specific context. Right now, we are in the middle of a crisis because of the rising inflation rate, which is driving interest rates up. We need rapid, concerted action to support the entire Canadian population, especially in rural areas.

• (1235)

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know Conservatives are ideologically driven in their opposition to the carbon tax.

We brought forward an amendment today to remove the GST on home heating because we know people are struggling. We are trying to find ways to work together. If there is a way we could converge and do something to help people right now, removing the GST on home heating would be an incredible opportunity for us.

Would the member's party reconsider our proposition so we could provide relief on something we could agree on, something Conservatives had in their platform in the last election, which is removing the GST on home heating so that people could get relief right now?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I said earlier, what is important now is to act quickly to fight the inflationary crisis, which is boosting interest rates.

Many people in my riding still heat their homes with propane. We need to act quickly for them, and that is the purpose of our motion today.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, when I listen to the Conservatives' arguments, I clearly see that their goal is to deal with inflation and help Canadians and Quebecers fight runaway inflation. At the same time, they do not want their friends, the oil companies, to shoulder the burden.

Business of Supply

The carbon tax does not affect the revenues of businesses in the oil and gas sector, and the proceeds of this tax are returned to the public and consumers. This is the kind of measure that helps them, because the tax revenues go back into the public's pockets.

I would like to hear what my colleague from Beauce has to say about that. I do not think the carbon tax is a bad deal, because it puts money back in the pockets of those who need it.

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

If he has been following the proceedings in the House, which I have no doubt he has, he has heard us mention on a regular basis that it is false to say that all the money is returned to the people. Real examples from my riding show that that is not the case.

I believe we should be careful—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

[*English*]

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the great people of Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame and, in fact, of all Newfoundland and Labrador, and Atlantic Canada, to proudly support our Conservative motion to axe the carbon tax plan on home heating fuel.

This initiative is the latest installment of the cult-like plan to triple the carbon tax on Canadians. According to the chair of the Council of Atlantic Premiers, the energy poverty in Atlantic Canada is nearly 40%, which is the highest in the country.

Even Newfoundland and Labrador's Liberal premier is begging the Prime Minister not to put carbon tax on home heating fuel. It will drive up heating cost by 20% this winter. The premier, a very close friend of the Prime Minister, said in early September that ending the current carbon tax exemption would place "undue economic burdens on the people of this province".

The four Atlantic premiers wrote to the federal environment minister around the same time to request an extension on the home heating fuel carbon tax exemption. They were flatly turned down by the Liberal government, whose intent to tax the right to heat one's home reflects its cult-like beliefs that taxing the essentials of life will lower carbon emissions.

The NDP coalition partners are partial to the very same beliefs. The leader of the carbon tax pact, the Prime Minister, brags that Canadians receive more in rebates than they pay in carbon tax. However, it is time for the Prime Minister to get the memo: Atlantic Canadians get zero carbon tax rebate, and now, the carbon tax deficit of homeowners who heat their homes with oil or propane is about to grow even more with the addition of this tax to their fuel.

As if that is not enough, they will be charged HST on top of the carbon tax. That is right. It is a tax on a tax.

The Liberal carbon tax is thus far a complete failure. Since the government took office in 2015, our emissions have increased, along with the carbon tax, with the exception of 2020 where it

dropped, probably because the Prime Minister and his world economic forum buddies were forced to park their private jets.

The failure of carbon pricing in Canada is in stark contrast to the success that Americans have had in reducing their emissions. They did not bend to climate activists, but instead, they used technology and did things like converting coal plants to use natural gas. However, the people of my province do not have the option of converting to natural gas, so they will have to continue, for the most part, with diesel heating fuel, and I will speak more about natural gas near the end of my speech.

When implemented this winter, the carbon tax, combined with the HST on heating fuel, will be about 17¢ per litre, and according to our Liberal premier, this constitutes a 20% increase on the cost to heat a home. This is with carbon pricing at the current rate of only \$50 per tonne. That rate is set to rise to \$170 per tonne by 2030, which will drive up the carbon tax on that same litre of fuel to about 55¢ per litre.

This is nothing short of a disaster created by a government whose smallest concern is the real lives of Atlantic Canadians. It is a slap in the face to the very people who have put so much faith in the Liberal government since 2015.

I hear from nervous constituents all of the time lately. Constituents are already stretched to their breaking points by inflation that is out of control. Yesterday's food inflation numbers told them what they already know, and now winter is coming. The people of Atlantic Canada will need to choose between food on the table or a warm home.

Recently, the environment minister bragged about his new program to switch homeowners from heating with fuel to heating by heat pumps. It is a plan that can help, at best, 3% of homeowners.

Where does that leave Cory from Gander? Last year, Cory spent \$4000 to heat his home. With the intended carbon tax added, he will pay an extra \$700 on his annual heating bill. Cory considers himself to be middle class, but with this inflationary tax increase, he is worried about paying his bills.

Business of Supply

• (1240)

Felicia from Pike's Arm told me that she spent \$6,000 in only 10 months last year to heat her home. The carbon tax on just 10 months of fuel will cost Felicia an extra \$1,050, if the Prime Minister does not back down from his tax-hiking plan. The people of Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame simply cannot take more inflationary tax pressure on their lives. Real people with real bills to pay are really fed up. They are much more intelligent than the tax master, our Prime Minister, makes them out to be.

They know this tax-and-spend climate plan is not working. Even the Liberal premier of Newfoundland and Labrador knows it is not working, and he says it is completely unnecessary with the price of oil where it is and where it is projected to go. According to most experts, oil is forecasted on average to be about \$95 per barrel next year and will rise to \$125 per barrel by 2025. With these oil prices where they are and where they are going, there is already enough pressure on consumers to cut their consumption. This is an unnecessary Liberal tax grab.

According to the CBC, which by the look of it is abandoning its carbon tax love affair, Nova Scotians alone will pay \$1 billion extra on home heating fuel by 2030. That is quite the tax grab. Can members just imagine: \$1 billion and no guarantee that a tangible tonne of carbon reduction will occur? The one thing that is guaranteed is that money in people's jeans will be reduced by this inflationary tax pressure.

The Prime Minister should listen to his friend in Newfoundland and Labrador. He should stop misleading Canadians while he contradicts the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the PBO, who said in March that the carbon tax will deliver a net financial loss to most households. The Prime Minister should listen to experts like the PBO, but what can we expect from a guy who said the budget would balance itself? He said there was no economic case for shipping natural gas from Newfoundland and Labrador to Europe, because of the distance.

We are just 4,000 km from Europe. However, the U.S., with its LNG plants in Texas, more than twice the distance from Europe, exports a billion dollars' worth of liquefied natural gas per day. Argentina, in a partnership with Petronas, is building a \$10-billion LNG facility to export natural gas. The only place further away from Europe than Argentina is the South Pole, but our wise Prime Minister says that the island of Newfoundland is too far from Europe for it to make economic sense to take on such a project.

Right now, as we speak, Germany is converting natural gas plants back to burning coal, which has double the emissions. Instead of helping our allies by harvesting the 8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas on the Grand Banks and boosting the prosperity of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Liberal government promotes air pollution in Europe and energy poverty in Atlantic Canada.

I am proud to support our Conservative motion to exempt home heating from the carbon tax, and I hope my colleagues on the other side of the house, especially those from Newfoundland and Labrador and the Maritimes, stand with the people who elected them when they stand to vote on this motion.

• (1245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, here is a bit of a challenging question, and I hope the member chooses to answer it. He makes reference to the Atlantic, and I do not know whether he said Nova Scotia or Newfoundland and Labrador, and he said the government would receive hundreds of millions, I think he actually said a billion, in terms of a carbon tax. That is what we are going to be receiving.

Ottawa is not receiving carbon tax dollars coming from Atlantic Canada. It is the provinces that are receiving that money. If he really believes it is Canada that is receiving it, can he provide us an actual number that he believes the Government of Canada is receiving because of a carbon tax in Atlantic Canada?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague across the way knows that his leader and his party support forcing Atlantic Canadian premiers to place a carbon tax on home heating fuel. The carbon tax is a federal government initiative, and my colleague knows who invented the carbon tax. I just cannot wait to hear him say later that Atlantic Canada is going to get so much back. I cannot wait to hear him say later that we get so much back in rebates, like the Prime Minister constantly brags about, when it is completely false. Atlantic Canadians get zero back in rebates on the carbon tax.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I think my colleague will agree that, when natural disasters happen, it is natural for governments to help the people who are affected. We saw it with Fiona. The government made investments to help those who had paid the price in their everyday lives. They lost their homes and other possessions.

The UN estimates that, over the past 20 years, natural disasters have cost the world \$3 trillion. When governments pay, it is the taxpayer who ultimately ends up paying for it in taxes.

How can my colleague think that taxpayers will benefit?

The cost comes to \$3 trillion over the last 20 years. Just imagine what will happen if nothing is done. The carbon tax is not a perfect tool, but experts say that it is not that bad for now. In Quebec, we are better off, since we have a carbon market. Obviously, the bill will come due for taxpayers eventually.

How does my colleague think things will go?

Business of Supply

• (1250)

[English]

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, what troubles me the most is the Bloc's attack on oil and gas. Renowned financial experts have said that if it were not for our oil and gas industry, Canada's dollar would be worth 35 U.S. cents.

I have a little something else. How would my hon. colleague's province do without the transfer payments that arise from the prosperity that comes from our oil and gas industry? They cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, people are worried about upcoming increases in their home heating bills. Meanwhile, CEOs of big oil and gas are making huge profits on the backs of families. They made \$147 billion last year. I never once heard the hon. member talk about the Irving family. The Irving Oil Corporation estimates revenue per employee at over \$320,000, so does the member agree with forcing wealthy CEOs and big oil and gas companies to pay what they owe in order to fund the GST exemptions on home heating costs?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, that is a great question, but it kind of flies in the face of the support that our Liberal-NDP coalition gave to Loblaws. It gave Loblaws billions of dollars for its freezers while Loblaws was making massive profits.

I support capitalism and free enterprise, not socialism and Marxism.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to address this motion concerning carbon pollution pricing, particularly as it affects my constituents in York Centre, in the north end of Toronto.

Climate change is real. It is one of the most pressing issues of our time, and carbon pricing is the backbone of our climate plan. In recent years, climate change has had unprecedented effects on Canadians. Impacts from climate change are wide-ranging, affecting our homes, the cost of living, infrastructure, and health and safety. The economic activity in communities across Canada is disrupted time and time again.

We hear a lot of talk today about costs. The official opposition never speaks about the cost to our communities and to our health and safety, or about the impacts on the economy from these increasingly frequent severe weather events.

The latest science warns that to avoid severe impacts of climate change, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced significantly and urgently to hold the global average temperature rise at 1.5°. In April 2021, the Government of Canada responded to this by submitting a strengthened national emissions target of 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030, a key milestone on the pathway to the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 and a piece of legislation I am proud to have worked on.

On March 29, 2022, the government released the 2030 emissions reduction plan, outlining how Canada will meet its 2030 target. The plan builds on a strong foundation, starting with Canada's first-ever climate change plan in 2016, and then our strengthened plan, released in 2020. Carbon pricing is central to this and to all of our

plans, because it is the most efficient and lowest-cost policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

There was a time when Conservative economists at least understood this as a market fundamental, but today's Conservatives, honestly, are penny-wise and pound-foolish. They have been fighting climate action for years in Canada, and today they are fighting us on climate action. Today, we face literally billions of dollars in cleanup and adaptation costs from extreme weather events that are stronger and more frequent because of climate change. We just have to look at B.C. Between fires and floods, our residents are struggling.

I am sorry that I did not say this in my introduction. I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Winnipeg North.

While Conservatives oppose our climate plan, they also vote against every single measure our government brings in to improve affordability for Canadians. Whether it was a child tax benefit, pandemic relief or even, yesterday, on dental care and rental relief, they just keep voting no. I really do not understand why.

Now the Conservatives pretend to be on the side of helping those who may be facing energy poverty, but Canadians have been riding this roller coaster of volatile global oil and gas prices for years. It is not new, but Conservatives have said nothing about skyrocketing profit margins for oil and gas producers, nothing.

We have heard from stakeholders across the country that consistency and predictability are the key to unlocking investment in a low-carbon economy. We also know that businesses and industries are developing innovative technologies and approaches to reduce emissions. They need clear incentives and supports to commercialize and put those technologies into practice. Carbon pricing creates those incentives without dictating any particular approach. It lets businesses decide how best to cut their emissions.

At the same time, this motion emphasizes that Canadians, especially the most vulnerable Canadians, are facing an affordability challenge. The federal approach to carbon pricing was designed to maintain the consistency demanded by industry and investors while prioritizing affordability for Canadians and their families.

Business of Supply

We know it is not enough to create a cleaner economy. We have to make sure Canadians can actually afford it. It is true that carbon pollution modestly increases fuel costs. The federal fuel charge currently adds about 10¢ to the cost of a cubic metre of natural gas, about 11¢ to a litre of gasoline and about 16¢ to a litre of home heating oil. These impacts will increase as the carbon price increases, and we know that every little bit counts with fuel prices already being high.

However, carbon pricing is not and has never been about raising revenues. In fact, most households in jurisdictions where federal fuel charges apply end up with more money in their pocket than they paid. Conservatives should know this.

● (1255)

A lot of members from the opposite way from Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba received their quarterly climate action incentive rebate, which was deposited just last week, but we never hear the Conservatives talk about that.

Wherever federal fuel charge proceeds are returned directly to households, eight out of 10 families actually get more back through climate action incentive payments than they face with the increase on fuel costs. This is particularly true for low-income households, which come out significantly ahead. Why? Because they get the same climate action incentive payment as every other household of the same size, including higher-income households, which tend to heat larger homes and drive larger vehicles.

For example, the average cost on carbon pricing on a household in Alberta is expected to be about \$700 in 2022, but this is less than the average climate action incentive payment that will be provided to Alberta households, which is about \$1,040. Similarly, in Ontario, the average household cost is estimated to be about \$580, but households will receive back, on average, about \$710. These estimates take into account direct costs, like paying more for fuel and also indirect costs, like paying a bit more for goods and services.

Families in rural and small communities are also eligible to receive an extra 10%, because we know that our rural and remote communities face increasing cost challenges.

Households can use these funds however they want. They can use them to absorb the higher cost of gasoline, natural gas and heating oil, and households that take action to reduce their energy use will come out even further ahead, because they will still receive the same climate action incentive payment.

Canadians have real options, and the government is providing support for those options. We are not asking people to change their lives overnight. Taking transit or using an electric vehicle will not work for everyone right now, which is why we have the climate action incentive to ensure that the policy is affordable for everyone.

Here is the real opportunity. Canadians who do make low-carbon changes benefit even more, and we are helping them make those choices.

For example, fuel-efficient vehicles use less gas and therefore incur fewer carbon costs. We are accelerating the rollout of electric vehicles, and the government provides purchase incentives to bring the cost down. We are investing in more charging stations and the

technologies keep improving, with longer range, better batteries and lower costs. Canadians are starting to do the math; I wish my colleagues across the way would do it as well. It is a rising carbon price, volatile oil prices and tailpipe pollution versus less maintenance, no oil changes and charging at home.

We can look at our homes, and most of them are heated with natural gas, some still with heating oil. Better insulation, plugging leaks, a newer furnace, all of these use less energy, cut pollution and save money, which is why the government is supporting home energy retrofits through the Canada greener homes grant.

The only way to eliminate energy poverty, reduce household energy costs in Canada and to have true energy security is by fighting climate change.

The Government of Canada has also committed to return proceeds collected from the federal output-based pricing system, or OBPS, to the jurisdictions of origin. Provinces and territories that have voluntarily adopted the OBPS can opt for a direct transfer of proceeds collected. Proceeds collected in other backstop jurisdictions will be returned through OBPS proceeds fund aimed at supporting clean industrial technologies and clean electricity projects.

Climate change is a serious challenge, but it is also an opportunity, and a very big economic opportunity. Canadians want to take advantage of the significant economic opportunities in a low-carbon economy. Analysis by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate estimates that changing to a low-carbon economy will deliver a direct economic gain of \$26 trillion U.S. and generate 65 million new jobs. That sounds good to me.

Just as we are putting a price on carbon pollution, we are also making historic investments in clean technology, innovation and green infrastructure to drive growth and reduce pollution, including \$9.1 billion in new investments to cut pollution and grow the economy, which is part of our 2030 emissions reduction plan.

This is the plan for the future, and it reflects the submissions of over 30,000 Canadians, provinces, territories, indigenous partners, industry, civil society and the independent net-zero advisory body.

Canadians want this. Canadians know we need to change, and the Conservatives are just going to be left behind.

Business of Supply

• (1300)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I come from Oshawa, which has significant export business. What my colleague may not understand is that carbon taxes affect the expenses for business, which affects our competitiveness. The reality is that the Liberals do not have an environment plan. What they have is a failed tax plan that has done absolutely nothing to decrease emissions.

I wonder if the member would acknowledge this and admit that their plan has not worked with respect to lowering emissions and that she should be supporting our motion today.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Speaker, I would like to look at the history of the hon. member's party. When the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was the leader, it took him over 400 days to come out with a climate pamphlet. The member for Durham was shunted out of here for wanting to say that climate change was real.

We have been consistent in doing the work year after year, passing the legislation, offering incentives and working with business and industry, because we all need to change together.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, I do not know if my colleagues remember, but I remember when gas prices dropped to levels I had not seen since 2005. I told my partner that the pendulum would swing back the other way, that the price would soon go back up, and that it would not be good for the public because businesses would make up their profits when the pandemic was over. It seems that is exactly what is happening, with the huge profits we are seeing now.

I would like to hear what my colleague thinks about the possibility of taxing the oil companies' excess profits and taking a long-term view, instead of putting half measures in place.

[*English*]

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Speaker, doing the right thing for the environment, and what we are talking about today, is about lowering household energy costs. We know the market is volatile; it goes up and down. The government pays attention to that and offers supports to Canadians when they need it, and sometimes it is targeted.

For example, recently the government put up \$250 million to help Atlantic Canadians and others make the switch from home oil to clean energy or renewable alternatives.

We will be strategic and careful. We are looking at the bottom line with respect to the pocketbooks of Canadians, their dollars and their households.

• (1305)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with the question that just came from the Bloc. We know that oil companies have had record profits, \$147 billion last year alone. We have seen that with grocery stores. We have seen it with the big banks.

I agree with my colleague that we need to invest in clean energy and support people so they can be energy efficient, and we can lower costs on clean energy. The only way we are truly going to get

there is by ensuring that big corporations and CEOs pay their fair share.

My colleague supported an NDP motion just this week to ensure that grocery store CEOs and big companies pay their fair share. Will she support the NDP's call to ensure that oil and gas companies and the big banks pay their fair share? When will the Liberals finally act?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Speaker, I am really glad we are on the same page with respect to the urgency of climate change, the costs that come to households, and ensuring that Canadians can make the necessary changes with supports like this one.

However, we need to realize that big corporations need to come along in the process also. That is why we will not back down on the carbon tax. That is why we will not back down on working with industry and technology to ensure that a green economy is the economy for Canadians.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I recently did a survey in my community, and affordability and climate change were the two top issues in Don Valley East. People there are very supportive of the initiatives we are taking.

I want to ask the member this. Why is there such a misalignment between the Conservatives and Canadians on this issue?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his advocacy and his understanding that for the people in urban ridings like ours, the cost of living is really high. That is why we have these tax rebates for Canadians across the country. We understand that change is hard, but we need to make this change. The Conservatives are leaving themselves and others falling behind. I really cannot answer why they are dragging their feet on things that are so important to Canadians, like climate change.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what a great contrast between what the Conservative Party, the official opposition, is doing and what the government is doing.

We have a fundamental difference. We want to see an economy that actually works for all Canadians. We believe in Canada's middle class. We want to support those striving to become a part of the middle class. We need to be there for those individuals who need that extra bit of help, directly or indirectly.

From what I can tell, this motion deals with two real topics. One is the issue of inflation and one is the issue of our environment. If I were to pick a couple of issues to show the contrast between the official opposition, the Conservative Party, and the Liberal Party, they would probably be two of the top three issues.

When I think of the price on pollution, it is almost comical where the Conservatives were and where they are today. They are definitely not consistent. I do not think they even understand the issue based on some of the comments we have heard today. Their arguments just do not make sense.

I posed a question to the relatively newly elected leader of the Conservative Party, who has once again changed the Conservative Party's policy on the price on pollution. All 338 Conservative candidates in the last federal election, including every one of the members across the way, had an election platform that supported the principle of a price on pollution. That leader was dumped and a new leader has come in. Now there is a new policy position, that the Conservatives no longer support the principle of a price on pollution.

In 2015, countries from around the world went to Paris. Canada was one of many countries. Some agreements were achieved. One of the most productive discussions and dialogues that took place was on the principle of a price on pollution. Canada came back with a healthy delegation, and we started to push for a price on pollution. At that point, of course, the Conservative Party did not support it, but there were Conservatives from coast to coast to coast who did support it at one point.

The world has recognized that a price on pollution is in fact the way to go, but the Conservative Party, with its most recent flip-flop, has gone back in time. I would argue that the Conservatives are not listening to their constituents. It makes a whole lot of sense to have a price on pollution, but the Conservatives conveniently try to misrepresent the issue.

We all hear the words triple, triple, triple. Every Conservative member wants to stand in question period and say that the carbon tax will "triple, triple, triple." They love saying that. What they do not tell us is that where the federal government is applying the price on carbon, in the jurisdictions like Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, over 50% of the population of Canada, there is actually a rebate, a credit. That credit is also triple, triple, triple. The Conservatives are trying, intentionally, to mislead more than half the population.

In Ontario, for example, it is a \$745 credit. In Saskatchewan, it is well over \$1,000 credit. In Alberta, it is over \$1,000 credit. In my home province of Manitoba, it is \$832 for a household. They will receive, as will other provinces, quarterly cheques. That is money in their pocket, because of the price on pollution. People in Manitoba recently received \$208.

• (1310)

These are tangible things. The Conservatives will say that they are paying a tax. The independent Parliamentary Budget Officer made it very clear that eight out of 10 are receiving more than they are paying.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, they can babble all they like, but that is what the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer states. That means that eight out of 10 constituents in Winnipeg North are receiving a net benefit, yet the Conservatives are

Business of Supply

fixated on trying to mislead the residents of Winnipeg North and, in fact, all Canadians.

Today we had a member from the Conservative Party say that Ottawa is collecting hundreds of millions of dollars on our carbon tax in Atlantic Canada, which is absolute garbage. That is, again, the Conservative Party misleading Canadians, because that is not what is happening. In the provinces where there is no federal backstop, the money is going to the provinces. Ottawa is not receiving that money. We are not receiving hundreds of millions of dollars, or billions, as the member opposite tried to put on the record.

What we are witnessing is misinformation coming from the Conservative Party of Canada, all in the favour of a catchphrase. We see that, and we will see it in about an hour from now when its members stand up for question period. For them, it is humour. It is a bumper sticker. They are more interested in that than they are in the environment.

What is the Conservative Party of Canada's policy on the environment? It is moving backward. While every other political entity in Canada is moving forward in dealing with environmental concerns, the national Conservative Party is actually moving backward. If Canadians only knew the lack of sincerity, the misleading information and the ideas of the climate deniers in the Conservative Party, they would see the contrast between the Conservatives and the Liberals.

We can also talk about inflation, which is the other part the motion attempts to deal with. Conservatives are saying, even though it is not true, they will give a tax break on the price on pollution. Actions speak louder than words. In dealing with inflation, we brought forward legislative measures to assist people during this difficult time. The biggest one was the GST rebate, which is legislation the Conservative Party originally opposed. Eleven million Canadians would benefit from an enhanced GST rebate, and the Conservative Party originally opposed it. After being shamed, they finally saw they were making a mistake and voted for it. I applaud them for that. It is good they voted for it.

Then there is the dental care for children, which would provide assistance for kids under the age of 12 to receive dental care. The Conservative Party is voting against that. Along with that legislation there is legislation to support those who are finding it financially difficult to make their rental payments. Through the legislation, we would see direct payments. We also have legislation dealing with money going directly to people with disabilities.

Conservatives can talk all they want about fighting inflation, but all they are really interested in is what they can put on a bumper sticker. To them, that is what it is all about. As they focus on trying to create havoc, we will continue to focus on being there for Canadians from coast to coast to coast, recognizing we want an economy that works for all Canadians. We want a society that truly cares about social programs, one that values national programs that are going to make a difference.

Business of Supply

• (1315)

Liberals will talk about the importance of long-term care and mental health. We will talk about dental care for our children. There are many things we—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is time for questions and comments. The hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap has the floor.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I continue to be amazed by the hypocrisy of the Liberal government. It baffles me why Liberals can claim they will be paying Canadians back more than they are paying in carbon tax. If that were the case, and the government would be giving them back more than it is costing them, why would Canadians change their habits? It simply makes no sense. It is obvious to me that this is not a plan to reduce emissions. This is simply a tax-and-spend plan, a shell game, from the Liberal government.

Could the member opposite please confirm that this plan is only meant to distract from the fact that the Liberal government has failed to meet any emissions targets in the seven years it has been in government, and that it is really just a shell game for a tax plan?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, ironically, members might be somewhat surprised to know that the principle of a price on pollution actually originated in the province of Alberta. Go figure. Other provinces then picked up on that and started to duplicate it or come up with different forms of it. It is only the national Conservative Party of Canada that is moving backward on this issue, and I do not quite understand why when more and more people are looking for leadership on the environment.

The report said that eight out of 10 people would benefit. The member does not have to believe me. The independent Parliamentary Budget Officer made the statement that eight of 10 people will see a net benefit from the money being paid in and the money being paid out. That is a good thing, and it is why I think the Conservatives—

• (1320)

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, earlier, my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean was lucky enough to get two opportunities to ask my Conservative colleague a very insightful question about the huge profits being made by oil and gas companies.

I myself asked the member for Toronto—Danforth the same question earlier. Like my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean, I would like to know if my colleague from Winnipeg North acknowledges and opposes the obscene profits being made by oil and gas companies. If so, what does his government plan to do to balance them out and rectify the situation?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, from day one, the Prime Minister has made it very clear that he expects everyone to pay their fair share of taxes. That is one of the reasons why one of

our very first budgetary measures was to increase the tax bracket for Canada's wealthiest 1%. That is something we have taken immediate action on.

With respect to what the member just referred to, in the last budget we heard the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance indicate that we are putting a special tax on banks and insurance companies because of the pandemic profits. We are very open to looking at ways that we can, as the Prime Minister has dictated, ensure we move toward a fairer taxation system.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Winnipeg North and I share a border. We represent ridings with some of the most severe human rights issues in the country, including his riding, which has the highest number of kids are in care in the whole country. Many families are living in poverty.

Although I know he has given a lot of good news announcements, one thing the Liberal government has failed to do is force CEOs of big oil and gas to pay their fair share. They could be paying for things such as programs that could do more to help people make energy-efficient renovations to not only fight against climate change, but also cut down on their monthly bills. This is critical in our ridings.

I heard another of his colleagues today talk about 2050. Families need help now. Is his government willing to go after big CEOs to get them to pay their fair share right now?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on the member's comments regarding children. She makes reference to our ridings, and there are so many children who need that extra attention. That is why I felt so good when we increased and changed the Canada child benefit program. It lifted literally hundreds, if not thousands, of children out of poverty. These are children who are represented by both of us. We need to continue to work hard at making sure—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake has the floor.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Hastings—Lennox and Addington, also known as H, L and A. The member is also known as the daughter of the former member for that riding. His name is Daryl, and he is at home watching, so it is a family business here.

Today, I am pleased to rise to support this motion from my colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn, which would see the House lend its agreement to the comments by the Liberal premier of Newfoundland and Labrador calling on the federal government to exempt all forms of heating fuel from the Liberal carbon tax for all Canadians.

Business of Supply

Indeed, all four premiers of the Atlantic provinces have written to the Prime Minister urging him to stop punishing Atlantic Canadians with this punitive tax upon a tax this winter season, especially as they have already faced the highest inflation rates, Liberal just inflation rates, that they have seen in decades.

It is the highest inflation since the Prime Minister's father bungled the failed national energy program in the 1980s. Let us take a walk back in time. It is worth resting on this point for a moment. There is an eerie parallel between the failed initiative of the Prime Minister's father with the national energy program, and where we find ourselves today.

We have record inflation, a looming economic recession, western alienation and a government so blind, so out of touch and so reckless, that it truly believes it knows better than Canadians on how to spend their own money. As serious and as concerning as this type of arrogance is, there is hope.

The failed national energy program of the senior Trudeau set the stage for the election of the strong, stable Conservative majority government of Brian Mulroney. The government's mismanagement of the economy and its zealous punishment of its own citizens who work in the oil and gas sector, as well as those who rely on this sector to heat their homes, is creating the perfect storm, which will see Canadians choose another strong and responsible Conservative majority government. This time, it will be led by my hon. colleague from Carleton, our honourable leader.

My constituency of Miramichi—Grand Lake is the largest federal electoral district in New Brunswick. At 17,420 kilometres, it is more than double the average size of other districts in my home province. It is actually three times larger than the entirety of Prince Edward Island.

My constituency is rural. It is extremely rural, and it is vast. I believe that the Prime Minister has probably read some short books about life beyond the limits of the major Canadian cities. I would imagine they were cartoons. I am sure he believes he understands the plight of everyday Canadians and their families from the CBC News, which blindly endorses and reaffirms the misguided decisions of the government as a regular part of its editorial control.

Let me tell the Prime Minister and all the members of his government that my constituents and Atlantic Canadians, by and large, will quite rightly rely on oil to heat their homes this winter, and they want and need the government to understand that fact. They want and need the government to put people before politics and remove the Liberal carbon tax from heating fuel, which has already nearly doubled in price in the past two to three years.

In rural New Brunswick and across Atlantic Canada, Canadians have few choices when it comes to heating their homes. Many, if not most, use oil as the primary source to keep their homes and families warm. Natural gas is not an option. As we have seen with the devastation of the electrical infrastructure across the Atlantic provinces after tropical storm Fiona, even electricity is not always reliable.

It is one thing to lose electricity for days, or even weeks, in September or October. However, if this happens during a Canadian winter, between November and March, homes will freeze, plumb-

ing will fail and homes will get destroyed. In many cases, oil is the only safe and reliable option to keep one's home and family warm through the Canadian winter in rural Atlantic Canada. I know that the government and the Prime Minister at least value the homes of Atlantic Canadians.

• (1325)

I wonder, if the Prime Minister had his way, whether he would still have Atlantic Canadians locked in their homes, for their own safety of course. Perhaps he might consider chipping in with the Atlantic Canadians on their share of his carbon tax to help offset the cost of keeping these home detention centres warm this coming season, just in case he needs them one more time. It is frustrating for me to stand in this House, time and time again, and explain the realities of rural life to the government.

I understand that, as members of the House, we all represent different constituencies and geographies, none being more important than the other, but there is a reality to Canadian life. Our country is large and vast, and a great many Canadians live in rural settings. They understand what choices work for them and their families, and they do not need the Liberal government taxing them in a punishing sequence for choosing the only available option that is safe and can be relied upon. Canadians are better to choose for themselves.

The Liberal government has made enough decisions for people who did not want them to begin with. The government has mismanaged the economy in such a way that the price of heating oil has already more than doubled on its watch. Other necessities, like food and certainly the cost of building or maintaining homes with repairs, has at least doubled. The punishment of Liberal inflation never ends for Canadians, but their pain is the government's gain. For every item or service in our economy that is subject to the federal portion of the HST and has doubled in price, the government is now collecting double the tax on these items than it would have only a year or two ago.

To be fair, to any normal responsible government, this additional tax revenue would be a windfall and help to allow a budget to balance itself, as the Prime Minister likes to say, but I understand the government has a severe spending problem. Even this doubling in revenue is not nearly enough for them. They have, in fact, caused inflation. Much of these high percentages we have are caused by the government's inability to have monetary policy and manage the books of this country.

Business of Supply

I revert to the fact that the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, a Liberal friend of the government, has publicly called on the Prime Minister to exempt home heating oil from the Liberal carbon tax. This is not Ottawa Liberals whispering to themselves that it is time for the Prime Minister to move on. I can understand why the Prime Minister, with no serious job prospects of his own on the horizon, would ignore these Liberals, but a sitting and popular Liberal premier in Atlantic Canada, in Newfoundland and Labrador, speaking about it aloud in the news is a whole different story.

I implore the Prime Minister, even if he does not listen to the Ottawa Liberals urging him to walk the plank, to at least listen to this one Liberal who has the courage of his convictions to try to explain these bread and butter issues to the federal government, which is so very out of touch. Premier Andrew Furey from Newfoundland and Labrador has made the decision to have the courage of his convictions, and we applaud him for that.

I proudly support this motion to remove the Liberal carbon tax on home heating fuels. This is what my constituents have told me to do, and now I have relayed their concerns to the House. The tax grab by the Liberal government will increase heating costs by over 20% for working Canadians, and as the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador has rightly said, it will create “undue economic burdens” on Canadians who do not have the resources to cope with this burden.

● (1330)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have heard, time after time, Conservatives come forward and talk about inflation as though it is a specific problem only to Canada. They say that Liberals and the Canadian government created this inflationary problem, but the reality is that just about every developed country in the world followed a similar pattern with their monetary policy in order to support their populations during the global pandemic. If that Conservative member is saying that inflation is strictly a Canadian problem and that monetary policy in Canada is what led to inflation, he is essentially saying the same thing for every developed country in the world.

Is the Conservative Party basically saying that it is against the western world?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure to answer this question, because while Vladimir Putin threatens to turn the energy supply off to our western allies and while he funds his war machine on Ukraine, the government here does not think we should develop our oil and gas, when we might distribute that oil and gas to our allies so they would not have to rely on Putin. I am going to take that question and say that I think the Government of Canada has turned its back on western Europe completely when it comes to energy.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, when I invest in something, usually it is to try to renovate my home, so it lasts longer. I want added value. I want to see a return. In the case of my home, the return is that it lasts longer.

For the last 50 years, we have made massive investments in oil and gas companies and oil and gas development without seeing a percentage of the profits, other than what is received through taxes. This is without any commitment from the companies to clean up.

Now, we have companies making billions of dollars in profit. These are profits like they have never seen before. Would it not be much better for the entire population if the oil companies, which make money on the backs of workers, consumers and the government—which invests heavily in the industry—were taxed on their profits?

● (1335)

[English]

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, just the other day I was speaking to my sons who are in high school and they were learning about climate change in school. Obviously, we want our children to be able to learn everything that is happening in the world and all the issues. What I noticed was not getting relayed was what has driven the Canadian economy for eternity, which is natural resources and the revenue that has come from that.

I do not disagree with my hon. colleague from the Bloc party who thinks that when there are record profits companies should be paying their fair share. I can agree with that statement. However, the New Democrats and the Liberals in this House love companies like Amazon and ArriveCAN. They love to buy new deep freezers for Loblaw's when it has had record profits. They love to pay between \$12 million and \$20 million for new deep freezers for one of the richest companies.

The member's question is a good one. It would have been probably better directed at the NDP or the Liberals, but I will gladly answer it.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, that is hogwash. The NDP has actually been wanting Amazon and the big corporations to pay their fair share.

While people cannot afford to pay their home heating costs, which is the debate we are having today, the IMF is saying it is actually runaway corporate greed and CEOs who are making record profits in oil and gas, the banking sector and the grocery stores. To help interpret for my Conservative colleague, it is the triple greed that has taken hold of this country. I am calling on the Conservatives to stop being the gatekeepers for big oil and big corporations. Will they today tackle the triple greed?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, why is the NDP supporting the Liberal government, which supported \$28 million to a Liberal donor's company? Now they have a \$54-million ArriveCAN app that could have been made on a weekend for a quarter of a million by most tech companies. They jumped right into—

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

The hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to our Conservative opposition day motion.

As we already know, record inflation is driving up the cost of everyday necessities. Meat is up nearly 8%. Dairy is up nearly 10%. Vegetables, fruit and baked goods are all up over 10%, with cereals up nearly 18%. Gas prices are 13% higher than they were at this same time last year. Our dollar is simply not going as far as it was before, and home heating is no different.

Canadians have been burdened with paying these increased prices in tandem with their creeping increases. We buy groceries and gas every week and do so year-round, but heating is different. Heating costs, for most Canadians, is a seasonal expense. It is not something that most Canadians are paying at this point. As we head into the winter months that is going to change. With heating costs so high, thanks to the government, this Christmas will mark the very first time in history that Canadians are actually hoping for lumps of coal in their stockings.

Rural and low-income Canadians are going to be hit the hardest. According to the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, the average amount spent on home energy in a year in urban centres in Ontario is \$2,002. In rural Ontario, that number explodes to \$3,198, a shocking increase of 62.6%. The report also breaks down the types of fuel used between electric, natural gas and other sources. When accounting for this, rural communities spend 57 times more on other sources of fuel. That is the difference between urban and rural Canada when it comes to energy expenditures in our homes.

We have all heard about the dramatic impacts that are being caused by the energy shortages around the world, inflation and the war in Ukraine, but I want to bring this closer to home. Most of us here in this place have the privilege of walking into a room, flicking a switch and the lights go on. If the room is cold, we walk over to a thermostat and turn it to a comfortable temperature. Unfortunately, that is not the case for too many of our constituents. Even in my riding of Hastings—Lennox and Addington, natural gas is the exception, not the rule. Most rural residents outside of small towns and villages heat with propane. Some are still using fuel oil, and a number, which would probably surprise colleagues, still use wood stoves as either primary or secondary heat sources.

Earlier today, the member for Kings—Hants took issue with the wording of our motion, specifically the portion stating that for some Canadians there are no alternatives to propane or heating oil. He suggested that Canadians simply convert their homes to other sources. He may not speak to his constituents, but those who struggle through the winter need to be listened to. I am listening to the people of Hastings—Lennox and Addington. Would it surprise colleagues that there are communities in my riding that operate winter wood banks? It is like a food bank, but it provides dried, split wood to seniors and other shut-ins who otherwise cannot cut and split wood for themselves and might run out if the heating season lasts too long or is harsher than normal.

My riding is not unique. Many ridings across Canada do not have the privilege of natural gas heating. Many homes across Canada have not been able to take advantage of electric heat pumps, because their climate is too cold or electricity has been too expensive.

Business of Supply

Propane is widely used and so is heating oil. This is why we keep asking the government to stop adding more and more taxes to these fuels. It is not that Canadians do not want to do their part. It is about treating one's fellow Canadians with respect instead of driving them into energy poverty.

• (1340)

The cost of living is the single biggest issue in my riding of Hastings—Lennox and Addington. Constituents regularly call into my office, post on my social media or contact me directly with their concerns. For example, one wrote, “Last March I paid over \$800 for half a tank of furnace oil. Last month it was \$527 to top it up. I don't see how I'll be able to pay for basic home expenses.” Another said, “I paid over 400/month using budget billing (equal payments each month) equalling almost \$5000 a year. Many people in rural environments that don't have the option to live in new homes AND for many people that are transitioning from oil to more efficient heating like propane, the cost is between 10 and \$12,000.”

To be clear, it is not just individuals who are being hurt by these increases; it is businesses as well. Last week, I received a text from one local business owner, who said, “Rural areas are getting gouged. [The] price of propane is out of control. I record every purchase I get, so I compare what it would have cost last year to what it will cost this year.” I would continue, but frustration with heating costs led this person to some very explosive language that would be considered unparliamentary in this place.

For those watching at home who may not be familiar with the nuts and bolts of what is actually happening today, allow me to briefly explain.

There is a tradition in Parliament that maintains that government cannot submit its expenditures until the opposition has an opportunity to demonstrate why it should not be allowed to. As such, certain days are allotted to the opposition parties to decide what the topic of debate will be. This is commonly referred to as an opposition day. On these special days, the motion put forward by an opposition party gets precedence over other government business, which means we debate that motion on the day regardless of what else is on the docket. This is what we are doing here today. This is what we are doing right now. Our Conservative opposition chose to ask the government to exempt heating from the carbon tax.

Previously, we used one of our opposition day motions to ask the government to lower gas prices by 5% via a reduction to GST/HST. Unfortunately, that did not pass. I hope this opposition day motion will be different.

Business of Supply

Yesterday, in this place, the Prime Minister responded to a question from my colleague chastising the Conservatives for standing in the way of a payment. He said, “Mr. Speaker, this supposed preoccupation of the Conservatives with the cost of living would be slightly more believable if not for the fact they are standing in the way of delivering \$500 in extra support to low-income renters between now and Christmas”. Today we have an opportunity to do better than a one-time cheque. We have an opportunity to provide sustained relief over the dark, cold, lonely winter months for millions of Canadians who are struggling by making their already inflated heating bill exempt from the carbon tax.

Minority Parliaments can do the right thing. Sometimes, but not often, we do see eye to eye and do the right thing for Canadians. We saw that earlier this week when the House voted in favour of the NDP's opposition day motion to lower food prices. I was comfortable voting in favour of that motion because I knew it would help struggling Canadians.

This motion would help struggling Canadians with home heating prices, and I hope this House has the good sense to pass it.

• (1345)

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am assuming the member opposite was at the Conservative convention back in March 2021 when the party itself voted against admitting that climate change was real, so I want to ask a very simple question of the member. Does the member believe that climate change is real?

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, there are actually constituents resorting to heating with a wood stove because a cord of wood is cheaper than a tank of propane. Which does the member think is worse for the environment? The issue is the cost of heating.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a simple question for my colleague.

We have heard about the record profits made by oil and gas companies several times today. There are different ways of looking at a problem. Would she not agree to implementing a special tax on the huge profits and having the money redistributed to people who need it to deal with inflation? Would she agree, for example, to increasing old age security for people aged 65 and older? I know I am being annoying with this question, but I never get an answer.

[English]

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, I am trying to decipher the purpose of this question. Is it for the hon. member to make a point or to actually make a difference? I speak to my constituents, and this costly coalition is digging into the pocketbooks of Canadians. What our motion today is here to do is help provide relief for Canadians.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have certainly enjoyed working with my hon. colleague on the status of women committee to get good things done for women and gender-diverse individuals across Canada. However, we differ on where the problem is.

We know that big oil and gas is making record profits and we know that is where the problem is. The Conservative government consistently failed to make big corporations and big companies pay their fair share, including the CEOs of big oil and gas, who are reaping the benefits while people are struggling across the country.

I wonder if she agrees with me that it is fine time that big oil companies pay their fair share and that we take that money and invest it to make things easier for people across the country.

• (1350)

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, the people in Hastings—Lennox and Addington are extremely overwhelmed with high prices and have been forced to cut back and spend less. So should the government. Fuel and food prices are soaring, and the purpose of today's motion is to get us to speak to heating in Canadian homes. That is what I am here to do today.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I take in good faith that today's motion is actually about the affordability of day-to-day life. As others have said in this set of questions, if we are going to be honest about that, we need to look at the record-breaking profits that oil and gas companies are making. If we look at the price of gas, for example, the carbon tax contributes two cents a litre whereas the wholesale margins mean net new profits are 18¢. That is nine times as much. Is this not of concern to the member?

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, no one was waking up this morning in my riding with relief that the economy is in good shape. People in my riding are talking to me about the rising costs of everything, including home heating and groceries. Across the board, people are exasperated by rising costs.

The role of the opposition is to respectfully try to hold the government to account. I am encouraging it to listen.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for St. John's East.

I think I will start by picking up on the question that the member for Don Valley East asked of the member for the riding that neighbours mine. Specifically, it was whether she believed that climate change is real. This is not just about her response. It is about all of the non-responses we get to that question from the other side of the House.

Business of Supply

I think what we have to do is listen to her non-answer, listen to the continual non-answer and ask ourselves why. One of two things is happening: one, the Conservatives and this member do not believe that climate change is real and do not want to answer the question, or, two, which I submit is probably the more plausible explanation, they do believe climate change is real but are petrified of saying it and of their base hearing it.

Imagine being part of a political party that is so petrified of how the base might react to hearing the truth come out of its members' mouths. That is where we see the Conservative Party of today.

Earlier, we heard the Conservatives talk about how the federal government supposedly forced the provinces into this position. I am so glad to hear my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois point out the reality of the situation, which is that unfortunately for the Conservatives' narrative, Quebec and Ontario have been decades ahead of the rest of Canada as a whole when it comes to pricing pollution. It was Quebec and Ontario that met with Arnold Schwarzenegger, the former governor of California, and ironed out the deal for cap and trade. That was back in 2006. The member for Don Valley East was part of the provincial government at the time they did that. A number of members of the House were.

For the Conservatives to walk in here and suddenly suggest that carbon pricing is a brand new concept that is completely foreign to Canadian soil is absolutely ludicrous. We have seen Quebec and Ontario partner on it and get ahead of the game with responsible leadership, going straight to states in the United States, in particular California, and working on this. I find it incredibly rich.

There is another individual who supports carbon pricing whom the Conservatives might listen to. Do members know who that is? It is their former leader Stephen Harper. Stephen Harper believes in pricing pollution. He actually said, in 2008, "our plan will effectively establish a price on carbon". That is what Stephen Harper wanted.

Where are we today? Ten years ago, people thought, wow, Stephen Harper's government is so non-progressive, but think of where we are today. The current form of the Conservative movement is so much less progressive than even Stephen Harper was.

The Conservatives full-on reject the notion that climate change is real. They reject the notion of a basic fundamental principle of the economic system and how to incentivize choice in the marketplace. Of all people, the Conservatives, who purport themselves to be the saviours of the economy and understand economic principle better than just about anybody else, as they will always tell us, cannot comprehend the simple concept that putting a price on something will change behaviour within the marketplace. How is it that we got to this place where this Conservative movement will not even accept the reality of a fundamental economic principle?

That is where we are. I know they are heckling me because they do not want to hear me say this, but one would think they would have learned over the last three or four years of listening to me speak that the more they do it, the more it encourages and emboldens me to continue, so I will.

I want to talk about a company that recently decided to choose Loyalist—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am going to ask hon. members to please respect the person who is speaking before I have to take other actions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, there is a company that recently chose, over two locations in the United States, Detroit being one and I cannot remember the other, to set up its new multi-billion dollar facility just outside of my riding, in the riding of the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington. She was there when the Prime Minister made the announcement, and she was quite excited about it at the time, as she should be.

The company, which is called Umicore, decided to set up its brand new lithium battery manufacturing plant right outside my riding, in her riding of Hastings—Lennox and Addington. The most telling thing about that was when the CEO was asked why he chose Ontario over Detroit and other options. The answer was that Umicore is making a sustainable product. It sees itself as a corporate leader in sustainability. When it puts inputs into its product, it wants to make sure they are clean. It recognizes that because of great leadership, like that of the member for Don Valley East and other provincial Liberals from a few years ago, we no longer burn coal in Ontario. We have the cleanest energy grid of all the options those companies are looking at.

Where are we in the world right now? We are at a place where it is no longer just individuals demanding sustainability and saying they choose sustainability over profit or over money. It is now companies that are actively saying they do not want to set up in an area where they know the resources going into their product are harming the environment. That is exactly what we are seeing now.

We have come to the point where even corporations understand the fact that clean energy is absolutely key, yet we do not even have a Conservative Party in which a member will stand up and say they believe in climate change. The member was asked a direct, straightforward and simple question by the member for Don Valley East, who asked the member if they believe climate change is real, and it was a complete non-answer. It is just so easy to stand up and say one believes climate change is real, but the member refused to do that. I do not understand why.

They are mouthing "yes" to me now, but now they just need to verbalize it. They need to allow the voices to come out of their mouths and admit they believe climate change is real. That is all we are asking Conservatives to do. I know they have it in them. They are this close, and I am here to be the support they need in doing that.

I know the Speaker wants to interrupt me to start question period, and I look forward to continuing afterwards.

Statements by Members

• (1400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member will have two minutes remaining after question period to conclude his speech and for the questions and comments period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[English]***TRACK CYCLING WORLD CHAMPION**

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last week, the Canadian cycling team, led by Olympic champion Kelsey Mitchell, raced at the UCI Track Cycling World Championships in France. It was on that track that Mississauga's own Dylan Bibic, from Streetsville, became the first man to win the gold medal in his event, and he did it in his world champs debut at just 19 years old.

Dylan won the 15-kilometre scratch race with an average speed of over 54 kilometres an hour. He is only the second male Canadian to win gold on that track. Dylan is now looking forward to training for his upcoming races at the elite UCI Track Champions League.

It is a sincere and exciting privilege to congratulate Dylan for this historic win at Track World. Streetsville is proud of Dylan. Congratulations to him on earning his second rainbow jersey. We are all excited to follow his journey to the 2024 summer Olympic Games in Paris.

* * *

ABBOTSFORD RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Abbotsford Rugby Football Club is celebrating its 50th season. Established in 1972 with just one men's team, it now boasts over 11 active men's and women's teams, with players ranging from five all the way to 70 years of age.

In its 50 years, Abbotsford has won 30 provincial championships, and 55 players have represented Canada in world championships, test matches, sevens and the Olympics.

Those of us in the House who have played this wonderful game know that rugby has a special and unique culture like no other. While two players may smash each other on the field, we will see them enjoying a post-game brewski, a meal and a friendly handshake at the clubhouse. Rugby brings people together like no other sport, and it builds strong communities.

I thank all the players, coaches and volunteers who have made the Abbotsford Rugby Football Club so successful.

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN B.C.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday was election day for municipalities across British Columbia. I am pleased to stand in the House today to thank the previous mayors and councillors for all their work, and I congratulate

late those who are newly elected or were re-elected to these leadership roles.

From Cloverdale—Langley City, I look forward to working with mayors-elect Nathan Pachal from Langley City, Eric Woodward from the Township of Langley and Brenda Locke from Surrey.

I also want to thank all those who put their names on the ballot, and their families. It takes courage to put one's name forward to serve one's community, and it can be done only with a supportive family. Democracy is more fragile than many of us realize, and I appreciate all candidates and those who voted during this election.

I believe that municipal governments and the federal government can come together to solve our most pressing issues. Protecting the environment, fighting climate change, building affordable housing and combatting homelessness are the first issues that come to mind. This can all be achieved through collaboration and respect. I look forward to working with the new mayors and councillors.

* * *

*[Translation]***MEDAL FOR MERITORIOUS ACTS**

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on December 20 of last year, firefighters in Val-d'Or were called to a fire at a factory where dismantling work was being done. In fighting the fire, one of the firefighters fell into a seven-metre hole partly covered by steel plates. His colleagues went to his rescue in difficult conditions, due to a lack of visibility and the fire close by, in a place that was hard to access. In the end, the victim got out with just a few injuries. The firefighters had to rely on their remarkable professionalism, unparalleled mental strength and intense efforts to rescue their colleague in distress.

The Government of Quebec awarded the medal for meritorious acts to the five firefighters from the Val d'Or fire department who rescued their colleague and helped him avoid the worst.

I would like to congratulate firefighters Luc Gronne, my former colleague at CISSAT, Sébastien Ménard, Karl Hanbury, Jean-Christophe Pichon and Matthew Lachaine for their act of bravery and courage. Bravo.

* * *

2SLGBTQ+ COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my nephew Michel Gervais who is an ardent 2SLGBTQ+ community activist and president of West Nipissing Pride.

Statements by Members

● (1405)

[English]

Michel is once again putting Sudbury, Nickel Belt and Sturgeon Falls on the map. He has been cast to be a contender on the second season of *Call Me Mother*, a drag competition reality show on OUTtv. The first episode will be airing October 26. The series is hosted by Entertainment Tonight Canada reporter Dallas Dixon. The show allows prominent 2SLGBTQ+ people across Canada to appear in a drag competition, which will see up-and-coming drag performers.

[Translation]

I am proud of Michel, and our government is proud to support the 2SLGBTQ+ community. I encourage parliamentarians to support gay and queer communities and individuals in their goal to advance their rights.

* * *

*[English]***AFFORDABILITY FOR STUDENTS**

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, runaway inflation is hurting Canadian students. The University of Alberta campus food bank is facing the highest demand ever. In the past year, the food bank has gone from serving fewer than 300 families to having more than 1,100 clients. Most of these new food bank users are international students.

Four litres of milk is \$1 more than last year, and it costs 60¢ more for a loaf of bread. That may not seem like much to the Prime Minister, but it is a hardship for students on fixed budgets. With price hikes already on textbooks and rent, it is no wonder students cannot afford to feed themselves.

Why is the government making it so hard for students to be successful?

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK IN YUKON

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week Yukon celebrates Small Business Week while also marking Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, with the theme “healing hearts, building relationships”. Surely there is no better time to promote our local economies while reaching out to those who are struggling.

I am proud to be part of a government that is creating an economy that works for all Canadians. I am also proud of our government's support for innovative enterprises like Kaska Dena Designs and Anto Yukon in my riding. Yesterday we announced almost \$200,000 toward these two women-owned Yukon businesses, helping them scale up their reach in Yukon and beyond. Investing in Canada's small and medium-sized businesses means we all prosper.

Meanwhile, Coast Mountain Sports in Yukon is stepping up to help support homeless and housing-insecure people at this time of year. Its share the warmth program allows customers to exchange their winter jackets toward the purchase of a new one, with proceeds donated through the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to help

those in need. When we support local businesses, they, in turn, invest in our communities.

Happy Small Business Week, Yukon.

* * *

*[Translation]***AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH**

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize October as autism awareness month.

As a nation, we have made great strides in our knowledge of the autism spectrum, and much of that success is due to the efforts of organizations like the Société de l'autisme et des TED de Laval.

However, there is still much to be done.

[English]

Persons on the spectrum are an essential part of our society and we, as a people, are stronger because of their contributions. That is why all of us must continue to raise awareness and acceptance for persons on the autism spectrum, and I encourage us to go further and create inclusive communities for neurotypical and neurodivergent persons alike.

We all deserve a dignified place in our society. People living with autism are no exception.

* * *

TOURISM

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the pleasure to meet with members from the Tourism Industry Association of Canada. Tourism matters. It enables economic development and job creation. My community of Niagara Falls is the number one leisure tourism destination in all of Canada, generating some \$2.4 billion in receipts. More importantly, it employs almost 40,000 workers.

The recovery of Canada's visitor economy is key to Canada's overall economic growth, and I encourage all members of the House to meet with representatives of TIAC to discuss the impact tourism has, not only on this country but also in each of our communities. As they say, all politics is local, and so too is tourism.

As the newly appointed shadow minister for tourism, I am committed to working with our Canadian travel and tourism stakeholders, including members of TIAC, to find creative and innovative ideas to expedite and support the recovery of our tourism sector across Canada, including in my home communities of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

CONSTABLE SHAELYN YANG

Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our community has suffered an incalculable loss. Constable Shaelyn Yang was killed in the line of duty on Tuesday. At 31, in the prime of her life, she was working every day to make our community a better place.

As I stood with all members in silence yesterday to honour her memory and her service, I struggled to find the words I might say to her family and to her loved ones. I think about the families of her fellow officers, whose partners, mothers and fathers continue to serve so selflessly so that we can all be safe.

I would like to ask that all Canadians who might hear this very short speech at one point or another take some extra effort to appreciate a first responder. It might be a police officer, a firefighter, a paramedic or a nurse. It would be a great way to honour Shaelyn's service and, honestly, it is impossible for any one of us to say "thank you" enough.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is Small Business Week, a time to celebrate the backbone of Canada's economy.

Small business owners are our unsung heroes who employ nearly two-thirds of workers across the country. From my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex to Victoria to Whitehorse to Regina to Halifax, millions of Canadians rely on meaningful paycheques from small businesses to feed their families.

The new Conservative leader will put the people first: their paycheques, their savings, their homes and their country. The Conservatives will fight the Liberal government's high payroll taxes, carbon tax, wasteful spending and careless attitude that is costing hard-working Canadians their jobs.

This Small Business Week, I encourage everyone to shop local, support small business and know that the Conservatives are doing the same. I thank all Canadians who own or work for a small business for what they do.

* * *

HOME OWNERSHIP

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first-time homebuyers in Canada are giving up on the idea of ever owning a home due to the housing crisis. The average cost of a detached home in my riding of King—Vaughan is \$1.8 million. Canadians are already struggling with their budgets. Buyers are not able to qualify for a mortgage. This is due in part to the high interest costs by the Bank of Canada.

The qualification process used by financial institutions include principle and interest, property tax and, of course, heating costs. The tripling of the carbon tax will further reduce the purchasing power.

The Liberal government has created more problems than it is solving in our housing market. The government needs to commit to stopping the tax increase. The dream of home ownership under the government has become a nightmare.

The government must demonstrate compassion and understanding toward the desire of Canadians to own a home. The Conservatives will work to make this a reality.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is national small and medium-sized business week, and I am proud of our government's support for innovative projects that move our economy, our community and our country forward.

There is a small business in Châteauguay-Lacolle called Logiag, whose agrology and agricultural engineering experts help farmers adopt innovative, sustainable practices. With funding from the agricultural clean technology program, Logiag will participate in our greenhouse gas reduction strategy by calculating how much carbon is sequestered in farmland. That is just one example among many of our government's contribution to our SMEs.

Together we will build an economy that benefits everyone.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a proud Hamiltonian, it is an honour to rise in the House and report that the "spirit of '46" is alive in the NDP caucus. We continue our fight for workers' rights to collectively bargain with their employers and, when necessary, withdraw their labour in order to push back against a tax on their wages, working conditions, pensions and benefits.

For decades, the New Democrats have introduced anti-scab legislation in the House to ensure that during labour disputes the use of scab replacement workers does not undermine the ability of workers to negotiate fairly or hurt labour relations. Scabs prolong strikes and lockouts and give employers little incentive to reach a fair deal. In the past, Liberals and Conservatives teamed up and voted against our anti-scab legislation.

Today, I am proud to also report that we have not stopped fighting for workers and have used our power in this Parliament to force the Liberals to include legislation to ban replacement workers. That includes not just strikes but lockouts as well. We will always fight for more democratic workplaces, democratic economies and to improve the material conditions of working-class people in our country.

* * *

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL POETRY FESTIVAL OF TROIS-RIVIÈRES

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the 38th edition of the International Poetry Festival of Trois-Rivières came to a close just a few days ago. This year, 2022, approximately 60 poets from around the world gave more than 250 performances that were enjoyed by tens of thousands of poetry lovers.

Ukraine was at the heart of this year's festival. In collaboration with the Ukrainian poet Dmytro Tchystiak, the festival wanted to give a voice to the Ukrainian people by presenting approximately 60 works by their poets. These poems were featured and translated, and then hung on the "clothesline of poetry".

I am proud of the festival's success and would like to congratulate Gaston Bellemare, its president, Maryse Baribeau, the executive director, and the entire festival team for making Trois-Rivières the capital of poetry.

The festival adds to the beauty of our world and brings elegance to its anguish, providing respite for the heart and soul.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food prices are up 11% and Canadians are struggling to put healthy food on the table because of Liberal inflation.

The Liberals could throw Canadian families a lifeline by cancelling their planned tax hikes on food, fuel and home heating. Instead, it seems the Liberals are determined to increase the cost of living with bad policies like failing to establish a Canadian vaccine bank for foot and mouth disease, putting our entire livestock industry at risk; by forcing front-of-pack labelling on manufacturers; by failing to give deemed trust to our fruit and vegetable growers; by putting a tariff on fertilizer and farms; and, now, tripling the carbon tax on farms and every aspect of our food supply chain.

Grocery prices are at a 41-year high and 1.4 million Canadian kids live in households with food insecurity. Canadian families can no longer afford the Liberal government.

There is hope on the horizon. A new Conservative leader, who does think about monetary policy, will end the Liberals' unjust inflation and ensure every Canadian can put affordable food on their table.

Oral Questions

CURLING

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Don Duguid won every conceivable championship in curling, including two men's world championships, three Canadian men's championships and a Canadian masters championship, to name a few.

He was the face and the voice of curling both in Canada and abroad for almost 40 years, and no individual has had a bigger impact on the spread of curling throughout the world. He was curling's very first colour commentator, beginning a 29-year career with the CBC in 1972, followed by seven years at NBC covering five Olympics as well as countless Briers, Scotties and other championships. He was inducted into the Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, the Canadian Curling Hall of Fame and was the very first inductee into the World Curling Hall of Fame. He was awarded the Order of Manitoba in 2014.

Today, curling great, and my father, Don Duguid received the Order of Canada from the Governor General. I want to congratulate my dad.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister added \$100 billion to our national debt before COVID-19 and \$500 billion to it before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He doubled the national debt by adding more debt than all of the other Canadian prime ministers in the history of our country combined. All of that money is driving up the cost of the goods that we buy and the interest that we pay.

All of a sudden, today, the Minister of Finance has done a flip-flop by recognizing that these inflationary deficits are increasing the cost of living. How can we trust the people who caused inflation to reverse it?

• (1420)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the lowest deficit and the lowest debt in the G7. We also introduced a budget that proposes to reduce government spending by \$9 billion. We also have the highest growth in the G7.

While the Conservatives are busy playing petty politics, our government brought Rio Tinto to Sorel-Tracy. Our government brought Moderna to Montreal. We are the ones who are going to ensure the long-term resilience of our economy.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a flip-flop. After adding \$100 billion of new debt before the first case of COVID, half-a-trillion dollars of debt before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, doubling the debt, adding more debt than all other prime ministers combined, now the Prime Minister's government is saying that it is going to cut \$9 billion and even bring in my "pay-as-you-go" law to find savings for every new dollar of spending. However, it now admits that deficits add fuel to the inflationary fire. Can we really trust the arsonists who lit the fire to put it out?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would obviously pose a question. During the pandemic, what would the Conservatives have cut? What supports would they not have offered to Canadians? In what way would they have not been there when Canadians needed them the most?

The second question I would ask is this. As we enter a time that is the most difficult probably that the globe has faced since the Second World War, it demands responsible leadership. Amplifying anxiety is easy; solutions are hard. Are the Conservatives going to support dental care for those who need it?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what would we have cut? We would have cut the \$54-million ArriveCAN app. We would have cut the half-billion dollars for the WE organization. We said that they should never have given wage subsidies to wealthy corporations that were capable of paying out bonuses and dividends to their executives. That is an easy question to answer.

In fact, \$200 billion of the \$500 billion in new debt in the last two years had nothing to do with COVID at all. Inflation was already spiralling out of control well before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Liberals should stop blaming everyone else and tell us how they are going to reverse the inflation that they caused.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is stating that inflation is a problem that is only faced by Canadians. He is presuming that Canadians are not watching what is happening in the rest of the world.

Right now, he has an opportunity. The Conservatives reversed the decision they made on Bill C-30 to provide support for Canadians. They have another opportunity to reverse their position to ensure that low-income renters have an opportunity to get the money they need in these difficult global times. They have an opportunity to ensure that those who need dental care get it. Will they reverse their position and support us in these measures?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is true that dumb governments that ran massive deficits all around the world and printed money to pay for it all have inflation problems. Countries like Switzerland that have low or no deficits have low or no inflation.

This was a choice. The government decided to spend a half-trillion dollars inflating the cost of living. More dollars chasing fewer goods leads always to higher prices. Now we have 40-year highs in inflation.

How can we trust the very few people who caused this problem to fix it?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, around the world we are dealing with unprecedented times: climate change, a war that has happened in Ukraine. We are dealing with global inflation and that demands maturity and serious answers.

I would say for the member opposite that in this time, we have an opportunity not to amplify anxiety, not to make people more scared, but to provide them real solutions. It is bad enough that the Conservatives are not willing to support dental care. I am just asking, as the House leader, as somebody who is attempting to get that legislation in support of Canadians, will they at least stop opposing it so the parties that do support it can get it done?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now the member blames the war in Ukraine for inflation, when less than 0.3% of Canada's trade is with Russia and Ukraine combined. Furthermore, the very things that the Russians and Ukrainians produce, oil and agriculture, are abundant here at home if only the government would get out of the way and let our farmers and energy workers produce them. If we cannot do that we have bigger problems still.

It is time for the Liberals to actually take responsibility. A half-trillion dollars of inflationary deficits have made life more expensive and have been bone-crushing for our consumers. When will they reverse these inflationary policies?

• (1425)

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives did not support child care for those who needed it, to help cut it in half immediately and make sure that it goes to \$10 a day. They did not support raising taxes on those who are earning the most so that we could give a break to those in the middle class. Here we are again with dental care, where many families are struggling because of the challenges happening across this globe, and they are not supporting that. I understand they are not supporting that, which is their partisan position, but will they at least get out of the way so that those of us who are trying to help Canadians right now can pass legislation?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec is currently having a debate on the oath to the King of England. It is also a debate on the general principle of the monarchy. We are told it is not a priority. What is likely a priority is challenging Quebec's secularism law. What is surely a priority is challenging a stronger Charter of the French Language. This raises a fundamental question and I would like a clear response.

Who is the head of state of Canada?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the oath is in our Constitution and it is a long-standing tradition in our parliamentary system. It is above all an oath to our institutions and our democracy, of which the sovereign is part. The Canadian courts have clearly established that it is not an oath to the person, now King Charles III, but to the state he represents.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what I heard the member say is that swearing an oath to the King of England is like swearing an oath to a symbol and a democratic institution, even though the king is in fact an actual person. Now I have heard it all. This is not a trivial thing.

We are in a country where no one can tell me who the head of state is. That is quite something, yet they are saying that it is normal. A democratically elected prime minister is encouraging an oath to a foreign king.

I would like someone to explain that to me.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone has their own priorities.

Here on the government side, we are concerned about the rising cost of living, access to decent housing for Quebeckers, access to child care for our Quebec children and housing assistance. We are there for our youth, for our workers and for our families. I do not understand the Bloc Québécois's priorities.

In the beginning, the Bloc was here for their passion. Today, we are coming to realize that they are here for their pensions.

[English]

The Speaker: Order. I am not sure what is going on today, but there is a lot of chatter. It is nice to see people getting along, but I want to remind people that we want to hear the questions and the responses.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the cost of living is still going up. The inflation rate at the grocery store is a record-high 11.4%. People are finding it harder and harder to pay for food.

We forced the Liberals and the Conservatives to adopt our plan to help families. When will the Liberal government implement our plan to help people?

• (1430)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we laid out our affordability plan, and the first step is to double the GST credit for 11 million Canadian households. That money will flow in early November, which is very soon.

We introduced a proposal to help low-income Canadians pay their rent and to subsidize children's dental care. I hope that all parties in the House will vote in favour of these measures.

* * *

[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, without a question, the Rogers-Shaw merger will be bad for Canadians, for people and for our country. There is no question this will result in job losses. We know the Competition Bureau is also opposed to this decision.

When will the Liberal government finally stand up for people, stand up for Canadians, and oppose this merger?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear that greater affordability, competition and innovation in the Canadian telecommunications sector are important to us as a government, as they are to all Canadians concerned about their cellphone bills and connectivity. Our government will ensure that consumers are protected and that the broader public interest is served. These goals remain front and centre as we analyze the implications of this proposed deal.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister had an epiphany after listening to the new Conservative leader's plan for ministers to find savings if they want to spend any new money. The only problem is that before COVID her government ran up \$110 billion in debt, and before the Russian invasion added a half-trillion dollars to the debt. Of that, \$200 billion was not even COVID spending. The government would rather blame everyone else than take responsibility for its homegrown inflation issue.

How can any Canadian trust the government to fix the inflation crisis it created?

Oral Questions

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to address that member's question. For weeks now, the Leader of the Opposition has considered our pandemic spending frivolous. I respectfully disagree. I think the millions of Canadians who kept their jobs and stayed employed because of the CEWS disagree. I think the millions of Canadians who were able to feed their children because of the CERB disagree. I think the hundreds of thousands of businesses whose doors are still open today because of our investments would disagree.

Thank goodness we were here, because the Leader of the Opposition does not want to lead.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals will continue to blame everyone else for their homegrown failures, and these failures are driving Canadians deeper into debt. They cancelled good Canadian energy projects, attacked our farmers and hit Canadians with a job-killing carbon tax. They drove up inflation and made groceries, gas and home heating more expensive, driving more Canadians to food banks and homeless shelters at an alarming rate.

How can anyone believe that the same government that is pile-driving more Canadians into insolvency will give this economy a soft landing?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the context of a country where fires, floods and hurricanes are already devastating and in the context of a time when there is a scientific deadline and timetable to when we must address climate change, we must make sure we take these actions so that we do not put future generations of Canadians at risk.

I call on that member and the entire opposition to come with us, together in this place, and figure out a plan, like we have, to grow the economy, create jobs and fight climate change.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government increased the debt by over \$100 billion before COVID and then increased the debt another \$500 billion during COVID, half of which it did not even spend on pandemic measures. Now we are supposed to believe the government has a new-found religion called fiscal restraint.

If the government has not shown Canadians any fiscal responsibility in seven years, why should we trust it now?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are a fiscally responsible government. Every single year over the last seven years we have been in government outside of the pandemic, the debt-to-GDP ratio has gone down. That is while we have invested in Canadians. In fact, the poverty report came out in October. We have lifted millions of Canadians out of poverty. Today, 25% fewer seniors live in poverty than when we took office in 2015, and that is because we are supporting Canadians.

• (1435)

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the government wants to run on its record, it is going to have to own up to its spending having helped drive inflation to 40-year

highs. Canadians are having a hard time putting food on the table. Even the Bank of Canada says that inflation is a homegrown problem.

The Liberals promise to keep spending increases to 2% a year. Has the Deputy Prime Minister told the rest of cabinet about this new fiscal plan?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that inflation is a global problem. Inflation in Canada has come down from its peak to 6.9%, but we know it is 8.2% in the United States. It is over 10% in the euro area. It is over 10% in the OECD.

It is important that we continue to focus on affordability measures that are going to make life easier for Canadians, like we did by doubling the GST benefit, which is going to 11 million Canadian families that need it and over 50% of our seniors.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to our great surprise today, the Minister of Finance is now taking inspiration from the Leader of the Opposition's speeches. She realizes that budgets do not balance themselves and is asking ministers to find savings before proposing new programs. Hallelujah.

The problem is that she should have listened to the member for Carleton much sooner.

The Liberals added \$100 billion to the national debt before COVID-19, and they added \$500 billion to the national debt before Russia's war on Ukraine, \$200 billion of which was completely unrelated to COVID-19. How can they be trusted to manage the inflation they themselves have created?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the Conservative member is so interested in the correspondence between the finance minister and her colleagues.

There is no question that our plan is based on fiscal responsibility. We delivered a budget that has been recognized by all the experts as fiscally responsible and we are seeing the results. Our inflation rate is much lower than that of our partners around the world.

We will continue to make sure we spend responsibly.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Yes, Mr. Speaker, let us talk about fiscal responsibility.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister said in his inaugural speech that interest rates would remain low for decades to come. I remember that the Liberals promised to run small deficits because we had the means and said interest rates were going to remain low and that it was no big deal to continue to rack up debt. The Liberals added \$100 billion to the debt even before COVID-19. That is the reality.

Today, they are asking Canadians to take them at their word when they say that they are going to manage inflation and lead them out of this crisis. No, Canadians no longer trust them. The Liberals are not capable of managing the crisis.

When will you abandon your plan to hurt Canadians by raising taxes yet again?

The Speaker: I would remind members that they need to ask their questions through the Chair not directly to the members.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think my Conservative colleague is too excited about attacking the Bank of Canada and the independence of our financial institutions.

We, on this side of the House, believe in the independence of our institutions. It was a Conservative government, led by Brian Mulroney, that set the Bank of Canada's targets. We think that was a good idea.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister gives the Governor General a pension. I do not know one Bloc member who would not give up their pension. Tomorrow, we will bring about independence.

Now that the minister is here in the House, he could also act accordingly. I will remind him that he swore an oath to the British Crown. To whom is he loyal? To Charles III or to the public?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as an MP from Quebec and a proud Quebecker, I am here to fight and to work for the well-being of Quebeckers, as are all my Quebec colleagues. That is why, on this side of the House, we are focusing on the rising cost of living, access to housing, assistance for child care and health care. Those are our priorities. If the Bloc members want to debate that, so be it, but as long as we are here, we will tackle the real priorities of all Quebeckers.

* * *

• (1440)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be a Bloc MP. It was not just a lack of coordination between governments that allowed the trucker convoy to stay in Ottawa for 24 days, it was a lack of leadership. The request from the City of Ottawa was simple: It wanted 1,800 police officers, from anywhere possible.

How many did the federal government send? It sent 250 RCMP officers out of the 1,800 that had been requested. The majority of those officers were deployed not to the streets of Ottawa, but in front of the Prime Minister's house and Parliament.

If the Prime Minister truly believed that the situation was serious enough to warrant protecting his home, did he not think that it was equally justified to protect the public?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the illegal occupation last winter, people across the country were hurting, not just in Ottawa but across the entire country. Canadians' freedom to feel safe in their homes was threatened. That is why we invoked the Emergencies Act. It was the right thing to do, and it worked to end this illegal occupation in Ottawa and across the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government sat on its hands for three weeks before finally invoking the Emergencies Act.

Today we found out from the commission that all of its excuses for using the most extreme of last resorts were false. Yesterday, CSIS testified that there was no foreign funding behind the convoy. The Ontario Provincial Police demonstrated today that there was no credible extremist violence. Every government excuse was false.

Is it not true that the federal government's lack of leadership for three weeks was the only reason for invoking the Emergencies Act?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member has forgotten what it was like during that time and what the federal government was doing. We were working with the provinces, including the province of Quebec, as well as working with the Ottawa Police Service and police services across the country.

Even the premier of Ontario, the Conservative premier, has said that he was standing shoulder to shoulder with the Prime Minister. We invoked the Emergencies Act to keep Canadians safe, and it worked.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more than 60% of Canadians are struggling to put food on the table, and food bank use is up by 20%. Housing prices have doubled under the Prime Minister, and now he wants to make it more expensive for struggling Canadians to heat their homes by tripling the carbon tax. Families will struggle to keep the heat on in February in Canada.

Oral Questions

Will the Prime Minister show some compassion for those struggling to heat their homes and cancel his plan to triple the carbon tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from the Parliamentary Budget Officer's last report on pricing, not what the Conservative Party is saying about it, but what the Parliamentary Budget Officer actually said. He said, "we project most households will see a net gain, receiving more in rebates from federal carbon pricing...than the total amount they pay in federal fuel charges".

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are the falsehoods and failures of a tax plan disguised as an environmental plan. In four provinces, Canadians pay more in carbon taxes than they get back, and in the rest of the provinces, they do not get anything at all. Worse, the government has not hit a single environmental target. Emissions have gone up. If it were serious about making life more affordable, instead of freezing seniors, it would scrap the taxes.

When will it scrap the carbon tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe it is time for the Conservative Party of Canada to come clean with the House and Canadians and admit to all that the fuel charge that will come into effect in 2023 will not come into effect before April, at the very earliest. This is April of 2023, so it will have no impact whatsoever on the cost of heating our homes over the winter.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the situation in this country is pretty bad. Food prices are up 11.4%, houses are unaffordable and young people are sleeping in their parents' basements.

Winter is coming, and we know how harsh winter is in Canada. Heating our homes is not a luxury.

Today we are calling on the government to exempt all forms of home heating fuel from the carbon tax for all Canadians

Will the government support us?

• (1445)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to enlighten my colleague on the other side about the difference between federal carbon pricing and the Quebec government's cap and trade system.

The Quebec government has no planned increases because the Quebec system works on a cap and trade basis, and the cap is the part that goes down. It is not related to the price. I would be pleased to explain the difference between the two to my colleague.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Pakistani government is cracking down on Afghans with threats of deportation and imprisonment by the end of the year. As they wait for the special immigration measure application to be processed,

many Afghans' 60-day visas have already expired. For others, they will expire soon.

Processing delays and the arbitrary cap that limits the number of Afghans who served Canada who can get to safety are going to cost lives. The situation is more urgent than ever. What action is the government taking to ensure Afghans who served Canada are not thrown into prison or sent back to the Taliban?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listen, we remain firm on our commitment to resettle at least 40,000 Afghan nationals to Canada and to do this as quickly and safely as possible. We are processing applications day and night for Afghan refugees, and we have mobilized our entire workforce in helping.

What I am most proud of is that, as of just a few days ago, 311 Afghans can now call Canada home. We have almost 23,000 Afghans here, and we will continue to work with Afghans. Our government is fully committed—

The Speaker: The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people are struggling with the destruction caused by the climate emergency, and it is only going to get worse. A report by the Canadian Climate Institute reveals that the federal government needs to take greater action. By 2025, Canada will see an annual \$25-billion loss to GDP, and it will only get worse every year. CCI found that proactive measures are the best way to reduce those losses, but the Liberals are far behind.

Will the government stop subsidizing the fossil fuel industry and redirect those billions of dollars to help communities prepare for climate change?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. Climate change is a very pressing issue, which is why our government is working hand in hand with colleagues, provinces, territories, indigenous leadership and municipalities to build the first-ever national adaptation plan so Canadians are better prepared to fight climate change.

Yes, we are in the process of meeting our commitment to eliminating fossil fuel subsidies two years earlier than all of our G20 partners. This will be done by next year. These subsidies have already gone down from \$12 billion to \$4 billion just at EDC in the last few years.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I announced a \$1.4 million investment in Racer Machinery International. This investment by our government will create and maintain 31 jobs in the Kitchener area.

Could the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario update the House on how our government has supported businesses such as Racer?

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I am rising in the House as the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, and I wish to acknowledge that I am honoured, excited and grateful to take on this new role.

I want to thank the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler for her advocacy for small businesses. Our government knows that when we invest in small businesses such as Racer, it creates jobs and strengthens our economy. Supports like this will help entrepreneurs reach their full potential, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Small Business Week.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the evidence is in. The Liberals' soft-on-crime approach is not working. Violent crime is up 32% in Canada since they took office, yet incredibly, Bill C-5 would eliminate mandatory jail time for serious firearm and drug offences, even the offence of assaulting a police officer with a weapon.

For the sake of our communities, police officers and all law-abiding Canadians, I ask them to please, do the right thing. Will the minister withdraw his soft-on-crime Bill C-5?

● (1450)

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for being reappointed to his role as critic.

Unfortunately, I disagree with him on his view of Bill C-5. Bill C-5 is about serious crimes getting serious consequences and getting the attention and resources they deserve. We are doing that by taking the focus off of instances where incarceration is not the solution, hence the focus on removing a certain number of mandatory minimum penalties. Serious situations, where public safety is at issue, will still get serious consequences.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these serious consequences would be to serve house arrest while playing video games for discharging a firearm illegally. That is not a serious consequence.

The Minister of Justice has permitted a catch-and-release justice system. Businesses are closing down, and people in my riding of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo are afraid to walk downtown in certain pockets, even in the daytime. We even had a McDonald's close down due to street crime.

Oral Questions

Bail has become the norm for repeat violent offenders. Will the government shut this revolving door?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and congratulate him on his recent appointment as the second critic on this file.

Public safety is our priority, and serious crimes will always carry with them serious consequences. Former supreme court justice Michael Moldaver, whom nobody in the House could accuse of being soft on crime, has said precisely that we need to dedicate more of our judicial and penal resources towards combatting serious offences and treating those offences seriously, and conversely, taking away some of the resources for crimes that should not be punished by incarceration.

Public safety is our number one priority.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the owner of a Winnipeg convenience store is in the hospital with a serious brain injury after he was attacked by thieves. Manitobans have become quite accustomed to seeing the daily headlines of assault, murder, arson, stabbing, stealing, and break and enters.

The perpetrators of these crimes are usually the same people. It is a revolving door, and the bad guys are getting away with it over and over again. This is the Canada we have after seven years of Liberal government. What is it going to take for these Liberals to finally get serious and start protecting Canadian families from violent offenders?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been serious about protecting Canadians since we got elected. Our number one priority is to keep Canadians safe, and that is why we have introduced common sense firearms legislation, such Bill C-71 and Bill C-21, which is at committee right now. These would keep Canadians safe. These measures are supported by Canadians, and we hope that the hon. members across the way will support us in this legislation.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals well know that gun violence is the result of criminals and gangs who smuggle guns across the American border. It is not the result of licenced, trained and vetted-by-police Canadian firearm owners. At the same time, these Liberals are letting violent offenders off the hook. This year, a woman in Winnipeg was robbed at gunpoint while holding her infant child and had her car stolen.

Oral Questions

The Liberal Bill C-5 would remove mandatory prison time for robbery with a firearm. Therefore, this violent offender would serve house arrest because he terrorized this woman. That is the world these Liberals have created for Canadians. It is reckless, and it will continue to fail to keep Canadians safe. Does the minister not agree?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, public safety is our top priority. The kind of circumstance the hon. member has just described is not the kind of circumstance that would carry with it a minimum mandatory penalty. It would go to the other end of the sentencing spectrum precisely because public safety was at risk and the act itself was serious.

What we are doing, and what experts such as the former supreme court justice Michael Moldaver are suggesting, is that we concentrate our limited judicial resources on precisely those kinds of situations by freeing up resources from situations where public safety is not at risk.

* * *

• (1455)

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is not compatible with fighting climate change? The energy policy that the Deputy Prime Minister recently announced in Washington. She announced that Canada will fast-track oil and gas development to sell as much as possible to Europe.

The government has even said that it could not care less about spending political capital. It clearly could not care less about public opinion, because what matters is selling gas to Europe.

Could anything be less compatible with fighting climate change than producing more oil and gas to make money?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is determined to tackle the global energy security crisis and climate change. That is why we are investing in good projects across the country. These projects will have to comply with our climate and environmental ambitions and respect the rights of first nations.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it tells us a lot when the Minister of Natural Resources answers a question about climate change.

What makes it even worse is that when the Liberals tell Washington that they want to sell more oil and gas, they are worried about their political capital. The Deputy Prime Minister said that we have to be prepared to spend some domestic political capital to sell fossil fuel in Europe.

Instead of worrying about the impact of their decision on global warming, they are worrying about their political capital. In the midst of a climate crisis, should the Liberals be worried about political capital or about climate change when they talk about selling more oil and more gas?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the 1970s, people thought that fighting climate change was the environment minister's responsibility. For our government, it is the responsibility of all ministers and all members on this side of the House.

Everyone must fight climate change, whether it is the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transport, the Department of Justice or the Department of the Environment. That is exactly what we are doing, and that is why in Canada we now have twice as much investment in renewable energy and clean technology as we do in fossil fuels.

The more we move forward, the more investment there will be in the renewable energy sector and the less there will be in the fossil fuel sector.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, news broke this afternoon that one of the companies the government says it gave \$1.2 million to for its ArriveCAN boondoggle says that it did not get a dime. Where is the \$1.2 million? Who got rich?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout the pandemic, keeping Canadians safe has always been our top priority. That is why we used the ArriveCAN app. CBSA is aware of concerns surrounding contracts and it is looking into the matter further.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, CBSA is concerned and Canadians are concerned because the Prime Minister's scandal-plagued record speaks for itself. This app, when it started out, was supposed to cost \$80,000 and the expenses ballooned to more than \$54 million. It wrongly quarantined and forced into house arrest 10,000 Canadians.

It is a boondoggle. It is a failed app. The government lost \$1.2 million. Who got rich?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish the party opposite would go back in time to when it was calling on us to close borders. We brought in the ArriveCAN app to keep Canadians safe, and it worked. It is no longer mandatory. As I said—

The Speaker: I am just going to interrupt for a moment. I am having a hard time hearing the parliamentary secretary and I am sure the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes would like to hear what she has to say. I am going to ask everyone to take it down a notch and maybe take a deep breath.

Oral Questions

We will listen to the parliamentary secretary, from the top, please.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, it is starting again across the way. I guess they do not want to remember what it was like a year or two ago when Canadians were living with COVID and the Conservatives were calling on us to close the border and stop letting people come in.

We brought in the ArriveCAN app to keep Canadians safe, and it worked. As I said previously, CBSA is aware of issues with the contract and it is looking into it.

• (1500)

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' continued use of the ArriveCAN app destroyed any chance of recovery this summer for our Canadian tourism sector. Canadians are struggling and deserve so much better, so they can be excused for being upset when the government committed \$54 million to the disastrous ArriveCAN app.

Canadians simply want to know two things: Who got rich at their expense and when will we scrap this app?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ArriveCAN app is no longer mandatory. Perhaps the hon. member has not been watching the news to know that. However, I want to assure Canadians that it is still available for those who wish to use it.

We brought in the ArriveCAN app, along with many other measures during the pandemic, because we were always putting Canadians' health and safety as our number one priority.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Haiti has asked for international assistance to combat the current crisis. Since then, politicians and the corrupt financial elite have only ramped up their scheming, and gangs continue to terrorize the people of Haiti.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell us how Canada intends to respond to this plea for help?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his important question and his support for the people of Haiti.

Like many Canadians, I am very concerned about what is happening in Haiti right now. Solutions need to be found by and for Haitians. The Prime Minister and I are working with our counterparts on the issue. That is also why we recently sent safety equipment to the Haitian national police.

We are also prepared to impose sanctions against those who are financing the gangs and feeding the unrest. Our message is clear. We will always stand with the people of Haiti.

[*Member spoke in Creole*]

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we heard some responses from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, but we did not get an answer.

This is very clear. The Liberals said the app was going to cost \$80,000, and then they said they gave this company \$1.2 million out of a total \$54 million in this boondoggle. The company they say they gave \$1.2 million to said they were not given a dime.

We asked who got rich and the Liberals do not know the answer. Here is a new question for them: Who is lying?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member is not accusing me of lying in this House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, it is really hard to answer the question when I cannot even hear myself think.

I have answered this question now four times. For the opposition to call the ArriveCAN app a boondoggle when it was developed to keep Canadians safe is appalling. CBSA is aware of issues with the contract and it is looking—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the parliamentary secretary for a second and ask her to maybe give us the answer from the top again.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Wait. I am going to share a little story. Last night I was at a reception across the hall and there were some people in the gallery. They were looking down and were identifying individuals who were screaming and shouting. They were embarrassed for the individuals. I want members to think of that when they are sitting in their seats thinking they are alone. They are not alone. Either they are on camera or someone is watching.

I will let the hon. parliamentary secretary start from the top.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, throughout the pandemic, our number one priority was the health and safety of Canadians. The ArriveCAN app was part of the response to that.

As I have said numerous times in this House, CBSA is aware of issues with the contract and it is looking into them.

Oral Questions

• (1505)

TAXATION

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling because of the inflation caused by the Prime Minister and his government. Now, as temperatures are dropping below zero across northern Ontario and the Liberals are planning to triple the taxes on home heating, people are worried and are wondering if they are even going to be able to afford to heat their homes this winter.

Will the government do the right thing, finally recognize that home heating is not a luxury and support our plan to cancel the taxes on home heating, yes or no?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, every Canadian household between Grande Prairie, Alberta, and Cornwall, Ontario, received a cheque from the Government of Canada. This cheque was the climate action incentive. Thanks to that program, 80% of households have more money in their pockets. Now every Conservative politician in this House wants the government to go back and pick the pockets of every single one of those households. With the affordability challenges that Canadians are facing today, that is something we simply will not do.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night I spoke to Bonnie from a remote part of my riding, who lives with her retired husband. They paid \$900 last year to heat their home with oil. That was double the year before. They just learned that their bill this year is going to be \$2,400. On a combined income of \$25,000 a year, that means they are going to have to eat crickets in order to eat and heat.

When will the government stop hurting Canadians and cancel its plan to triple the carbon tax?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very important to say to hon. members across the House that climate change is real and is an existential threat to the future of the human race. The Conservatives are proposing to make pollution free again, and now they are proposing to pick the pockets of the vast majority of Canadian families by taking away their quarterly rebate cheques. This will make the climate crisis worse. It will drive away investment and will make everything more expensive. Our government will oppose Conservative political efforts to rob Canadians of this important financial support.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is Small Business Week. Small businesses are the backbone of our communities across the country, especially in the Northwest Territories. They create jobs and economic growth and are critical in postpandemic recovery.

Can the minister responsible for CanNor please update this House on the important work our government is doing to support small businesses in the Northwest Territories?

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, I thank the member for his hard work on behalf of small businesses in the Northwest Territories.

Through CanNor's economic programs, we have supported hundreds of businesses in the north, including 200 women-led enterprises, over 100 owned by indigenous people and over 320 in tourism. Today, I was pleased to announce \$50,000 for the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce to support local business events in NWT.

Our government will continue to be there for small businesses to help them grow and create jobs.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of groceries. The increase in food prices has hit a 41-year high, rising twice as quickly as people's wages. This week, we made the Liberals and the Conservatives admit that CEO corporate greed is driving up food prices. Now it is time for the government to take a stand and support families.

When will the Liberals finally close tax loopholes, forcing CEOs to pay what they owe?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to answer the question.

As I stated for an earlier question, we have been focused on reducing poverty in this country. In fact, we have lifted millions of Canadians out of poverty, including seniors and hundreds of thousands of children. We have done that through benefits such as the CCB, the OAS and the GIS. We have indexed those benefits to inflation so that as the cost of living goes up, those benefits go up as well.

We are continuing to look at programs like the recovery dividend and at a tax on excess profits for banks to make sure that everybody is paying their fair share.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, “Establish and fully fund a Canada Water Agency in 2022” and “Modernize the 50-year-old Canada Water Act” are quotes from the Liberal platform. A fully independent and integrated Canada water agency is urgently needed. We lack the scientific capacity to monitor water quality and quantity, to predict impacts and to protect safe water.

The climate crisis is a water crisis. No more announcements. It is time to create the Canada water agency. Will the minister update us as to the plans to do it in 2022?

• (1510)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are, in fact, working to create an independent water agency for Canada. We need more information on water and better water management in Canada, because water, despite the fact that we have a lot of it in Canada, is also under threat because of climate change. We are working on this and we will have good news to announce to this House in the coming weeks.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is Thursday, the time when the opposition asks the government what we can expect in the week ahead. We have reason to be optimistic that there may be a piece of legislation that would enshrine the Leader of the Opposition's principled approach to government financing, where any new spending item would have to be accompanied by a spending reduction. This is something that the opposition would entirely support if the government were going to introduce that next week.

I wonder if the government House leader would inform the House as to the business for the rest of this week and into next week. Can we expect legislation to enshrine permanently the brilliant idea the Leader of the Opposition has already proposed?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I can assure the member opposite, my hon. opposition House leader, is that the government will continue to be introducing legislation that helps Canadians with affordability and makes their lives easier in these globally difficult and conflicted times.

With respect to the immediate term, I can tell the House that tomorrow we will turn to Bill C-9, which concerns the Judges Act at second reading. On Monday, we will continue with the second reading debate on Bill S-5, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Tuesday shall be an allotted day.

On Wednesday, we will commence with the second reading debate on Bill S-4, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Identification of Criminals Act, related to COVID-19 response and other measures. On Thursday, we will deal with the report stage and third reading of Bill C-31, with respect to dental care and rental housing.

We also hope to make progress next week on Bill C-20, an act establishing the public complaints and review commission and amending certain acts and statutory instruments.

Business of Supply

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—TAX EXEMPTION ON HOME HEATING FUEL

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary has two minutes remaining.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spent the first eight minutes of my speech prior to question period talking at great length about how the Conservative Party of Canada today is nothing like the Conservative Party of Canada that cared about the environment under the leadership of Brian Mulroney, for example. What I found very interesting between that part of my speech and this part of my speech is this.

During an exchange during question period, one of the parliamentary secretaries on this side of the House talked about the Premier of Ontario Doug Ford being a Conservative. The member for St. Albert—Edmonton put in quotes “Conservative”, as if to suggest that Doug Ford, the Conservative Premier of Ontario, is not Conservative enough for this particular Conservative Party of Canada that we are stuck dealing with now.

It goes without saying that I will vote against this motion. It is the third time the Conservatives have brought it forward. We identify that they are doing things in threes these days. Therefore, I will once again, for a third time, vote against this ill-informed motion brought forward by the Conservatives.

I will reiterate what I said before, which is that pricing pollution is a smart, effective tool based on economic principles that we would assume the Conservatives could somehow wrap their heads around, yet here we are and they are reluctantly refusing to do that, despite the fact that even their former leader Stephen Harper agreed that pricing pollution was a—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are clapping for him. Great. Hopefully, they can clap for his principles too, which was to price pollution, because Stephen Harper certainly felt that way.

• (1515)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I listened to many of the speeches today given by especially Liberal members, I found it very interesting that they seem to be incredibly dismissive of the challenges facing Canadians. They are tying themselves into knots trying to figure out a creative way to somehow spin that this motion is not about providing real practical relief to a part of the country that does not benefit from their so-called federal backstop. However, I will leave the many criticisms I have about that and the fact that so many Canadians, in a country so rich in natural resources, are facing energy poverty.

Business of Supply

My question for the member is very simple. Can he look past his partisanship, acknowledge the fact that many Canadians are simply asking for that bit of relief, come to the table and at least have a discussion about how we can get that relief to Atlantic Canadians who are facing unprecedented energy poverty?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, what I am dismissive about is when Conservatives come into the House and continually purport falsehoods, like earlier today when they said the federal government has imposed a price on pollution in all provinces, which is not the truth. Quebec and Ontario were doing it with California long before the federal government ever got involved in it.

The member seems to suggest that the particular motion before us today is the be-all and end-all to support Canadians. He is asking us just to provide a bit of support. I would remind him of the various different supports that have been introduced in this House just in the last several weeks, legislation that we know they are going to vote against. They changed their minds on increasing the GST rebate. They flip-flopped on that one. Maybe it is time for them to flip-flop on other supports, like providing dental care and housing supports for Canadians.

There are many different ways that we can support Canadians and it does not have to come at the expense of the environment, which is what the Conservatives want to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his speech. I would like him to clarify something.

Newfoundland has submitted a climate change action plan. My understanding is that if the plan is accepted, the province would be excluded from the federal tax and these concerns would no longer be an issue.

Can my colleague comment on that?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: To that end, Mr. Speaker, had the province submitted a plan that met the standards of the national requirements, it would have been excluded, just like Quebec has. Quebec never even had to touch this issue because it was years, if not a decade, ahead of the rest of the country with respect to this issue. Ontario used to be in that same position.

When the price on pollution was first introduced in the House, there was still a cap and trade model of pricing pollution shared among Ontario, Quebec and California, and Ontario was exempt from the federal program. What happened? Doug Ford ripped up the cap and trade program that had been put in place, excluded Ontario from that trilateral deal with California and Quebec, and as a result was subject to the default, which was the federal program. The federal program has always been the default.

It has been about creating a standard, a benchmark, to which provinces need to adhere in order to be not included in that program. Many provinces have done that. Unfortunately, some provinces chose not to and those are the ones that are subject to the federal rules.

• (1520)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed by the hon. member's speech because I only got to hear the last two minutes, but I am hoping he can talk about a former Conservative government that tackled acid rain with a price on pollution, how that worked and why the Conservatives will not learn from their own past.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, Brian Mulroney spent a decade pushing the U.S. government to improve legislation to control acid rain. When George Bush came along, he agreed to it and adopted what Brian Mulroney, a Progressive Conservative, had been pushing for a decade. Let us just think about that. Brian Mulroney had a massive impact and effect on environmental policy throughout North America. That was a Progressive Conservative government.

Unfortunately, what we have here is something completely different. There is no possible remnant of Brian Mulroney and the representative from my area, Flora MacDonald, left in what is across the way.

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to take part in today's debate. Indeed, our government is acutely aware that rising prices are being experienced around the world and that Canadians are not exempt, but at this point the hon. opposition should also be aware that carbon pollution pricing is not the problem. In fact, most households will get back more through climate action incentive payments than they pay due to federal carbon pollution pricing.

The federal carbon pricing system is not about raising revenues. All direct proceeds from pricing carbon pollution under the federal system are being returned to the provincial or territorial jurisdictions in which they were collected. Among households, eight out of 10 get back more than they pay, so putting a price on pollution is not the problem. It is a solution and an effective one. It is a market-based mechanism that actually was initially proposed by Conservative economists, but for the official opposition, it is ideology over expertise every time. They have been fighting climate action for years in Canada.

Business of Supply

Today, we face literally billions of dollars in cleanup and adaptation costs from extreme weather events that are stronger and more frequent because of climate change. Conservatives vote against every measure our government brings forward to improve affordability for Canadians, whether it is the child tax benefit, pandemic relief, dental care or a temporary GST break. Now the Conservatives pretend to be on the side of those facing energy poverty. Canadians have been riding the roller coaster of volatile global oil and gas prices for years, and Conservatives have said nothing about skyrocketing profits for oil and gas producers.

The only way to eliminate energy poverty, to reduce household energy costs in Canada and to have true energy security is by fighting climate change. With the volatility of oil prices and record profits for oil companies, Conservatives are proposing Canadians be chained to the oil and gas markets and completely vulnerable to foreign wars and cartels.

Because the problem Canadians are facing is global, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, our government has been steadfast in delivering targeted and fiscally responsible financial supports to help Canadians through these challenges. We know that many are experiencing the rise in the cost of living through higher food prices and rent, and we know that this poses a particular challenge for lower-income Canadians, who are more vulnerable to these effects. We are supporting Canada's most vulnerable by doubling the GST credit for six months. That is why we have taken action to put more money back into the pockets of those who are most vulnerable.

Bill C-30, which just received royal assent on Tuesday, offers a perfect example of how we are doing this. By doubling the goods and services tax credit for six months, Bill C-30 will roughly deliver \$2.5 billion in additional support to roughly 11 million eligible low-income people and families, including more than half of Canadian seniors. This will mean up to an extra \$234 for single Canadians without children and up to an extra \$467 for couples with two children. Seniors will receive an extra \$225 on average.

With Bill C-30 now law, these extra GST credit amounts will be paid starting in early November as a one-time lump sum payment through the existing GST credit system to all current recipients. Current recipients do not need to apply for the additional payment. They will receive it automatically. If individuals have not filed their 2021 tax returns already, they should do so to ensure they are able to receive both the current GST credit and the additional payment. Eligible Canadians who already received the GST credit will automatically receive their payments starting in early November.

● (1525)

I would like to take a moment to look at some examples of what this will mean to some of our most vulnerable neighbours, in real terms. Under the present GST credit, we know that a single mother with one child and a net income of \$30,000 will receive \$386.50 for the July through December 2022 period, and another \$386.50 for the January through June 2023 period, but with Bill C-30 she will receive an additional \$386.50. In total, she will be receiving about \$1,160 this benefit year through the GST credit.

What is more, Bill C-30 is just one example of how we are helping the most vulnerable Canadians. We have also introduced Bill

C-31, which would provide a Canadian dental benefit starting this year. This would be for families with children under 12 who do not have access to dental insurance and who have an adjusted net income of less than \$90,000. Those families would be able to access direct payments totalling up to \$1,300 per child over the next two years, up to \$650 per year, to cover dental expenses for their children under 12 years of age. It is expected that 500,000 Canadian children could benefit from this targeted investment of \$938 million.

Bill C-31 would also provide a one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit. This one-time payment of \$500 would be available to applicants with an adjusted net income below \$35,000 for families, or below \$20,000 for individuals, who spend at least 30% of their income on rent. It is estimated that 1.8 million low-income renters, including students who are struggling with the cost of housing, would be eligible for this new support. For the Canadians who need this support the most, the most vulnerable Canadians, this would mean new money for them this year, at exactly the right time. The measures in Bill C-30 and Bill C-31 would complement previous actions taken by our government and are providing help this year to support those who are most vulnerable through the current challenges.

We have enhanced the Canada workers benefit. We will have cut child care fees in half by the end of this year. In July, we increased the old age security by 10% for seniors 75 and older. For post-secondary students, we have doubled the Canada student grant until July 2023. With these and other recent measures, a couple in Ontario with an income of \$45,000 and a child in day care could receive about an additional \$7,800 above their existing benefits this fiscal year. A single recent graduate in Alberta, with an entry-level job and an income of \$24,000, could receive about an additional \$1,300 in new and enhanced benefits. A senior in Quebec with a disability could benefit from over \$2,700 more this year than they received last year.

Helping our most vulnerable through the current challenges is the right thing to do. We know our government can tackle affordability and climate change at the same time. In fact, climate action and reducing dependence on volatile global oil and gas prices set by foreign cartels and overseas conflicts are the path to eliminating energy poverty once and for all.

Business of Supply

We know that a price on pollution is the most economically effective way to fight climate change. Canada's carbon pricing system is recognized by experts and institutions around the world, including the IMF, as being a model for other countries to follow.

• (1530)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member studiously avoided actually speaking to the motion. The motion is very specific. We are trying to express Parliament's will here in expressing our support and agreement with the comments of the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador and calling on the government to exempt all forms of home heating fuel from the carbon tax for all Canadians.

Will the member vote for this motion and with her premier?

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Madam Speaker, being a member from Newfoundland and Labrador, I am very pleased to say that I support the government's action that we not back down on climate policy. The tax is necessary to support a green economy. Climate action is essential, and carbon tax is a component of that. I work closely with the provincial government and look forward to continuing that relationship.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge my colleague, who sits with me on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and for whom I have great respect.

The Bloc Québécois agrees that polluters must pay and that there must be a price on pollution.

However, in April, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development wanted to determine whether this measure really targets a significant proportion of greenhouse gas emissions. He concluded that it did for individual emissions, but not for those of large emitters.

Does my colleague not think that there is work to be done on that, to ensure that large emitters also pay their share?

[English]

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Madam Speaker, I certainly support the government's policy that a carbon tax is absolutely essential to managing the climate crisis. We have to take bold action. We will continue to address the need to bring emissions down to a level that is in line with our targets of 2030 and 2050. It is important to remember that as the rate of pollution tax increases, so does the rebate.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, earlier this week, the Alberta Federation of Labour brought forward a report on what it would look like to have a just transition for workers in Alberta. The member talked a lot about the boom-and-bust economy and certainly my family, as a family that has been involved in the oil and gas sector for some time, understands the challenges of that boom-and-bust economy. However, we did not get clarification from the government this week if it would be supporting the calls of Alberta workers for a just transition for a future economy for workers. Could the member comment on that?

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Madam Speaker, I am always very proud to talk about the work this government is doing to support Canadians, to support workers.

There is a plan in place for a just transition, and I can speak to this from my own province. We are moving ahead to ensure that our workforce is ready to move into the reality of low-emission technology, which will power the world as we move forward.

I am very pleased with the work the government is doing and I am proud of the work it is doing to support families. We will continue to be there for workers and families as we move forward.

• (1535)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on a question that my colleague, the member for Calgary Shepard, asked which the member refused to answer.

Does the member stand with the Prime Minister, her leader, who is punishing her constituents and those who live in her province? Because of bad economic and energy policies, her province alone has seen a 52.8% increase in fuel oils. Otherwise does she stand with her Liberal premier, her constituents and follow what the Conservatives are trying to do to help save on home heating bills for her constituents?

Ms. Joanne Thompson: Madam Speaker, I am very proud of the relationship that the federal government has maintained with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I am very proud to say that since 2019, Newfoundland and Labrador has received \$8 billion in support from the federal government. I think that speaks for itself.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

The government is completely out of touch, and I do not say that lightly. There is a crisis unfolding in rural parts of our country, in Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, a real crisis, a crisis the government is ignoring.

Here is the crisis. Ten per cent of Canadians heat their home with heating oil or with propane. That is 3.8 million Canadians. About a million and a half households in our country heat their homes during the cold Canadian winters with heating oil or with propane. That is a third of Canadians living in Atlantic Canada. That is over a million people living in the province of Ontario. They heat their homes with oil or propane, and the vast majority of them heat with oil.

What many people do not realize, and what the government certainly does not realize, is that these Canadians are in dire straits. They are facing a crisis this winter. The one out of 10 Canadians who relies on heating oil or on propane is going to be bankrupted by the cost of heating his or her home this winter, and here is why.

Traditionally, 90% of Canadians heat with heat other than heating oil or propane. They either use natural gas or some form of alternative. However, here is the reality for those 10% of Canadians who use heating oil or propane.

For a house that is heated with natural gas, for every dollar of heat that house uses in natural gas, for that same house located in an area where there is only heating oil or propane, it costs three dollars, three times the amount, to heat with propane and it costs four dollars to heat with heating oil, or four times the amount.

These figures I give to the House are before the global energy crisis that has hit global economies over the last year or so. This winter the figures now facing the 10% of our fellow citizens who heat with propane or heating oil are truly frightening and that is why this is a crisis. I went on the website yesterday of West Nova Fuels of Nova Scotia, and I will quote from its website:

[O]n average a typical house with four people in it should burn about three to four tanks of oil in a year to heat your home and hot water, about 2800 litres of oil.

That is now much it takes to heat a typical home in rural Ontario and rural Atlantic Canada: 2,800 litres.

I went on the website of a company called Crescent Oil in rural southern Ontario that services much of rural southwestern Ontario with heating oil. Its current price for the cost of a litre of that heating oil is \$2. Some areas of rural Ontario and rural Canada have even higher per-litre costs for heating oil. Canadians will understand that if they are told that number two heating oil is diesel. That is what furnace oil heating oil is.

If people have driven around in Ontario in the last week or so, they will see that the price of diesel fuel is at record high levels because of shortages of distillates and other heavy crudes, and it is selling for about \$2.35 a litre now in Ontario. Therefore, it is no coincidence that heating oil, which is diesel, is selling for \$2 a litre. That is \$2 a litre for 2,800 litres over a winter. That is \$5,600 to heat a typical home in rural Ontario or rural Atlantic Canada. That is before the carbon tax and the HST.

● (1540)

There is a carbon tax of roughly 13¢ a litre on that heating oil. There is HST not just on the base cost of the heating oil, but also on the carbon tax, so that \$5,600 it is going to cost to heat one's home this winter in rural Ontario or rural Atlantic Canada actually is closer to \$6,739, of which \$375 is the carbon tax.

The government's rebates do not cover these costs. A typical four-person family, mom, dad and two kids, living in these rural areas, heating with heating oil and driving to work in a two-income family and putting 25,000 kilometres a year on each vehicle, because there is no public transit in rural areas, which is the very nature of living in a rural area, will consume about 5,000 litres of gasoline in a year.

As well, in Ontario there is an 11¢ a litre carbon tax on that gasoline. That means someone who is paying about \$550 a year in carbon taxes for commuting, and add to that the \$375 they have paid on their heating oil to keep their home at a minimal temperature of about 19°C or 20°C, is looking at \$925 a year in carbon taxes just on commuting and heating. That is not to mention all the carbon taxes that are embedded on shipping, groceries and other costs. The

Business of Supply

climate rebate of \$204.88 a quarter, for a total of \$819.52, does not cover the cost.

Out of the government's own admission, and we heard it from the previous member, two out of 10 households in this country do not get more back from the rebate than they pay in carbon taxes. The government is ignoring those households and ignoring the crisis facing these households. It is ignoring the astronomical skyrocketing costs it will take to keep one's house warm in rural Ontario and rural Atlantic Canada this winter.

The argument that this is somehow working as part of a plan to reduce emissions to combat climate change is bunk. Here is the proof. Liberals have not met a single target. They came to office saying that they were going to meet Copenhagen. We blew through that without meeting that target. They said that they are now on track to meet Paris, which is total baloney.

Emissions have been rising under the Liberal government. In 2016, the first full year the government was in office, emissions were 715 megatonnes. In 2019, the last year before the pandemic for which we have data, emissions rose to 738 megatonnes. Now, they dropped in 2020, but shutting down the economy is no way to combat climate change and reduce emissions.

I will go out on a limb here. I believe that in 2022, Canada's emissions will blow through that 738 megatonne level to a record high for the government. Do not take it from me; take it from Bloomberg. I was reading the news this morning and I came across an article Bloomberg just published today entitled “[The Prime Minister] Defends Canada's Minuscule Climate Progress”, with the subheading, “A bevy of climate policies championed by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau have not yet translated into steep pollution cuts in the country.”

I want to quote from that article—

● (1545)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. member he is not to mention the Prime Minister or anybody else by first name or last name, even if he is quoting an article.

The hon. member has one minute and 17 seconds to wrap up.

Hon. Michael Chong: My apologies, Madam Speaker. I got caught up in the moment and I made a mistake. I withdraw that.

I want to quote from this article, because it is damning.

Business of Supply

It reads:

But all of Canada's peers in the Group of Seven, or G-7, have managed to achieve economic growth while simultaneously cutting emissions, and Canada's environmental commissioner says the country is struggling to bend the emissions curve. Among the Group of 20 major economies, or G-20, Canada ranks behind only Saudi Arabia when it comes to per capita emissions, and ahead of Australia.

That is a damning indictment of how the government's climate change policies are working, including its carbon tax.

I will finish by saying that this is the only government in the G7 that has raised taxes on fuel during a period of record high global energy prices. Even the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador is pleading for relief.

The government needs to get in touch with Canadians and understand that 10% of this country is in dire straits facing a heating crisis this winter. It needs to do the right thing and cut the taxes on propane and heating oil.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before many of us ever got involved in politics, I would say that we looked to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills as a beacon of hope in the Conservative Party with respect to fighting climate change. We saw him as the only leadership contestant in a race who was willing to talk about and acknowledge climate change. He, at the time, I believe, was a proponent of carbon pricing, a strong proponent of strong action to fight climate change.

Lately, the Conservatives have been telling us to cut the tax, cut the tax, not acknowledging that supreme courts across the country have said that it is not a tax, that it is a rebate program and it is actually helping many families who have made many adjustments to their usage of fossil fuels.

Many of my constituents also use heating oil and many of my constituents also use propane. The methodology of the member opposite is not going to help fight climate change and, frankly, it is not going to help our constituents in rural Halton either.

Does the hon. member still believe in fighting climate change with carbon pricing?

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, what I proposed in 2016 was, in fact, a revenue negative carbon tax. I even said at the time that I did not support this government's carbon tax quite simply because it is revenue positive. Not all of the money is returned to taxpayers. The government has used it for a plethora of programs that are not working. In fact, the government admits it itself. It says that 20% of households do not receive more back in these rebates than they pay in carbon taxes.

What I proposed is nothing of the sort of what the government is proposing. Its plan is not working and the proof is in the pudding, as reputable news organizations like Bloomberg are pointing out.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He criticized the government for being out of touch. That surprised me, considering that the opposition motion would reduce the

cost of heating, but not until April. We all know people do not heat their homes as much in April.

This Conservative Party proposal is contradictory in many ways, and it is disappointing, frankly, because it does not elevate the debate in the House.

Why does my colleague think his party moves motions that offer little in the way of solutions? So many more useful things could be done for our constituents.

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I disagree with her. The carbon tax already applies to petroleum products for households and consumers in Ontario and other parts of our country.

• (1550)

[*English*]

The carbon tax is already in place and the figures I quoted were not for the increase that is slated to come in on April 1 of next year. They are for the carbon tax that is already in place and has been in place for a number of years that was increased on April 1 of this year.

These are the costs households are facing this coming winter. We are calling on the government to provide relief to these households, as many other major economy governments have done and cut the taxes on these fuels so that households will not face either freezing in the dark this winter or potential bankruptcy.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, definitely people are worried about upcoming heating bills.

My question for the member is about fair taxation. Does the member believe there is a lot of work to do to close the loopholes here in Canada for the ultrarich and corporations that are making outsized profits during this pandemic?

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, one of the things we can do to help disparity in this country is to reduce the tax burden on the most vulnerable households, many of whom live in rural Atlantic Canada and rural Ontario, many of them in older housing stock that was built before 1980 that are facing extraordinarily high heating bills this winter.

I think that would be a good place to start, and I encourage all members of the House to vote for the motion in front of us.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate because this directly affects Canadians. If there is one thing on the minds of every Canadian family from coast to coast to coast, from British Columbia, to Manitoba, to Quebec, to Newfoundland or the Far North, it is inflation.

Business of Supply

Unfortunately, things are not really getting better. The most recent figures show inflation hovering around 7%. That means a 7% increase in the general cost of just about everything. The area where inflation is hitting the hardest, where it is most directly and acutely affecting every Canadian family, is the cost of food. If there is one part of the budget that cannot really be cut, it is food, because it is essential.

I am laughing, but I do not find it funny, because Canadian families are really struggling. According to the latest figures, food prices have risen by more than 11.4%. These are goods that are considered essential, such as cereal products, which have risen by 18%, coffee, by 16.4%, bread, a basic product, by 15%, and fresh fruit, by 13%. Even more dramatically, the price of pasta has risen by 36% and, for those who like it, peanut butter, by 42%. With a 42% increase, I doubt anyone will want to try it. The reality for all Canadians is that inflation is skyrocketing.

It is important to understand that one of the things that is driving food prices up is the cost of shipping. Food does not fall from the sky. It must be transported. As we know, most products are transported by truck, and most trucks run on gas. This Liberal government's carbon tax is taking its toll. If the Liberal carbon tax were having any impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, we could call it a success, but that is not the case. The government has never met any of its targets for combatting or reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is not working.

It is now the end of October, and it is starting to get cold. The Canadian winter is coming. Everyone in Canada knows that we use more heat in winter. Fully 3.8 million Canadians, or one in 10, use propane or traditional fuels such as oil. This affects a lot of people. When transportation is directly involved, it impacts heating and food. That is why the government must implement good, positive and constructive measures to tackle the problem of inflation.

This government is a little bit difficult to follow. Being the finance minister is no small role, yet we are increasingly seeing the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance beginning to act as the prime minister, the foreign affairs minister, the natural resources minister and the environment minister. In short, she is taking on all the roles and speaking to groups all over the world. That is how the government finds out what its new finance policy is. Even worse, the finance minister is completely contradicting the government's record. Today, she stated that her government's policies have had an impact on inflation. Unfortunately, she is right about that.

It is unfortunate because we have been saying for years that the Liberal government's policies have fuelled the inflation that is now hitting Canadians. When members talk about inflation, they often say that it is affecting the whole world. However, I would point out that inflation does not happen overnight. There are situations that fuel inflation, and this government has been demonstrating that for seven years and one day. The election was seven years ago. That is when this government was elected.

Let us not forget the big campaign promise that the government made about public finances in 2015. It said it would run three modest deficits and then achieve a zero deficit in 2019. What actually happened during that first term? It was three major deficits, followed by a fourth deficit.

• (1555)

That is the track record of this government, which got elected by promising to run three small deficits and then a zero deficit. That did not happen. On the contrary, the government increased the debt by over \$100 million.

When the pandemic hit, the government started handing out money like drinks at an open bar. We understand that crises can occur. When we were in office in 2008, we expected that there might be deficits but that they would only be temporary. Most importantly, in the wake of the 2008, 2009 and 2010 crisis, our government implemented a plan to balance the budget, and that plan worked. The fact remains that, in 2015, we were the first G7 country to get back on our feet after the financial crisis of 2008, 2009 and 2010. We led the pack in terms of countries that weathered the crisis best. Today, we are at the back of the pack when it comes to this government's management of the public purse.

The deficits the government ran because of the pandemic were to be expected, but that is not the case for the enormous deficits this government decided to rack up. It added \$500 billion to the debt. Some will say that these deficits were due to the pandemic, but \$200 billion of that amount was not COVID-19 related. We must therefore be wary when the Liberals say that the deficits are due to COVID-19, because that is not the case.

We can do a very detailed review of all the government's measures and its out-of-control spending. The latest financial disaster is ArriveCAN, a major hassle for just about everyone in Canada on top of not producing the desired results. We want to take a close look at why so many tens of millions of dollars were spent on something that never worked and could have been developed for a fraction of the price.

This government's track record includes over half a trillion dollars in accumulated debt. Of that, over \$100 billion predates COVID-19, and over \$200 billion has nothing to do with COVID-19. Now we have to deal with it.

What is the government's plan to try to curb inflation or reduce its impact on Canadians? Unfortunately, it does not have one. Worse still, it refuses to temper its greedy desire to raise taxes, which is the wrong thing to do. I realize that when inflation is high and taxes are kept at the same rate, it can be very profitable for a government. As people pay higher prices, the tax is obviously higher. The amount of money that the government takes in is much higher than it would normally be. While the government is lining its pockets, Canadians are having their pockets picked because of rampant inflation and a government that refuses to cut taxes.

Business of Supply

There are two things that should be noted about this government. Personally, I like to compare myself to the best. Let us compare Canada's current Liberal government to the other G7 countries, which are the most industrialized countries, the best countries in the world. Unfortunately, the Canadian government is the only G7 government that has not cut taxes. The other six countries have done so.

Even the Prime Minister's close friend, President Biden, lowered certain taxes. Every country on the planet wanted to provide relief to taxpayers. Only Canadians, who are living under the yoke of this Liberal government, are not getting any relief. Canada is the only G7 country to have raised taxes on fuel, but this is not producing the desired results, in other words lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Worse yet, it is increasing the burden on the citizens.

That is the reason for today's runaway inflation, which is affecting the lives of every Canadian. When the price of traditional energy is directly affected, that directly affects the price of transportation, heating and food. These are necessities for Canadians, who live a big country and who need to eat, get around, and heat their homes. The government is maintaining the Liberal carbon tax and the planned increase on April 1, but that is not the right approach to solve the climate problems, much less to help Canadians who are dealing with the inflationary crisis that is hurting all families right now.

• (1600)

[English]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the member opposite is talking about tax relief for Canadians, does he consider a doubling of the GST credit tax relief? If not, what is it?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague's question. The point is that when we talk about tax breaks, we talk about real tax breaks.

For many weeks, if not for many months or even a full year, we have asked the government to lower the taxes in this country. It is not because we are good guys on this side of the House, but because we are actual citizens and we understand. More than that, everybody in the world is doing this.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, each and every country in the G7 has lowered taxes, except the Canadian government. Shame on them.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill that she had an opportunity to ask a question. She does not have an opportunity to do a rebuttal, unless it is through questions and comments.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank our colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for his speech. I know that he is also the environment critic, so I would like to ask him a rather simple question.

If there is one price that keeps going up and down, it is the price of fossil fuels. If there is one thing that is always changing, that is chronically unstable, it is the price of fossil fuels. Does my colleague agree that we must reduce our dependency on fossil fuels?

I fully realize that a transition will not take place overnight, so not everyone is going to lose their jobs, but we need a plan to reduce our dependency, and the sooner the better.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for his question. Of course we are in favour of that. The entire world agrees that climate change is real and that we need an energy transition. We have been saying that for years too. However, we need to find the right approach.

As a Canadian, I will never understand why we are sending hundreds of millions of dollars to other countries when we have that traditional energy here at home. In Quebec, where I am proud to live and pay my taxes, we see that, year after year, 35%, 40% or 45% of the oil we use comes from Texas. I am uncomfortable with that as a Canadian.

Perhaps it does not bother some people to send hundreds of millions of dollars to Texas, and that is their call. I, for one, would rather keep that money here in Quebec. I do not support the Bloc Québécois, but I certainly do not support Texas.

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, the environment critic on the Conservative bench.

I want to frame this question with a very important context. When we are taking a solution from one emergency, which is the climate emergency, to try to address another emergency, my recommendation to the member is that we can actually do both.

The New Democratic Party has tabled an amendment to the Conservative motion that would take GST off home heating, something the New Democrats have fought for for a long time. If the member truly wants to ensure that a lower cost of living for Canadians is achieved and we actually get a result for Canadians, would he accept our amendment to ensure we get GST off home heating?

• (1605)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be the environment and climate change critic, or shadow cabinet minister. I am very confident in the mandate that my leader gave to me. As a Canadian and Québécois, I am so proud to address this issue.

Business of Supply

For years we have been asking the government to lower taxes. We could not believe it when we realized a few months that the government was still keeping the plan to raise taxes not once, not twice but three times, tripling the Liberal carbon tax on April 1. If the government is serious about helping all Canadian families, it will scrap the target to triple the Liberal carbon tax.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to today's opposition motion put forward by the member for Calgary Forest Lawn. I will be sharing my time with the member for St. Catharines.

This motion proposes to exempt carbon pricing from some fuels based on their targeted purpose on the premise that affordability and fighting climate change are mutually exclusive. From the outset, I want to make it clear that this is a false premise and I reject it. The environment and the economy go hand in hand, and one good example of this is the price on pollution.

We know that the price on pollution has reduced carbon intensity in our economy since it was first introduced, and without it, our emissions would have been going up more than they have been. We know that the price on pollution is a market mechanism and is one of the most efficient ways to reduce carbon. It is widely held as the best way to do this from economists worldwide and has been instituted by many governments. We also know that this is a revenue-neutral price on pollution and that the money given back to Canadians who pay for it, for the most part, offsets any additional costs they incur.

We have been targeting our relief to Canadians who need it most. A blanket exemption of the price on pollution for all Canadians would provide relief to Canadians who need it and to Canadians who can perhaps afford it. All Canadians should be doing their part to reduce pollution. I believe we are doing that, and we are compensating those who can afford it least by returning this money, which is paid through the climate action incentive.

Canadians in provinces where this plan is in place have received a cheque. In Ontario, they would have received it starting last Friday from the climate action incentive. It gave them much-needed money at this time. The money they will be receiving back will be in excess of what they are contributing, if they are taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint. It is this price signal that is so important for reaching our goals.

We all know that we have had inflationary periods over the past and that commodity prices rise and fall. We have seen this happening for many reasons. The global impacts of the war on Ukraine, of the post-COVID economy and of so much more have hit people around the world. This will happen again, and while we know it is causing challenges for many Canadians and we are providing programs and incentives that are targeting the Canadians who need help the most, we are also aware that the climate crisis is not going away.

We as a government have a commitment to Canadians. We have a commitment to businesses that are investing in clean tech. We have a commitment to Canadians, who are trying to make choices to reduce their carbon footprint, to maintain this price on pollution and not continually introduce waivers and exemptions along the

way. They rely on our commitment to make investments. We need to continue to do that. If we want Canadian businesses to invest in clean energy and want Canadian businesses to invest in clean tech, we cannot go back and forth and say today it is on and tomorrow it is off.

The Progressive Conservative Party used to be a party of business. It understood economics. I am really dismayed to see how the CPC has changed its bend. Now its math is even off. The price on pollution will be increasing from \$50 a tonne to \$65 a tonne on April 1, 2023. For most of Canada, that is after the coldest winter months, and in the math that I learned, that is not a doubling, a tripling or even a 35% rise in the price on pollution. I am not sure where the Conservatives are getting their economic or math abilities these days, but clearly they are not doing it themselves.

To go back to the price on pollution and the need for it, we often talk about what it costs Canadians and the cost of a price on pollution, but we do not often talk about what it costs us if we do not do this. What does it cost us if we do not take action to fight climate change?

● (1610)

Those costs are significant. We have seen them recently on the east coast with hurricane Fiona. We saw them on the west coast with atmospheric rivers, which none of us had heard of before but we now have in our vocabulary. These costs are significant. It is estimated that they are now \$1.9 billion a year.

Those costs and the effects they have on Canadians' day-to-day living, on small businesses, on the agricultural manufacturing sector, on farms, on so many people are real costs. They include the cost of insurance going up, the flooding of homes and the supply chains that are being affected, which ultimately affects inflation. These things are happening because of the climate crisis and because we are not doing enough.

Therefore, in addition to the price on pollution, we have introduced other programs to try to expedite that change, because we know we have not met some of our targets. However, the price on pollution is effective and we have seen that because the intensity of carbon emissions has gone down. We cannot be short-sighted in this House. We cannot just be focused on the next six months. We have to look at the long term and do things for Canadians, both to build a stronger economy and to help Canadians with affordability while at the same fighting climate change.

Business of Supply

I am proud that our government is doing that. We are targeting support because we are cognizant of the effects of widespread spending on inflation. We are trying not to put in place a measure that all Canadians get. We are trying to put in a measure that Canadians who need it most would benefit from. Taking the price on pollution off of heating oil and propane at this time would benefit all Canadians who use that fuel. I use that fuel in my home and I am among the many Canadians who do not need that break currently.

Let us focus on Canadians who need it most. Unlike Conservative policy with the Canada child care benefit, which was given to millionaires, we changed that and gave it to the people who need it most. That is what we have to do with our dollars now: focus on those who are really suffering and try to help all Canadians through other programs that we have put in place.

We have one of the most ambitious programs to address climate change and we know that other countries around the world are joining us. In fact, one of the premises in the preamble of this motion is that we are the only country that has increased the price on pollution during this period, and that is not true. In Canada, we are doing it in a very orderly fashion, incrementally by \$10 a year and \$15 a year going forward. Germany, for example, put a price on pollution of \$25 a tonne in 2021. It will be going up to over \$55 a tonne in one fell swoop. That is not what we chose to do. We chose to do it incrementally and consistently, so that people knew what was going to happen, they could adjust to those price increases and it would allow businesses to respond accordingly.

I know that Canadians from coast to coast to coast recognize that we need a government with a real plan of action, including the very effective market mechanism of the price on pollution. It is not sufficient, so we are moving forward with that. We are sticking with it while offering support to Canadians who need it most now. We will continue to do that and show that a green economy and green future go together. Let us keep fighting climate change while supporting Canadians.

• (1615)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, again I find it very interesting that real challenges being faced specifically by Atlantic Canadians and the cost of living crisis faced by so many are being dismissed by members of the government and also other left-leaning parties in this place. It is the definition of “elitism” to suggest that it is okay for us to raise prices as long as it is incrementally breaking people's banks just a little at a time. That is what the Liberals are suggesting.

The Prime Minister was elected in 2015 on the promise that he would never go above \$50 a tonne. He promised that until it was learned through a slip of the tongue by his former environment minister that it was actually going up to \$170 a tonne and some reports would suggest that it may go up to \$1,000 a tonne.

Are the Liberals planning to continue to flip-flop and incrementally break Canadians at the bank?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, there have been two elections since 2015, just to remind the hon. member opposite. Canadians have chosen to return us with our climate plan, which they see as a real plan, as opposed to the flip-flopping on the Con-

servative side, which, at some points, wants a price on pollution and then changes to not having a price on pollution and then goes back to, perhaps, a price on pollution. I am not sure where they are now. One member here seems to support it while the leader does not.

If he could clarify that for me, that would be great but, no, we are not flip-flopping. We are staying consistent in fighting climate change and we will continue to do that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, once again, I would like to acknowledge my colleague who sits with me on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and whom I hold in high regard.

We must work to wean ourselves off oil, even if that thought gives some people hives. There are several ways to move away from oil, and the tax on pollution is one of them, but there is also the issue of energy efficiency. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

[*English*]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite, with whom I enjoy serving on the environment committee very much.

I agree with you 100%. We know that we—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to ask the hon. member to address questions and comments through the Chair. It is not the first time.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I do believe that we have to reduce reliance on fossil fuels for many reasons. Climate is, of course, one of them, but there is also the ups and downs in the commodity price, which has caused so much difficulty for Canadians in affording this.

Certainly, we will continue to do that. We have to also look, though, at efficiency in heating homes. That is why we have the greener homes grant. We also need to look at efficiency in new buildings. As we are increasing our housing stock, we have to make sure that homes are being built with greater efficiency, so that home heating costs are not as great and we do not have to rely on propane and heating oil.

Yes, I agree with the member opposite. I also know that there is a transition and while we are doing that, we have to ensure that our oil and gas sector is the cleanest in the world. Continuing to put in mechanisms during that transition is equally important.

Business of Supply

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to start by recognizing that the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill is one of the strongest voices for the environment in the governing party caucus. She was also being honest in saying that the Liberal Party has not been able to meet the climate targets that have been set so far.

One of the reasons why that is the case is that there has been a continued increase in subsidies to the very sector most responsible for the crisis we are in, to the tune of tens of billions of dollars. Can she comment on what she could do to help move away from further increasing, for example, tax credits to carbon capture and storage, to the tune of \$8.6 billion?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's efforts on moving forward to combat climate change as well.

What I would like to say to that is that we have made a commitment to eliminate all fossil fuel subsidies and we are moving in that direction. I believe that we can do more and that we should do more to support renewable energy and to make that our primary focus. We know that fossil fuels will continue to be produced in Canada as we make the transition and that there are certain non-combustible uses that may remain. We need to make sure that we are supporting wind energy, solar and green hydrogen, and all of these other areas equally.

• (1620)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to speak to this motion. I truly believe it comes from a good place in the Conservative Party. There are many members all throughout this House who are concerned about the rising cost of living, the costs our constituents face on a daily basis. I think that is where this motion comes from, this genuine concern.

To all the members from the class of 2015, happy anniversary; it has been seven years. We can look back at all of the measures we have put in place on the cost of living, even starting from one of the first things we did, which was to raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% so we could cut them for everyone else. We have the Canada child benefit, \$10-a-day day care, dental care and rental supports, which the Conservative Party opposes. Whenever we are there to offer tax relief, the Conservative Party has stood up and said absolutely not.

We did raise taxes on the wealthiest 1%. The Conservatives raised concerns about raising taxes. We raised them on the wealthiest individuals in this country and the Conservatives voted against it. It is a little rich, at this point, that they are starting to take interest. It is great that they are taking interest in the cost of living crisis. I really hope they change their minds on the current government initiatives before us, especially dental care.

Every member of this House gets subsidized dental care from the taxpayer. It is shocking to see Conservative members of the House get up and say that 30% of people do not have access to dental care and that is okay. It is shocking that they are able to stand in this place and speak about three out of 10 of their constituents and say they do not deserve dental care, but we do.

The one thing that is interesting in this entire debate on the cost of living, and I have not heard a Conservative member speak to it yet, is the cost of climate change. Just in the past seven years that many members have been sitting in this place, we have seen devastating forest fires, floods in British Columbia, droughts in the Prairies and intense storms throughout Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

There is no movement. Actually, that is probably not true. There is movement in the Conservative Party on a climate plan, but it is backwards. I was pleasantly surprised as parliamentary secretary to the minister of environment and climate change when the Conservatives brought out a price on pollution. I said this is a positive thing for the country, even though I did not agree with how they were going to implement it. It was a positive thing for the country that ever major party going into the election acknowledged that pollution is bad and we should price pollution. There has been a change to that. Every member here from the Conservative Party ran on carbon tax.

It is true. We are hearing some heckles that some of them did not and I guess they took matters into their own hands under the Reform Act and dealt with the source of the carbon tax, which was the hon. member for Durham, who stood up and said Canadians wanted answers on pollution. They are worried about their kids. I am worried for my kids.

I am sure members are coming from that place where they are worried about their constituents, but I do not see them worried down the road. They do not seem to be worried about the increase in storms. They talk about the rising cost of food and that is a real worry for Canadians across the country, which should be raised, but they never once link it back to climate change. There are incredible droughts in the United States and in the Prairies, or the storm in Florida and how it is going to impact citrus prices. All of these things are connected and are going to increase the costs that we see every day. How will many of the constituents they have who have experienced extreme weather be able to afford insurance on their homes if they live near a river or the ocean?

Business of Supply

• (1625)

We hear Conservative leaders just dismiss that. There is no vision forward. There is no look ahead to ask, “What should we be looking at for our kids and for our grandkids?” It has always been heard back to a price on pollution. Maybe there is a better plan out there by the Conservative Party to address climate change, but there is none. There is zero plan. There was a plan; now there is none. I am sure something will come out in the future. We have seen now three elections with an unserious plan for climate change, but Canadians are genuinely concerned because they can see it with their own eyes. I talk to my constituents. It does not rain the same anymore where I live.

Every member of the House can see with their own eyes how the weather is different, how trends are changing and how the cost of that is impacting our constituents in every riding of this country. However, when the members of the Conservative Party talk about the cost of living, they never mention climate change as part of it. We can forget about the fact that there is a rebate on the price on pollution. The Conservatives seem to ignore that and forget about that every day. It is very convenient.

They never even talk about the price of climate change. What is the cost to taxpayers to help people in Atlantic Canada? We will be there for them. What is the cost in British Columbia with floods? What was the cost in Alberta, to taxpayers, of fires? What is the cost to Canadian homes and households if there is a drought in the Prairies, or if there is a drought elsewhere, and the price of food goes up?

If we are going to have a serious discussion about the cost of living, climate change needs to be part of that, but we see, time and time again, the Conservative Party being unserious about science. We saw it on vaccines. We have seen it now again on climate change. It has been disappointing to be here in this House and see it. Some members, including the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent who just spoke, say that climate change is a real thing. That is great. I know the Conservative Party itself voted that down in its last policy meeting. However, why is there no action? Why are those members not being heard by the leadership to say that we need to take serious action on the climate?

My friend, the hon. member from Kingston, talked about a previous Conservative government in the 1980s that exercised global leadership in North America and helped institute a price on pollution. At times, it seems the hon. leader of the Conservative Party likes to engage in Thatcherism. I do not have a lot of positive things to say about that, but one of the things that—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, we hear heckles that some of them like Margaret Thatcher, which is great. However, the one thing they do not like is that she warned the world early on that carbon dioxide was a problem, and Britain is now further ahead than Canada.

It is shocking, this cognitive dissonance that is going on in the Conservative Party. They like Margaret Thatcher, but they do not like this one thing she talked about. They like science, sort of, but they do not necessarily like vaccines. They are not going to talk

about real solutions on climate change, and they do not care about the next generation or the generation after that.

I would take this motion a bit more seriously if there were actually a genuine plan and if there were something coming forward. It is very easy to feed on people's fears and anxieties, especially at a time like now, which is a time of extreme uncertainty, war and environmental turmoil, but the Conservatives offer nothing. They offer nothing in this place, except fear.

We have brought forward solutions. We have brought forward real solutions to the environmental climate crisis. Maybe some day they will take it seriously, but after three elections, Canadians have seen that the Conservative Party of Canada does not take environmental climate change seriously and that is why the Conservatives are probably going to stay on that side of the House, unless they come to the table and address Canadians properly and talk about affordability in a real way and that means addressing climate change.

• (1630)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member across the way. It was a bit of a vitriol on my colleagues here and our stance on climate and the environment, which I think is much more progressive than what I have seen on that side of the House, because we are actually trying to come to solutions. However, solutions are one thing and talking about pretending to be serious is something else. I am going to catch him on this because he has failed every step he has made as far as reducing emissions goes. When we talk about being serious, I would like him to think seriously. I would like to go back to where the whole concept of carbon pricing started. It was advanced by a gentleman named William Nordhaus who won a Nobel Prize for it. A carbon tax was effectively one way of doing it.

Let us take a look at how the current government talks about the carbon tax it has. It has to throw regulations on it, including the clean fuel standard, the clean electricity standard and numerous others. It is atrocious. If it is thinking about a market mechanism, this is not a market mechanism. It is a tax. Can the member address that?

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, as the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled, this is not a tax. It is a price on pollution that is returned back to Canadians.

The hon. member talked about solutions at the beginning of his question and then rambled on about nothing. Never do I hear a Conservative member stand up in this place and offer anything concrete, anything substantive on climate change. There is nothing, time after time, day after day, year after year, from any of them. They are laughing over there and smiling like this is some kind of joke that our children are going to live through, their children are going to live through and our grandchildren are going to live through. They do not care.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for his speech. However, anger is a not a good guide when it comes to this subject.

We are talking about inflation and a suggestion that was made by the Conservative Party. I would like to know what my colleague opposite sees as alternative solutions for increasing seniors' purchasing power.

What about making the economy more resilient, for example, by rebuilding the supply chain, reducing our dependence on oil or taking action to address the labour shortage?

What other proposals does my colleague have?

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, I think there were six questions bundled up in there, and I do not think I have enough time in my 30 seconds to respond to that.

Even just looking at seniors with respect to the GST tax credit and rental supports, that is something that seniors and low-income seniors will benefit from. We have raised the OAS. We have raised the guaranteed income supplement. We have been there for seniors. The Conservatives are talking about the cost of living, but after the Conservative government increased the age people can collect OAS and GIS to 67, we lowered it back down. It did not increase the age its members could collect their pensions. They just increased it for seniors.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, what I believe is an important piece to this, which was mentioned by the Conservative bench and I want to give it credit for that, is the fact that the current Liberal government has increased the production of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases with its plan. However, what we are also seeing on the other end is that its budgets are continuing to pad the pockets of rich big oil and making sure they can continue to increase production. These two are connected.

When will the current government come clean and actually do the work?

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, with respect to subsidies, I know the previous Liberal member discussed our plan on fossil fuel subsidies, but it is interesting that the New Democrats in the last Parliament voted in favour of one of those increases, which was to clean up abandoned wells to help address the devastating economic impacts of oil and gas and the companies that have abandoned those oil and gas wells, and to put people back to work. Now, a year later, they are saying that they did not mean it when they voted for it. Let us have a serious discussion. The New Democrats were in favour of it before, and they are against it now.

• (1635)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my friend, the hon. member for Lakeland.

It is honour to once again rise on behalf of the people of Thornhill and bring their voices to Ottawa. I am proud to stand in this place on today's opposition motion from the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn, our new finance critic.

Today's motion could not come at a more opportune time. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but winter is coming and it gets cold in this country. As it gets colder, Canadians are firing up their home

Business of Supply

furnaces to keep themselves warm. For many this year, the decision to turn on the heat will not be as easy as flicking a switch. Here is why.

Most Canadians who pay for natural gas or electricity can expect their bills will rise by 50% to 100% on average this winter. I am going to say that again: The cost of natural gas or electricity will rise between 50% and 100%. There are some households that are going to pay up to \$3,000 this winter in some parts of this country. Where would a family find \$3,000? Where would a senior find \$3,000 to pay for it?

Knowing all of this, the government continues to push its plan to triple the carbon tax on seniors for the crime of heating their homes in February. It continues to push its plan to triple the carbon tax on families for the crime of heating their homes in February. The government continues to push its plan to triple the carbon tax on every single Canadian, wherever they live, whatever their walk of life, for the crime of heating their homes in February in Canada.

The price of furnace oil hit \$1.984 in Halifax last week. That has gone up about 30¢. It is not a luxury to heat one's home in Canada in the winter months, yet the government wants to punish people for doing it. It calls them polluters, seniors living in this country. Forty per cent of Atlantic Canadians are living in energy poverty, yet the government wants to hit them with a tax hike. They are not polluters.

The debate today suggests that members of the House do not agree, and if Liberals are not going to back down on their plan to triple the tax, would they at least have the compassion to exempt home heating from a tax hike? Why would they not at least do that? Why would they not at least consider that?

The government would say that the price of gas is out of its control, that the reasons are international and unpredictable, and that the government is a bystander in this country. It seems it has forgotten it is the governing party, while Canadians from coast to coast are being punished by the influences that are a product of the government's own decision-making. There is an inflation crisis in this country, and the government is fuelling that crisis.

The Liberals had an epiphany today. They have said they are going to solve this crisis. How do we trust a government that has created the crisis to now solve the crisis? The Governor of the Bank of Canada even agrees that policies of the government contributed to increased inflation. We would not know it from those opposite who claim that it could not possibly be true, that nothing happening today is happening because of their decisions. They are bystanders in their own government, and we are all just watching the show. Everything is outside of their control, at least when it is convenient.

Business of Supply

We have 40-year highs of inflation. People are struggling just to afford the basics: food, gas, electricity, a home. Nearly 50% of people in this country are within \$200 of insolvency. More Canadians than ever before are using food banks. We are an advanced economy. This is Canada. They are using food banks at a rate 20% higher. The sky-high costs of home heating this winter will be too much for too many Canadians, and we do not have to wait.

Everyone except my hon. colleagues on the other side are asking why. Why has it gotten so out of control? Why is a basic necessity of life so unaffordable? Why is it getting harder and harder to afford anything, let alone to get ahead? If we listen to any of the answers from the government, we would hear talk about international phenomenon and foreign wars, along with empty words and slogans about failed programs that only drive up the cost of living and add more debt that the next generation will have to pay.

● (1640)

The Liberals talk about our performance in the G7 as though it is something to marvel at. Here is a fact: Our country has the worst projected GDP growth of any advanced economy. It is last, and it is on page 25 of their own budget document, in last place. Enough with the talking points and the excuses. We know what the real answer is. The deliberate actions of this government are driving up the cost of everything in this country, and ignoring it has become an embarrassing defence of the indefensible.

The Liberals gave us a tax plan disguised as an environment plan, which has been directly cited for higher energy prices. The carbon tax is working so well that it has already been raised three times, yet we are still no closer to meeting any single environmental target, and emissions have gone up. There is no member in the House who can say that we raised taxes on Canadians and emissions went down because it did not happen. We have not hit a single target.

Today, we have the opportunity to give Canadians a break and maintain the Liberals' record of not hitting a single target. They are not going to do it if we cut the carbon tax. They did not do it with the carbon tax, and they are not going to do it if we raise the carbon tax. Nobody on the other side can tell me how high the carbon tax has to go for them to hit a single target. Not one of those members can answer that question.

Canada is the only country in the G7 that has raised fuel taxes during a period of record-high inflation, which is another fact. Canada raised taxes when more than 50 other countries, other governments worldwide, provided tax relief to ease the burden of inflation at this time. What do other countries know that we do not?

We have so many natural resources in this country, and that includes vast reserves of oil and natural gas. Instead of promoting production here in Canada, lowering prices and creating good-paying jobs, we are chasing opportunity out of our country with more red tape, regulations and policies that make it clear to job creators that they just might be more valued somewhere else.

When I say that everybody knows about the Canadian cost of living crisis, that includes the Prime Minister and the members on his front bench. They have admitted that prices are out of control, and they recognize that people are having trouble paying their bills. On

Monday, the Minister of Finance said that times are only going to get tougher, and we know that it is due to a government failure to control the drivers of inflation. They are the ones doing it.

Even though Liberals know that Canadians are struggling, they are serving up more punishing policies to go along with the freezing cold temperatures that we are about to have. They are going to triple the carbon tax. The government has no plan to support our domestic oil and gas industry, and it is counting on the path of reckless government spending that will drive up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay.

Before members of the House disparage the oil and gas industry more than they already have today, I will remind everyone that Canadian oil and gas has the highest ESG rating of anywhere in the world, and we cannot build a single electric car without it. Oil and gas has been the single driver and contributor to our GDP, and that is probably why page 25 of this budget says that we have the worst projected growth in the G7, and among advanced economies.

It will become clear to Canadians soon that rising prices on food and transportation, and the 100% increases on home heating, will be directly attributed to burdening Canadians with a rising carbon tax and restricting resource development in the name of an ideological crusade that does not even reduce emissions. Let that sink in. Not a single target has been hit.

Canadians know that this is not the right path, and even the Liberals know it. The Liberal premier of Newfoundland said that the Prime Minister's policies are imposing "considerable economic hardship and stress".

The Liberals have an opportunity to exempt home heating from their new taxes. It is time for the government to stand up for ordinary Canadians, whom they used to represent, and the middle class it promised to help. It is time for the government to give Canadians a break, and give them back control over their lives and their thermostats.

● (1645)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have loved avoiding three simple facts throughout this debate.

The first is that climate change is real and carbon pricing works. I appreciated the note about William Nordhaus and his Nobel Prize explaining just that.

Business of Supply

The second is that the price on pollution is not a tax. When the Conservatives say “fuel taxes”, they are saying the Supreme Court of Canada wrong. It is not a tax. It is a rebate program, and it helps Canadians. Canadians have just received their climate action incentive payments, which is something the Conservatives like to avoid talking about.

The third is that we are delivering on dental care and rental supports, and the Conservatives are going to vote against them. By all accounts, they do not want to help lower-income kids get their teeth fixed. They do not want to see \$500 put into the pockets of people who are stressed out about paying their rent.

Why is it that the Conservatives are so focused on going back to a time when they were focused on sending cheques to millionaires, making tax breaks for the wealthy and driving Canadians further and further into debt, just as they did when they were in power?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, more than 60% of Canadians in Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba pay more in carbon taxes than they receive back. That is what the Parliamentary Budget Officer actually—

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: That is wrong.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. parliamentary secretary there is no opportunity for rebuttal unless it is through another question or comment.

I will allow the hon. member for Thornhill to answer without any further interruption.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, perhaps the member can take that up with the Parliamentary Budget Officer. This carbon tax has not hit a single environmental target. It has not reduced emissions. It started at \$30, and then it went to \$40. It is now \$50, going to \$170. At what point are they going to stop this madness?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

What are her thoughts on the statement by the European Central Bank's chief economist about how boosting the most vulnerable people's purchasing power is the best way to fight this round of inflation, and how this policy should be paid for through redistribution, which means drastically increasing taxes on the very rich?

Do she and her party agree with this principle?

[*English*]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, more than 50 countries, including those in Europe, which he referenced, have cut fuel taxes or have cut a tax during this period of inflationary pressure. When the government spends money on programs, some of those programs do not hit very many people at all, and that drives the cost of everything else up. We know that. Bank economists here have said that. Without vaporizing all of the money it is giving back to Canadians, on top of the money Canadians are not getting back when they pay more carbon taxes than they get back, it does not matter. It is fuelling an inflation crisis. Everybody knows it.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Thornhill on the role of deputy leader of the opposition.

There are points we can agree on, such as the growth of the reliance on food banks in this country and the need to give Canadians a break. My ask for the member is around the NDP policy to have a GST exemption on home heating bills. Is that something the Conservatives would support?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, it has gotten out of control. The inflation crisis has gotten out of control in this country, and it has been fuelled by the government. We brought a motion to the House to exempt fuel from GST, and NDP members voted against it.

I am surprised to see that, when things have gotten so bad that we are talking about little old ladies in Nova Scotia having to pay \$3,000 to heat their house, they have somehow had a religious moment and they are now going to support it. We are asking the government right now to cut taxes on fuel before the winter. The question is simple. Will they support it or not?

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, when it comes to affordability and the cost of fuel, what is not being discussed here, as it should be, is the reality of the gouging from the oil and gas industry that is contributing to exactly what the member for Thornhill was just mentioning. Would the member for Thornhill and deputy leader of the official opposition comment on the need to address the gouging from the oil and gas sector in the midst of a climate emergency?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, I will address the gouging the government does in the pockets of consumers through its carbon tax. I will say it again. We have the highest ESG rating in the country in our oil and gas industry. One cannot build a single renewable without it, and it has been a driver, the singular highest driver, of our GDP. Now we are projected to have the lowest GDP growth. That is a problem.

● (1650)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my deputy leader for her fiery and steadfast advocacy, not only for people who are struggling to make ends meet but also for the oil and gas industry. That is important to the Canadian economy and everyone in every region.

In December 2019, the Prime Minister broke his promise and announced that he would increase his carbon tax 566% over the level at the time. The Liberals applauded while Conservatives said what it was, which is a tax plan. It is not an environmental one, and it would inevitably cost Canadian families more to heat their homes, get to work and buy groceries. It would literally make everything more expensive for everyone.

Business of Supply

Experts such as former Liberal MP Dan McTeague warned, “the price of the carbon tax on natural gas for home heating will now cost more than the price of the natural gas itself” and that it would “add an increase...of \$900/year to an average residential natural gas bill. This will effectively double most homeowners home heating costs.”

A CBC column even cited the former parliamentary budget office Kevin Page's prediction that the Liberals' irresponsible big spending would create pressure to hike the carbon tax even higher because, of course, it goes into general revenue.

Incredibly, the Liberals have claimed that they will not raise taxes or the cost of living for Canadians. Only two years ago, the Prime Minister was asked if he would raise taxes, and he said, “we are not going to be saddling Canadians with extra costs”.

In 2019, when asked if the Liberals would increase the carbon tax, the then environment minister said, “The plan is not to increase the price post-2022.” Well, it is 2022, and it is clear that these were all empty words, since they are going to triple their carbon tax on everything.

It was not too long ago that the Prime Minister also said, “Whatever approach is chosen, this policy would be revenue-neutral for the federal government. All revenues generated under this system would stay in the province or territory where they are generated.” The problem with that claim is that this is not true either.

GST is charged on top of the carbon tax and the government's own balance sheet shows that revenue is almost a quarter of a billion dollars. As Conservatives warned repeatedly, as it did with inflation, the carbon tax is not revenue-neutral, since the government pockets hundreds of millions of dollars at the expense of Canadians.

Most Canadians actually do not get back more than what they pay in federal carbon tax. Rebates do not and will never cover the direct and indirect cost hikes on everything caused by the carbon tax. For families in Ontario, Manitoba, Yukon, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Nunavut, the fuel charge backstop costs them more than they get back. That is the truth. After it is all said and done, the carbon tax costs households more than \$1,100 in Manitoba, almost \$1,500 in Ontario and Saskatchewan, and more than \$2,000 in Alberta.

Of course, the carbon tax, as we have always warned, has a disproportionate impact on rural, remote and low-income Canadians. Whereas farmers get the same rebates as urban Canadians, they also pay tens of thousands of dollars a year more in additional carbon tax costs.

Grain Farmers of Ontario, for example, says that it will cost more than \$36,000 a year on the average 800-acre farm, not including the costs of heating their homes and their barns, which, of course, already costs rural and remote Canadians more in the first place. A second carbon tax is coming too. Energy and industrial policy experts report that it will cost every Canadian almost \$1,300 more, and it will hike household energy costs by 2.2% to 6.5% with the Liberal fuel standard.

Conservatives have heard loud and clear from Canadians the disastrous toll of the Liberal carbon tax on their ability to afford to make ends meet and to purchase basic necessities such as gas, groceries and home heating. This Conservative motion asks for real, tangible and immediate action. It is asking for a way to ease the government-imposed burden on Canadians right now, to cancel the carbon tax on all home heating fuels.

Why? As Conservatives have had to say over and over, home heating is not a luxury in Canada. It is just ridiculous to have to remind the NDP-Liberal costly coalition that Canada gets really cold during the winter. The average temperature in Atlantic Canada is always below zero. In Nunavut, it ranges from -15°C to -40°C.

On my farm in Lakeland, it is an average -15°C, but let me tell the members, we sure learned last December that we better calve later in the spring when, for about three weeks, the temperature hovered around -50°C, and it was lower at night. It is not an exaggeration to say that Canadians will literally freeze if they cannot afford the cost of home heating, yet the Liberals just keep driving it up.

In eastern Canada, people have to rely on heating oil, with 63% of Prince Edward Islanders and 47% of Nova Scotians using it to heat their homes.

● (1655)

Those Atlantic Canadians who have to use oil for home heating will face an average loss of \$900 more a year because of the carbon tax. They also will be disproportionately impacted by the carbon tax 2.0, the Liberal fuel standard. The added costs are enormous. Furnace oil in Newfoundland and Labrador has already increased 54% compared to last year. It is just cruel that the Liberals tried to justify making that even worse and are ignoring the pleas from the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Around 47% of Canadians use natural gas to heat their homes. In Alberta, the average household pays \$312 in carbon tax alone on natural gas. That will go up to more than \$1,200 because of the Liberals' carbon tax hikes.

Ontarians currently pay \$235 in carbon tax on their gas bill. That will triple to \$745. We already know that gas bills have already increased across the country to almost \$1,500 a year and these guys are just going to go ahead and make it worse anyway.

Business of Supply

Propane is used disproportionately by low-income and rural Canadians. It will cost almost \$700 a year more to fill up propane tanks because of the Liberals' costly carbon tax hikes. All these costs are, of course, more intense during colder months. Home heating will double, on average, for Canadians this winter and some will face a 300% increase in their bill.

None of this is a surprise. In 2015, a Senate committee received a submission which clearly outlined the cost of home heating increases that Canadians would pay even at that current carbon tax rate. It predicted more than \$300 a year for Alberta families. It is even more than that today. It predicted \$231 for Ontario families. Today it is \$235.

Canadians are at a breaking point. That is why Conservatives are pushing the Liberals to cancel their plan to triple, triple, triple the carbon tax. The Canadians I represent cannot afford more taxes. Tracy from Vermilion emailed me that over a quarter of her gas bill was carbon tax. She said, "This is gross and unattainable for most Canadians" and it is "completely avoidable and unnecessary." She asked me to fight against this tax that is crippling her family and all Canadians.

Like many of my Conservative colleagues, I have spoken many times about how the Liberal carbon tax is hurting everyone in Lakeland, from young people just getting started to seniors on fixed incomes, but the Liberals have turned a deaf ear to every single one of them. Of course, it is also part of the Prime Minister's anti-Canadian energy agenda, designed deliberately to make oil and gas more expensive to develop and use in Canada.

As the new Conservative leader, the member for Carleton, said recently that while the Prime Minister punishes Canadians for trying to heat their homes and aims to shut down Canada's own world-class, responsible, innovative and transparent energy development, he is obviously just fine with oil and gas, as long as it is not created in Canada and as long as it comes from dirty dictatorships.

Instead of prioritizing Canadian businesses, jobs and paycheques, the Prime Minister killed energy infrastructure that would have ensured Canadian self-sufficiency and energy security, and would have boosted Canadian energy exports to the world. His approach actually supports despotic regimes that do not come anywhere close to Canada's environmental standards and forces Canada to import more than, for example, 70,000 barrels per day of oil from Saudi Arabia and other countries where energy development benefits only an elite wealthy few and is rife with corruption, environmental devastation and horrible working conditions.

While Canadians are freezing in their homes this winter, their tax dollars, because of the Prime Minister, will fund dictator holidays and Putin's war against Ukraine.

Other countries get it. Australia had a carbon tax and then scrapped it because of the detrimental impact on its economy and natural resources. It has a similar economy to Canada, but it is smaller geographically with warmer weather. It is less costly to develop its resources. It is not going back. The biggest oil and gas consumer and producer in the world is the United States. No president has imposed a carbon tax there, but it has actually achieved

meaningful emissions reductions, unlike the Liberal government which has missed every single target it has ever set.

The reality is that Canada is in the midst of a full-blown cost of living crisis caused by the Liberal government. From my northern Alberta riding to Vancouver, to the riding that my friend from Thornhill represents, to Newfoundland, to the north, home heating is not a luxury. It is not a choice; it is a basic necessity. All MPs should support this measure to give relief or I would suggest they turn off the heating in their offices and homes until the summer.

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member emphasizes the degree to which the Conservative Party of today at the national level really does not want anything to do with the price on pollution, even though we have seen a majority of provinces in Canada of all political stripes, whether they are Liberal, New Democrat or Progressive Conservative, and I emphasize "progressive", have recognized that a price on pollution is, in fact, a good thing. Over 100 countries around the world, through the Paris Agreement, have recognized that a price on pollution is a good thing.

The member talked about her constituents. Over 80% of the residents of Winnipeg North are going to receive more money back than they are actually paying into the price on pollution.

When will the Conservative Party get with what Canadians want? That is to see recognition and have a climate policy, something which the Conservative Party does not have today. When will the Conservatives provide that climate policy?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, of course, it was actually the former Conservative government that implemented the polluter pay principle, and what Conservatives are saying is that the proper, affordable, accessible, feasible and real path toward environmental stewardship and lowering emissions is technology and not taxes. This is what is so confusing about the proponents of the Liberal model of carbon tax, who also want to shut down the oil and gas industry at the same time. Among private sector investors in renewable and alternative energy technologies, 75% of that investment in clean tech and innovation comes from traditional oil and gas companies in Canada.

Here is the issue: The Liberals need to justify their policy by showing that it works, but they have not met a single solitary target, so instead they are just being cold-hearted and cruel and are punishing Canadians.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, in her speech, my colleague once again pointed something out, and it is not the first time I have heard it today. Apparently there is such a thing as clean oil, and apparently Canada buys oil from countries run by dictators.

I would just like to point out that, in September 2015, in the middle of an election campaign, Mr. Harper justified the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia, whose human rights abuses are well-known, on the grounds that we needed to put jobs first.

That was just the introduction. My real question is about something else. It seems that Canada is exporting more clean tech. That generates lots of jobs. Many of our companies are leaders in this field.

Why not talk about clean technology, rather than remain mired in the past with fossil fuels?

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I literally just talked about that in my previous answer 30 seconds before the member asked me that question. I specifically and proactively addressed private sector investments in clean tech and innovation. What I am saying is that it makes no sense to try to shut down the industry, as my colleagues from the Bloc want to do, which is simultaneously the single biggest private sector investor in renewable and alternative energy technologies and is a world-class leader in emissions reductions and innovation.

This is why the Liberals' policies are contradictory. This is why the NDP and the Bloc do not make any sense. They actually want to landlock, keep in the ground and shut down the industry that actually is the biggest investors in the private sector of the very technologies they say they want to come to fruition.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know the member quite well, and I know the member really cares about the cost of living crisis that is facing Albertans. I do too.

The community members I know in Edmonton Griesbach are being hurt by expensive goods. In order to get the "real, tangible" help to Canadians the member mentioned in her speech, would the Conservatives agree to amend the motion to ensure we can actually get something to Canadians? Would they agree to remove the GST from home heating and get that help to Canadians?

● (1705)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I have great respect for the member, and I am proud to represent his friends and relatives in Fishing Lake Métis Settlement in Lakeland.

Here is the reality: In 2019 the Conservatives ran on removing the GST from home heating, but really the solution is just to axe the carbon tax completely instead of that proposal. I would just urge the member of Parliament, since he shares our concerns about the cost of living even though he is propping up the Liberals who are the cause of it, to support our motion today and give that immediate relief to Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, the current inflationary crisis is affecting everyone and putting millions of households in hopeless situations. Families must make agonizing choices to be able to continue making rent or mortgage payments. Many low-income Canadians are cutting back on food and going hungry. The same is true for many middle-class households that are heavily in debt. Such a huge increase in prices, especially for food, energy and housing, creates considerable hardship, and that is not something to take lightly. My thoughts are with the millions of seniors who were already struggling to make ends meet before prices started going up. They are now facing an impossible task, making choices or making cuts to their budgets.

The inflation crisis is one of the most worrisome issues in the world, and I commend those who are trying to address it and find solutions.

As members know, the current increase in prices we are experiencing is essentially a global phenomenon and analysts generally agree that the situation is primarily attributed to a decrease in aggregate supply. The supply chain problem led to a significant drop in supply. It is the same thing with the war in Ukraine. Crop failures due to droughts or floods are also reducing supply in the food sector. Labour shortages, which existed before the pandemic but have gotten worse since, are limiting business activity, leading to a decrease in total supply, and so on.

On the demand side, we have seen more of a change than a significant increase in demand. During the pandemic, people shifted their usual consumer choices to new sectors. Supply was unable to adapt quickly enough, so we saw new price increases and often shortages, resulting from the imbalance.

We are seeing the same type of imbalance in the real estate market, where the construction of new housing is insufficient to meet demand. Inflation in that sector is also being spurred by the labour shortage and the increase in the price of building materials, which is itself explained by the current inflationary situation and the change in consumer habits during the pandemic, not to mention the impact of the war.

Even though the central bank's injection of money into the economy and the government's support to maintain consumer spending during lockdown were more generous than necessary, because they were not always well targeted, the effect of those interventions on the increase in global demand and on prices is generally secondary. The government's actions are not the main reason for the global inflationary crisis.

Unfortunately for us, and especially for those impacted the most by the current rate of inflation, there is no simple solution to a decrease in aggregate supply. The best solution is to support businesses as they adapt to the new reality. It is a long and complicated process, but as I said, even if the effect is not felt immediately, it is the best solution.

Business of Supply

For example, let us look at the labour shortage. The government could provide support for the automation of some economic activities. The government could also change the tax system to entice young retirees who want to remain in the labour market, perhaps with part-time work. The government could provide support for companies that invest in resilience, for example by making decisions that cut their energy consumption. The government could also do this for households, of course. That is the primary solution for addressing the supply side of the issue. Unfortunately, this government is doing very little about it.

It is said that the central bank is well positioned to use monetary policy to counter inflation. The Bank of Canada must ensure that the overall economy is in good shape. To that end, its main policy objective for the past 30 years has been to keep the average annual increase in prices within a range of 1% to 3%. As we know, we are well past the upper limit now.

Although the central bank is extremely well equipped to control inflation when the economy is overheating because of an increase in demand, the situation is very different in the event of a decrease in supply. That is because successively raising its key interest rate does not allow the central bank to influence supply. It simply reduces demand.

In other words, since production is insufficient to meet demand, equilibrium prices rise. All the Bank of Canada can do is lower demand to reduce the price increase. However, at the end of the day, there are not more goods and services available, only less room to manoeuvre and borrow to make consumption or investment choices.

The risk of such a monetary policy is that if we are not in an overheated situation when the policy is implemented, the central bank's action could also slow down the economy or even plunge it into recession.

Again, there is not much that either monetary or fiscal policy can do to respond to a supply crisis. These policies aim to reduce demand in order to lower prices, but they do not allow for increased production in the short term.

• (1710)

I want to reiterate that the best government policy is to support businesses and help them adapt and become more resilient in order to push supply back up, even though that does not happen automatically.

We should also take advantage of the current situation to accelerate the shift to a green economy. We can kill two birds with one stone. The government's response to the current crisis must be tied to the goal of reducing pollution.

I also want to reiterate that we need to avoid falling into the very tempting trap of responding to a decrease in supply by giving everyone money. That kind of policy may appear to meet people's needs, but it will quickly fuel inflation. It is therefore a futile, ineffective policy, especially if it drives society as a whole into debt. It is a good solution, but not for a supply-side crisis. In the same vein, the inflationary crisis should not be an excuse to shirk our much-needed climate change commitments.

I would like to remind the House that the federal carbon tax does not apply to Quebec, which has its own approach using a carbon exchange. I would also like to remind the House that very few households in Quebec heat with oil. They heat mainly with electricity, which is renewable.

Finally, let us not forget that the provinces, such as Newfoundland, are free to set up their own environmental plan and can choose to waive taxes on home heating fuel. Provinces like Newfoundland that are fortunate to have significant hydro power capacity can also offer incentives for people to switch from oil to electric heat.

Finally, with respect to the current inflationary crisis, again, there are no simple or easy solutions. We can help companies pivot. We also have a moral obligation to help the most vulnerable people and the hardest-hit sectors cope. Think of individuals and households with low incomes. Think of seniors who depend on small, non-indexed pensions. Think of sectors that are bearing the brunt of inflation, such as agriculture.

The European Central Bank's chief economist reminded us that a good way to fight inflation is to redistribute wealth rather than go into debt to support households and individuals. This means targeted measures for the less fortunate financed by a special tax on the wealthiest. Let us seriously consider that suggestion. The one thing we must not do is react to the crisis by once again abandoning our efforts to fight climate change.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a reflection on a commitment that was provided by the Conservative Party in the last election. It made a platform commitment that it supported the principles of a price on pollution.

Given the very nature of having a price on pollution, we see a general acceptance in Canada, with the Province of Quebec being an excellent example of that, and see what is happening around the world. Take the Paris Agreement back in 2015. Does the member have any concerns with the official opposition changing its policy position and adopting the belief that there should not be a price on pollution, period?

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I think most members in the House recognize the connection between climate change and human activities. Strong, credible and expeditious commitments are needed.

For the Bloc Québécois, the Paris Agreement is the minimum. We really must not exceed those targets. We know from the natural sciences that, if we do meet them, the effects might be too much, so strong action is required.

Private Members' Business

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[*English*]

The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the division stands deferred until Monday, October 24, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 5:30 p.m. so we can begin private member's hour.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC) moved that Bill S-245, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (granting citizenship to certain Canadians), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill S-245, an act to amend the Citizenship Act (granting citizenship to certain Canadians).

I want to thank the hon. senator from British Columbia, Yonah Martin, who brought forward this important bill. She introduced this originally as Bill S-230 in the last Parliament in the other place to address the lost Canadians whose citizenship was revoked without their knowledge and without warning simply because of the wording in the Citizenship Act.

I am excited to hear from the member for Souris—Moose Mountain, who will be sharing his experience of almost being a lost

Canadian. If he chooses to do so, maybe he can share a picture of the card he carries around.

While Bill S-230 passed unanimously through the other place in the 43rd Parliament, the unnecessary and selfish election of 2021 killed the bill before it could get to first reading here. That is why I was happy and hopeful to see it pass unanimously once again in the Senate and reach second reading here in this place.

I want to thank Senator Martin for her continued work on this file, along with former Senate Speaker the hon. Noël Kinsella and former senators David Tkachuk and Art Eggleton, as well as Mr. Don Chapman. He has worked tirelessly with our colleagues in the other place to advocate for lost Canadians and this much-needed change to the Citizenship Act.

Canadians who lost their status or become stateless because of these changes to the act are Canadians in every way except technically under the law. They pay their taxes, contribute to their communities and uphold the values of what it means to live in our beautiful country.

From 1947 to 1977, the law of the land was that children born abroad received citizenship only if their parents registered them within two years of their birth. In addition, their parents must have also given birth to them in wedlock, with at least one of the parents being a Canadian.

In 1977, the then government introduced a new Citizenship Act, changing the law so that children born abroad on or after February 14, 1977, received their Canadian citizenship if one of their parents was a Canadian citizen, regardless of their marital status. However, if the Canadian parent was also born abroad, a child had until turning 28 to apply to keep their citizenship. If they did not, it would be taken away.

When the law passed in 1977, the government made no effort to inform Canadians affected by this change. No form was published, no instructions were given on how someone could reaffirm their citizenship and no one affected was told that this requirement even existed.

Finally, in 2009, Bill C-37 was brought in by the Conservative government to make changes to the Citizenship Act to rectify past mistakes. When it came into effect, the rules for citizenship changed for people born outside Canada to Canadian parents who were not already Canadian citizens. The changes saw the age 28 rule repealed, and Canadians caught up in the rule previously who had not yet reached that age were grandfathered into the amended law. However, the wording of Bill C-37 created an unfortunate gap for a small group of Canadians who were born between 1977 and 1981. Those who turned 28 before Bill C-37 became law in 2009 were also excluded.

Private Members' Business

In the committee review of this bill at the Senate's social affairs committee, senators asked IRCC officials how this could take place, what was being done to inform those who did not know they were lost and why the government was not being proactive in finding them. The answer from the IRCC officials was, "It's fair to say that given the small number of applications...we are not out looking for Lost Canadians." In reality, IRCC relies on lost Canadians to figure out they were stripped of their citizenship due to bureaucracy and paperwork.

Some lost Canadians knew about the change and either applied to keep their Canadian citizenship or let it lapse. These are Canadians who in many cases were raised here, who grew up attending school here and who have worked here their whole adult lives. These are Canadians who started families in this country and paid their taxes on time, but for one small change to the wording of the Citizenship Act, they lost their Canadian citizenship. When they turned 28, there was no letter from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and there was no warning. It was just gone.

• (1720)

All of us in this place know that Canadian citizenship is not identified by each person as one tangible idea. On the contrary, it is deeply personal to each of us. It makes up our identity and sense of belonging to a broader idea. For my community and me, Canadian citizenship is a goal. It is a marker for achieving the Canadian dream.

Being an immigrant myself and coming to Canada when I was five, I experienced first-hand the journey to achieving citizenship. My family grew up economically in poverty, lining up in the rain for low-income bus passes and having both parents working jobs just to survive. My family always had that goal to reach for Canadian citizenship. I saw my parents work themselves to the bone for my family. Because of their hard work, my brother, sister and I are where we are today. We achieved our dream of Canadian citizenship after having to work hard day and night, coming from little and knowing that the road is not easy. However, we know that the blood, sweat and tears we experienced on that journey were worth it. We are Canadian citizens.

That is why, standing here as a member of Parliament, I cannot imagine what it would be like to lose one's citizenship arbitrarily, especially for those who worked hard and even served in uniform for this country, to one day lose something they believed so much in. This is not just an issue for the many people this bill would help to reinstate citizenship to; it is an issue for all of us. As Canadians and representatives of Canadians, it is our responsibility to help preserve what it means to be a citizen of this country and fundamentally what it means to be a Canadian.

I ask my fellow colleagues to do the right thing and support this bill to reinstate citizenship for lost Canadians.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating my colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn. I really enjoy working with him.

The bill before us today, Bill S-245, seeks to correct an injustice for people who did not deserve what happened to them. It is rare for a Bloc Québécois member to rise in the House on a matter involving Canadian citizenship. We are more likely to rise in the House on a matter involving Quebec citizenship. That will happen one day, I guarantee it.

The matter before us today is Bill S-245. An injustice occurred. IRCC is in the process of correcting it, but is this not proof once again that IRCC is taking far too long to correct the injustices? Is this not proof that IRCC has grown far too big, that there is a problem, that there is sand in the gears or water in the gas?

[*English*]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, I admire my dear friend from Lac-Saint-Jean, and I love his passion for human rights. We had a really good time on the immigration committee. I am going to miss that committee and working with everyone.

What we were doing on the immigration committee together helped to address some of the bigger issues that we have. We could work collectively for those who, in this case, were left out from citizenship, or for others who are being persecuted around the world. We can move in stride and work for them if we work together as a team and make sure our goal is to help those who need help the most. If we can continue to work collaboratively like that, we can accomplish a lot more in this House.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I too am the daughter of an immigrant father and a Canadian mother. Interestingly enough, I also have a daughter who was born abroad and a daughter who was born here. Given the 2009 legislation that the Conservative government passed, I have a conundrum. My daughter who was born abroad grew up here all her life. If she for some reason is abroad, maybe serving our diplomatic service in other places, and her children are born abroad, they will not be considered Canadians, yet the children of my daughter who was born here will be.

While I agree with the member that these are important issues, the legislation at the time did not address those issues. Would the member be willing to discuss those issues in the future to make sure all Canadian families are included?

• (1730)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, I know we can share the pride of coming here as immigrants to be able to live the Canadian dream together now. I know that we can all continue to work together to make sure we are helping others to realize the Canadian dream as well.

Private Members' Business

To the member's question, when this gets passed on to the committee, the committee can talk about any types of amendments or changes it wants to make to the bill. Unfortunately, I am not on the immigration committee any longer. As a team, the Liberals could bring that forward and discuss it at the immigration committee.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his comments and for sponsoring this bill. It is an important bill to bring forward.

However, to the point of lost Canadians, there are still many other categories of lost Canadians, and this bill would not help them regain their status. In fact, it was the Conservatives who took away second-generation born abroad's right to pass on their citizenship to their children. It was Jason Kenney who took away that right.

If we are going to fix this, would the Conservatives support amendments to fix all the problems of lost Canadians, including the problems that the Conservatives brought about with second-generation born abroad?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, I also enjoyed working with the member for Vancouver East on the immigration committee. Sadly, as I said before, I am not on the committee, but is a great place where the member for Vancouver East could work together with all parties to address not just the issues she brought up but others, and work to amend this bill in the way they think it would help the most people. Again, I think the member could discuss that at the immigration committee.

Let us get this bill to the committee so we can at least get to that point.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill S-245, seeking to make amendments to the Citizenship Act and address concerns raised on past citizenship.

I would first like to extend my thanks to Senator Yonah Martin for her advocacy and for bringing forward this bill, as well as its predecessor, Bill S-230. I would also like to thank the member for Calgary Forest Lawn for sponsoring this bill and giving us a chance to speak about it in the chamber.

In 1977, Canada introduced a new Citizenship Act to replace the one from 1947 and amend our citizenship rules. It maintained that individuals born outside of Canada to a Canadian parent or grandparents were citizens as well. However, as was the case since 1947, there were conditions.

Canadians born abroad in the second generation or beyond had to file an application to retain their citizenship. The 1977 act required these Canadians to do so before they turned 28 years old. Failure to do so meant they would lose their Canadian citizenship automatically on their 28th birthday.

The legislation also made another critical administrative change. Canadians who had children abroad no longer had to register their children born outside of Canada for their children to qualify as citizens. This change, removing the requirement for registration of births abroad, meant the government did not collect the names of children born overseas to Canadian citizens. It also meant there was

no list of Canadians born abroad in the second generation or beyond who needed to take steps to retain their citizenship.

Some of these individuals born abroad ultimately moved back and grew up in Canada, totally unaware that they had to take steps to retain their citizenship status before their 28th birthday, and because the government did not have a list of who was affected, there was no way to inform a born-abroad Canadian citizen in advance or prompt them to take the steps they needed to take in order to retain their citizenship before they turned 28 years old.

It has been noted that the government of the day could have made more information available in Canada and abroad so that Canadians with children born abroad were aware and could know they needed to take action. When these children turned 28, if they had not taken the required steps, they automatically lost their citizenship and may not have even known it.

The issue of automatic loss of Canadian citizenship for those born abroad in the second generation or beyond would come up only when something would trigger a review or a confirmation of their citizenship. In certain cases, they found it when they applied to work overseas, sought a military commission or a security clearance, or even just applied for a replacement citizenship certificate.

In 2009, the Citizenship Act was amended to address this issue and simplify the rules around citizenship. The 2009 amendments removed the requirement to apply to retain citizenship by age 28 for those born abroad to a Canadian parent in the second generation or beyond.

At the same time, the Citizenship Act replaced those rules with a first-generation limit, something that is quite personal, as I explained here to the member. It is a citizenship by descent, which meant that automatic Canadian citizenship by descent could be passed down for only one generation by a Canadian parent who was either born in or naturalized in Canada.

This first-generation limit remains in place today. Children born to a Canadian parent outside of Canada in the first generation are automatically Canadian citizens from birth. However, children born abroad to a Canadian parent in the second generation, where the Canadian parent was also born abroad or beyond are no longer automatically Canadian. As I mentioned, in families like mine, suddenly not everyone is equal, and this is why discussion, debate and careful thought are really needed on this bill as we go on through the evening.

Citizens like my daughter can apply to come to Canada and become citizens through our immigration and citizenship programs. The 2009 changes also ensured that anyone who was born after the 1977 legislation but had not yet turned 28 when the changes took place was allowed to maintain their status, was not required to file an application, and remained a Canadian citizen.

In 2009, and then again in 2015, the government introduced a number of amendments to the Citizenship Act to restore citizenship to groups of people who had lost their citizenship or who had never become citizens in the first place because of the rules in the first Canadian Citizenship Act of 1947, which we now recognize was discriminatory.

These people are known as the “lost Canadians”. Between 2009 and 2015 approximately 17,500 individuals came forward and were issued proofs of Canadian citizenship related to the amendments to the act.

• (1735)

From the 2015 amendments, another 600 cases came forward and received proof of their Canadian citizenship as a result. However, there is a remaining group of those who refer to themselves as lost Canadians. Those are persons born outside of Canada in the second or later generations who had already turned 28 before the 2009 changes and had already lost their citizenship due to the old rules that required them to apply to retain their Canadian citizenship before their 28th birthday.

We know this has impacted those who were born abroad in the second generation between 1977 and 1981, but there is no way to tell for certain how many people make up this cohort. We do know it is a limited group. It does not impact anyone born after 1981. Those Canadians could not have yet turned 28 before the 2009 legislation was passed. It does not include anyone born before February 1977, when the changes were made to set the 28-year-old retention requirement. It is only a limited group of people who were born between February 1977 and April 1981 and did not take the steps to retain their citizenship before turning 28 years old and were born abroad to a Canadian parent in the second or subsequent generation.

Bill S-245 represents a remedy for this group of lost Canadians. However, a possible solution already exists for this group. The Citizenship Act provides the minister with the discretionary authority to grant citizenship on a case-by-case basis. It is used to alleviate cases of special and unusual hardship or to reward services of an exceptional nature to Canada. To date, IRCC has granted citizenship to approximately 130 individuals affected by the former age 28 rule through this use of the minister's special discretionary authority. The department receives an average of 35 to 40 requests per year related to the former age 28 rule.

As members of this House review Bill S-245, I believe it is very important that they take the appropriate time, effort and care. Anyone who has spent time in the chamber can likely recall reviewing issues, omissions or oversights that can come from legislation that was drafted with good intentions, but where amendments that were missing a critical detail or consideration led to unintended consequences, such as in my own family.

Private Members' Business

In particular, on the issue of lost Canadians, history has shown us that making hasty changes can lead to the creation of new cohorts of people who may subsequently consider themselves lost Canadians. As lawmakers, we should ensure that legislation addresses the problem and does not create a bigger issue than the one we are already trying to solve. The legislation seeks to address such an issue. For example, bestowing citizenship on individuals who live in another country descended from a Canadian and who never sought to be a Canadian may create unintended problems for them. I note that the bill includes a simplified renunciation process as a result, which would be a very important element to have in place.

We should put in the required effort to get this right. I encourage the members of this House to be thorough and thoughtful in their work and to speak with legislative experts, department officials and citizenship experts. We should be looking carefully at how the legislation needs to be written and do our homework so that there are no unintended consequences. Rather than compounding one problem with a new one, I hope the House can work together to maintain the integrity of our citizenship system.

Once again, I would like to thank Senator Martin for bringing this bill forward and advocating for lost Canadians, who we all agree should be brought back into the Canadian family. I hope the senator, the member for Calgary Forest Lawn and all members of the House can work together to resolve some of the challenges.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, even though I do not always agree with my colleagues from the other parties who sit here in the House, I tend to avoid getting into partisanship. I think I am even transpartisan, and often being transpartisan allows me to do my work properly for the people of my riding, who, since 2019, have allowed me to proudly represent them in my corner of the country, Lac-Saint-Jean.

Today I will speak not only for Quebeckers, but also for a good number of Canadians whose files at IRCC have fallen through the cracks for far too long.

Today, as the Bloc Québécois critic for immigration and citizenship, I want to talk about Canadian citizenship. Yes, members heard me correctly, because this affects everyone here. More specifically, I want to talk about Bill S-245, an act to amend the Citizenship Act. It is a continuation of Bill C-37, which was unanimously passed in the House.

Private Members' Business

That is an example of cross-party co-operation. First, I want to quickly explain what this bill is about for those who are watching at home. Bill S-245 seeks to correct a historic injustice by allowing Canadians who lost their citizenship because of past changes to the Citizenship Act or little-known regulations to regain it. We are talking about children of Canadian parents who were born abroad and who had their citizenship revoked simply because they failed to meet the requirement to apply to retain their citizenship before the age of 28, which is absolutely ridiculous.

These are people we now refer to as “lost Canadians”, those who were stripped of their citizenship because of an often little-known but truly ridiculous provision. According to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's estimates, there are still between 100 and 200 people who have still not regained their citizenship. They are referred to as “lost Canadians”.

This bill corrects an oversight in the 2009 act, which missed a golden opportunity to do away with the requirement for people to apply to retain their citizenship when they turned 28. In fact, the main message of Bill S-245 is that we should be giving citizenship back to all of the people who lost it because of provisions in previous Canadian laws that were overly complex, unfair, sexist or even racist.

At the risk of ruining the surprise, I will say right away that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill S-245. If we think about it, this bill is perfectly in line with what our contemporary vision of citizenship should be. Once citizenship has been duly granted, it should never be taken away from an individual, with some exceptions. Only a citizen can freely renounce his or her citizenship.

Like all parties in the House, the Bloc Québécois supports and defends the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It states that “all are equal before the law”. In fact, citizenship is an egalitarian legal status given to all members of the same community. It confers privileges as well as duties.

In this case, the Canadian government has failed its citizens. This is a matter of principle. I do not believe I am alone in thinking that it is profoundly unfair that, even in 2022, people can lose their citizenship for reasons that they probably do not even know exist. These provisions are from another time, a time long ago when there were questionable ideas about what it meant to be a citizen of Canada. Time has remedied the situation and, if the reforms of the past have not been instructive enough, then politics must weigh in.

As we know, the process for recovering citizenship is much too complicated. There is no denying that the federal bureaucracy is not exactly super-efficient when it comes to handling immigration, refugee and citizenship files. I believe we have said quite a lot about this since returning to the House in September.

Just how slow is the government? The act was reformed in 2005, again in 2009 and yet again in 2015. How many reforms does it take? Many citizens were overlooked every time the act was reformed: men and women, soldiers' wives and children, children born abroad and members of first nations and Chinese-Canadian communities. The government did not do a good enough job of fixing the act, so these people were left out in the cold.

• (1745)

Let us look back in history. Don Chapman, a retired United Airlines pilot, fought to bring the plight of these citizens to the public's attention. Don Chapman discovered that he had lost his Canadian citizenship when his father immigrated to the United States. Thanks to his astute demonstration that this was a problem affecting many Canadians, including Roméo Dallaire, he was able to force Parliament to remedy the situation and pass the suite of legislative reforms before us today.

Bill S-245 seeks to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. I would also add one thing. Every time we check, the government backlog is worse. It seems to me that it would be a good idea to prevent problems from occurring in the first place and making us wait once again for the federal machinery to make things right.

What does it mean to “make things right” in this case? It means ensuring for once and for all that the constituents in our respective ridings get what belongs to them. It is not right that in 2022, 17 years after the first reform to correct the situation for lost Canadians, we are not getting anywhere. In a situation like this, it is up to the government to offer a solution to the individuals to regularize their status so that they can have their dignity for once and for all, like every other citizen.

Whether this bill affects hundreds of claimants or thousands makes no difference to me. It is a matter of principle. In no way does that stop us from taking action for the good of the people we are fortunate to represent and who put their trust in us. I will say it again: It is a matter of principle.

At the risk of repeating myself, I would like to conclude with this. Most of the time when I have the opportunity to speak in the House, it is about suggestions that come from the opposition. I think we are all on the same side when it comes to helping people, and rightly so. When the government listens to us and we all work together, it usually results in better programs.

As parliamentarians, we must tackle the problems facing our constituents with a great sense of duty, and we must set partisanship aside to do so. The people of Lac-Saint-Jean, whom I have had the honour to represent since 2019, along with all Quebeckers and Canadians, must be considered on an equal footing.

The situation facing the so-called “lost Canadians” should never have happened. I will say it again: Citizenship must be equal for all. Let us make one last reform, once and for all. We have to get it right this time, for reasons of equality, justice and principle, but also simply because enough is enough.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, for decades some Canadians have found themselves to be stateless due to a number of convoluted immigration laws. Some have found themselves all of a sudden losing their Canadian status and they do not know why.

In 2007, the UN listed Canada as one of the top offending countries for making their own people stateless. In 2009, the Conservatives said they were going to address this issue with Bill C-37. In fact, Jason Kenney was the minister of immigration then. Sadly, Bill C-37 did not properly address the lost Canadians issue. At the time, even Conservative minister Diane Finley acknowledged that Bill C-37 would not fix all of the cases of lost Canadians.

In fact, Jason Kenney created a brand new set of problems. For the purposes of this discussion, I will not get into the issues of how the Conservatives eliminated people's right to appeal when the government revoked their citizenship. I will simply focus on the issue of lost Canadians.

How did Bill C-37 not effectively deal with the age 28 issue with lost Canadians? When the government of the day did away with the age 28 rule with Bill C-37, in its wisdom it only applied it going forward. As such, those who turned 28 before 2009 were left behind. That means they remained as lost Canadians.

Affected Canadians caught up in this did not even know their citizenship was cancelled somewhere between 11 years and 15 years ago. For many it only came to light when they applied for something that required proof of citizenship, such as a Canadian passport. In some cases, because of Canada's archaic immigration laws, they discovered they were stateless. Others were faced with deportation, even though they were Canadians in every way prior to turning 28. It is just absurd.

I have met many lost Canadians whose lives have been turned upside down because of these unjust laws. Imagine someone who has lived all their life as a Canadian, has voted in elections, and one day wakes up to be told they no longer are Canadian.

I had the pleasure of meeting Byrdie Funk a number of years ago. She was caught up in this. She is a third-generation Canadian and had to fight this. It took her almost a decade to regain her citizenship, not because the law was changed; she had to shame the government to give her a special grant and to give her citizenship back.

Bill S-245 would fix this age 28 rule, and that is a good thing. However, this bill does not address the other issues for lost Canadians. Through Bill C-37, the Conservatives ended the extension of citizenship to second-generation Canadians born abroad, effectively creating two classes of Canadian citizenship. Preventing Canadians born abroad from passing their citizenship to their children if they were outside of Canada means the breaking up of families.

In the case of Patrick Chandler, when he was offered a job in British Columbia, he moved back to Canada, but he had to leave his wife and his children behind. That is the reality he was faced with as a second-generation Canadian who was born abroad. This is just plain wrong.

Private Members' Business

In another situation, a woman named Victoria Maruyama received her Canadian citizenship through her father as an immigrant from Vietnam. At 22, she moved to Japan to teach English and met her husband, a Japanese national. Her children were born in Japan, and as a result, they do not have citizenship through her, even though she had moved back to Canada. This is their reality.

• (1750)

In another situation, Gregory Burgess, a first-generation Canadian, and his wife, a Russian Canadian, were on a work visa in Hong Kong. Their child was born there and now their son is stateless. They tried to get their son Canadian citizenship, but the Government of Canada would not allow Mr. Burgess to pass on his Canadian citizenship to his baby. The government told them to apply to Russia, to get Russian citizenship through the mother. It is true. The government told them this right now, when there is a war that Putin is waging against Ukraine, an illegal war. It is unbelievable.

The message here is clear. Somehow, second-generation born-abroad Canadians are less worthy. These Canadians lost their ability to pass on their citizenship to their children. That is no thanks to the Conservatives and to Jason Kenney through Bill C-37.

Even though Bill C-37 was meant to fix the lost Canadian issues, many of the issues were not fixed, even though, in another situation, then ministers Jason Kenney and Chris Alexander had both asserted that Canadians were all British subjects prior to 1947.

That means that war heroes who fought for Canada are deemed British subjects, even though in 1943, for example, the Department of National Defence gave them documents indicating that they would be fighting the war as Canadians, as citizens of Canada. That is what was in the documents handed to those soldiers. The Conservatives would not recognize that.

Those war heroes have been left out as Canadians. They have been left behind. Some have passed on, but we should honour them and recognize them and their families. They were very much a part of Canada and should be recognized as Canadians.

Private Members' Business

Others were being discriminated against because of their age, gender and family status. Another individual, a Surrey resident, Jackie Scott, who was born in 1945 to a Canadian veteran and a British woman, was repeatedly denied citizenship despite having lived for decades in Canada. She was raised in Canada, effectively, and voted as an adult, and yet when she applied for her citizenship certificate in 2005, to her shock, she was told that she was not a Canadian. She had to launch a lawsuit against the federal government before the government would even take action to address the situation. Even though she voted previously and pretty well lived all of her life in Canada, she found herself, all of a sudden, without citizenship.

I could go on with a list of issues. I should note that when asked about lost Canadians in opposition, the now Prime Minister said that Minister Kenney needed to understand that the principles of Canadian citizenship need to be administered with compassion and openness, and that he simply was not addressing these Canadian issues.

The Liberal government had a choice to fix this problem and it did not do it, not since the 2015 election. That is why there are so many people who have lost their citizenship and now are lost Canadians. This needs to be fixed once and for all.

We need to address this issue. I have tabled a private members' bill to this effect. We can take that bill and work from there. We can make amendments to this bill, if they are not deemed to be out of scope or deemed to be out of order.

We do need to fix the lost Canadian issue. We have seen the havoc that it has created in people's lives and it needs to stop.

I want to thank all of the advocates, including Don Chapman, Randall Emery and so many others who have been fighting for Canada to right these laws and do away with these unjust discriminatory practices in our immigration laws.

Let the lost Canadians be recognized now.

• (1755)

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to second this important bill that is being sponsored by my colleague, the member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Bill S-245 is one key step towards ensuring the inclusion of Canadians as citizens who have fallen through the cracks due to a gap in legislation. This group, commonly called the lost Canadians, is actually one that I was nearly a part of, so I feel that I am uniquely placed to be able to speak about this issue from a first-hand point of view.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their work on this file. This issue has been championed by many over the years, not just by politicians, but also by advocates for the affected individuals and families. Most Canadians are completely unaware that this has even been an issue, aside from those who have been directly impacted by it. I know when I talk about this subject to my friends, they look at me strangely as if they have no concept of what I am talking about.

I deeply appreciate the efforts that have been made in the political sphere to close up this gap and to ensure that everything possi-

ble is done so that no more Canadians fall through the cracks and become lost going forward.

The Canadian identity is one that comes with many implications and connotations, almost all of them being overwhelmingly positive. Canada is known across the world for many things, and one of the most common things is the kindness of our citizens and a willingness to help out whenever it is needed. This alone makes me proud to be a Canadian, and I feel strongly that my citizenship in this country has actually become a very formative part of who I am as a person and how I view my community and those who live within it.

Canadian citizens have rights and responsibilities which date back over 800 years to the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 in England, and they are as follows: freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of speech and of the press; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association. These rights that every Canadian citizen is entitled to are key factors when looking at what exactly encompasses a Canadian identity.

As a citizen, I know that I am protected by the rule of law in this great country, and that gives me a sense of security and peace of mind as I go about my day-to-day life. For many Canadians who have been left in limbo due to gaps in legislation like the one Bill S-245 is addressing, they may not have this security, and many would not even know it until they went to renew a passport or other federal document.

Imagine someone living their entire life believing without question that they are a Canadian citizen, only to find out much later on that they are not, or that their citizenship has been rescinded through no fault of their own. I know that I would be devastated to think that the only country I have known as home does not see me as a citizen, despite having a career, paying taxes and participating in activities that make up the very fabric of a Canadian identity. This is precisely what has happened to what we call the lost Canadians, who, through a gap in legislation, were not included in changes that were made to try and address this issue.

In 1977, under the new Citizenship Act, children born abroad on or after February 14, 1977 received their Canadian citizenship if one of their parents was a Canadian citizen, regardless of their marital status. If, however, the Canadian parent was also born abroad, the child had until the age of 28 to apply to retain their citizenship, and if they did not, their citizenship would be stripped from them.

Section 8 of the Citizenship Act read:

Where a person who was born outside Canada after February 14, 1977 is a citizen for the reason that at the time of his birth one of his parents was a citizen by virtue of paragraph 3(1)(b) or (e), that person ceases to be a citizen on attaining the age of twenty-eight years unless that person

(a) makes application to retain his citizenship; and

(b) registers as a citizen and either resides in Canada for a period of at least one year immediately preceding the date of his application or establishes a substantial connection with Canada.

Private Members' Business

This law was passed, and then it seems it was forgotten. There was no follow-up from the government, and no process or instruction was released on how a person could go about reaffirming their citizenship. No forms were created for this. In fact, those who were affected were never even told that a retention requirement existed. This was a massive oversight that eventually led to a number of Canadians becoming stateless without their knowledge.

I was nearly one of those lost Canadians. I am eternally grateful that my father found out about this and contacted me so that I could take the necessary steps to ensure that I would not lose my status.

● (1800)

Again, I cannot imagine the dismay I would have felt if I only realized after trying to obtain or renew my passport that I was no longer considered a citizen of the only country that I have ever known. I was lucky that I was born before the set dates that were put in this additional legislation, but so many who have found themselves in this circumstance were not. This issue needs to be remedied as soon as possible.

One of the reasons I wanted to speak to this bill is that I recall what I went through in 1977 when this issue first came to light for me. What I experienced is not even close to the struggles that the majority of lost Canadians went through.

When I first encountered and heard about this legislation in 1977, I was a young student at the University of Waterloo. I heard about how I might be losing my citizenship if I did not do a whole bunch of paperwork, provide documents and get things all straightened out. As a youngster at that age and not understanding politics, legislation or any of those kinds of procedures, it threw me for quite a loop, especially as I was more concerned about getting my degree. It made me start to wonder what was going on and why it was going on. It was very distracting.

I was born in England to two Canadian parents who were posted overseas. My father was serving this country as a member of the military, so of course my mother was there with him during their time in Britain. That probably does not seem like a big issue. People hear that and say that someone born to two Canadian parents should be able to have citizenship through that avenue.

The problem is that my father was born in India to two Canadian parents. Therefore, when this legislation in 1977 came out, it put a panic in me due to the fact that I could be considered a second-generation Canadian, depending on how that was interpreted. That put a lot of fear into my mind as to what I had to do and the steps I had to take to figure out this whole situation. I was forced to deal with a bureaucracy that I did not understand and did not feel I had the time or wanted to get involved with. I had no idea where to go or whom to talk to, and there was no information that was easily available for me to figure it out and get answers as to what extent it impacted me.

At no point during this time did a bureaucrat or government employee say that I did not have to do this. My perception was that, after 1977, the Government of Canada put out that, by the age of 28, I had to determine whether I was going to reaffirm my Canadian citizenship. If I had forgotten to do that, I could have been in a situation where I lost that citizenship. Unfortunately, many of those

lost Canadians had to deal with that exact situation. Furthermore, I was away at university and my mom and dad were not close to me. The reality is that I had to recognize that I was born before the dates proposed and at that time I did not. Lost Canadians lost their citizenship without even knowing because they likely never even saw or heard of the legislation until some time well after the fact when they were applying for a passport.

I know I cannot use props in the House, but I do have a citizenship card that I would like to read from, which I have kept in my wallet for 40 years. On this citizenship card, is my picture and, yes, I did have hair. It has my age and a number, and it has my height, my sex and my eye colour. On the back, it says, "Certificate of Canadian Citizenship". It has my name and it says:

This is to certify that...is a Canadian citizen under the provisions of the Citizenship Act and as such is certified to all the rights and privileges and is subject to all the duties and responsibilities of a Canadian citizen.

I say that because I have had to have that card and my brothers do not have that card. They did not have to have it. There are many lost Canadians who do not have that aspect because they never even had the opportunity to do that.

This is something that is very unfortunate and it is why this legislation is so necessary. We need to recognize these lost Canadians and get them back the citizenship that they deserve and they are entitled to. The time period that this bill addresses is roughly 50 months. The affected individuals need to have the understanding and reassurance that they are respected Canadian citizens despite this gap in the legislation.

● (1805)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise to speak. Some issues I really enjoy having the opportunity to talk about because I can relate them to my constituency. In this case, I can relate it not only to my constituency, but to having been a former critic of citizenship and immigration for the Liberal Party when it was in opposition as the third party and being very familiar with Minister Kenney, even though I was not around when he made that specific change.

I want to share a few thoughts. One is directly on the issue before us and another on citizenship in general.

The member across the way gave a personal experience, and that is great. We can really learn a lot when members share personal stories of how something affected them. I appreciated what my colleague from York Centre had to say. It really makes the issue relatively simple to understand.

Government Orders

Let us say the member for York Centre, a Canadian, has a child in Israel. Two years later, that child lives in Canada with the member. The member then has a second daughter, who is born in Canada. The only difference between her two daughters is that one spent the first two years of her life in Israel. Imagine that her two daughters are growing up and, for whatever reason, maybe one of them decides to leave Canada and spend some time in Paris, a wonderful city no doubt. If it happens to be the member's first daughter and that daughter has a child in Paris, that child would not be a Canadian citizen, whereas if her second child were to move to Paris and have a child, that child would be a Canadian citizen.

That is not necessarily an anomaly. A number of those situations have arisen because of legislation, which has already been referred to, Bill C-37, that the Conservative Party under Stephen Harper brought in and passed. Many people are in that position and, sadly, as the former speaker just highlighted, would not even know it. They would be going along in their own way thinking they are Canadian citizens until a day when maybe they need to communicate with the federal government, perhaps about a passport or some other issue that would require citizenship, and then it might come to the surface that they are a second generation and, therefore, should not have Canadian citizenship. The Canadian citizenship would then be taken away.

I do not think anyone among us would deny the opportunity for the member for York Centre's first-born daughter to move to Paris and spend a few years or however long there. Not having her child classified as a Canadian citizen would be unfair.

In looking at the legislation today, it is interesting, but we need to recognize that ministerial discretionary authority is already in place. I could not say with 100% certainty how all-encompassing it is, but from what I understand, there are dozens of cases of lost Canadians that the minister is able to deal with. I am very encouraged by that because I was not aware of that happening when I was the critic for immigration and citizenship for the Liberal Party when it had third party status. I know for a fact that over the last couple of years, citizenships have been granted to lost citizens.

• (1810)

Is there a way this can be improved upon? That is why we are having this debate today and there will be another hour of debate. Suffice to say that I generally believe that individuals inside this chamber understand and appreciate the importance of Canadian citizenship. As the member quoted, he has his own citizenship card. Many, possibly all of us, in terms of the pandemic, have had the opportunity to see that sense of pride that immigrants often display during citizenship courts.

Canada is a country that is very dependent on immigration. In my own home province of Manitoba, the population would have decreased if it were not for immigration to our province in the last 15 years. Immigrants have built our country. We need to have well thought-out policies and a system of fairness, a system that ensures that permanent residents become citizens.

I enjoy it when I have an opportunity to participate in citizenship courts. I remember, very vividly, a young lady being sworn in of Filipino heritage with a Canadian flag wrapped around her as they sang the national anthem for the very first time as a Canadian citi-

zen. It brings tears to the eyes of many when we witness that. Citizenship is the greatest thing that we can provide. People will wear the Canadian flag with pride when they travel to Europe or other countries around the world as Canada is seen as the greatest country in the world to live. We might all be somewhat biased.

These are the types of issues that come up when we think of citizenship and everything that is acquired. I go back to the residents of Winnipeg North, with many first generation immigrants participating in those citizenship courts. Virtually every weekend I am meeting with permanent residents who I know some day will become Canadian citizens.

It takes 1,095 days to become a Canadian citizen. That means three years. There is a bit of a calculation. Technically, it is a minimum of three years in the last five years from the moment when one puts their application in that one has to reside in Canada. There are some issues even within that. I have brought up the issue, for example, of long-haul truck drivers, ones that drive back and forth between Canada and the United States. I want to ensure that people, and families in particular, are provided that opportunity to get citizenship because I have seen the value of that. I understand and appreciate Canada's diversity. It is second to no other country. I want to make sure that we get it right.

We have to ensure the integrity of the citizenship process. That is, in fact, priority one for me in recognizing how important it is that lost Canadians are, in fact, being provided the opportunity to have that citizenship as quickly as possible. That is why I believe in ministerial discretionary authority. If there are examples that members have, they should not hesitate to bring up those examples with the minister in question, no matter what happens in terms of debate on this particular piece of legislation. We all want to make sure that the people who are entitled to have it should have it. There are examples that I think we really need to work through.

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, October 19, the House shall now resolve itself into committee of the whole to consider Motion No. 21 under Government Business.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1820)

[*English*]

MENTAL HEALTH

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 21, Mrs. Alexandra Mendès in the chair)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Before we begin this evening's debate, I would like to remind hon. members of how the proceedings will unfold.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Each member speaking will be allotted 10 minutes for debate, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comment.

Pursuant to order made Wednesday, October 19, the time provided for the debate may be extended beyond four hours, as needed, to include a minimum of 12 periods of 20 minutes each.

[*English*]

Members may divide their time with another member, and the Chair will receive no quorum calls, dilatory motions, or requests for unanimous consent.

We will now begin tonight's take-note debate.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That this committee take note of mental health.

She said: Madam Chair, I would first like to acknowledge that I am on the unceded and traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka who have been the stewards of these lands and waters since time immemorial.

I believe it is important that parliamentarians be able to demonstrate to Canadians that we share their concerns and are listening to those with lived experience of this issue, the experts and the front-line workers. We will implement evidence-based practices to respond to the mental health parallel pandemic.

The past few years have been difficult for several reasons.

[*English*]

Isolation, financial and employment uncertainty, and disruptions to daily life have left many people across Canada struggling to cope with stress, anxiety, depression and loneliness, and young people are expressing their serious concern about climate change.

It is clear that COVID-19 has pushed an already stressed health care system to its limits, and we know that it can be a challenge for Canadians to know where to look for help, find help, find the right help and access that help right away. Sadly, during this time, when so many of us needed support, support was all too often out of reach.

Caring for those struggling with their mental health and substance use has not been consistently available across Canada, and when it was available, Canadians often faced long waiting lists. This is not a new problem, but like so many gaps in our health and social systems, it was amplified by the pandemic. Those who were underserved by our health and mental health systems before the pandemic are suffering even more now. More than half of all Canadians feel that their mental health has worsened since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over 70 years ago, Canadian war veteran Dr. Brock Chisholm, the first director general of the World Health Organization, stated, "without mental health there can be no true physical health." Mental health must be treated as a full and equal part of our universal health care system. Canadians should be able to expect the most ap-

propriate care in the most appropriate place by the most appropriate provider at the most appropriate time.

We are working with the Standards Council of Canada, as well as our provincial and territorial partners, to develop national standards for evidence-based mental health and addiction services in the priority areas identified with our provincial and territorial colleagues. The work is being supported by \$45 million over two years, and we are encouraged by the incredible early progress on national standards for integrated youth services, the wraparound care now being adopted by all jurisdictions.

Since 2015, we have made historic investments, including the \$5 billion to provinces and territories to increase the availability of mental health care, \$598 million from the distinctions-based mental health and wellness strategy for indigenous peoples, \$140 million to support veterans and \$270 million for the Wellness Together portal. Through the \$5 billion in provincial and territorial bilateral agreements, we are now providing \$600 million additional annual funding until 2027 to expand access to community-based mental health and addiction services for children and youth and integrated services for people with complex needs, and to expand proven models of community mental health care and culturally appropriate interventions linked to primary health services.

We also remain fully committed to investing another \$4.5 billion through the Canada mental health transfer. Over the past year, we have heard clearly from partners and the community that the new transfer needs to be based upon a comprehensive, evidence-based plan, including the timely sharing of health data to ensure transparency and accountability to all Canadians.

Last Monday, I met with my provincial and territorial mental health and addictions counterparts to share wise practices. Next month, the Minister of Health and I will meet with all provincial and territorial health ministers in Vancouver to chart our way forward, focusing particularly on health human resources, including the expansion of the concept of the mental health workforce.

• (1825)

Tonight I would like to congratulate and thank my colleague from Prince George being appointed critic for mental health and for his hard work on suicide prevention and the 988 three-digit helpline. We also know that it is essential for Canadians to have timely access to suicide prevention. They need to know they are not alone.

Government Orders

We welcome the CRTC's decision to approve the new 988 three-digit suicide prevention line, and are working to ensure it has the capacity for a successful launch next fall, together with the national action plan on suicide prevention, which will update the existing framework.

We have partnered with CAMH to oversee the implementation of the crisis line, and we are investing \$21 million over five years through CAMH to implement and sustain a fully operational pan-Canadian suicide prevention service. We are also working closely with American counterparts to learn from their four-year implementation process for the similar service they launched earlier this year.

Tonight it is imperative that we all communicate that, if people are struggling with thoughts of suicide right now, or know someone who is, help is available at 1-833-456-4566.

While the pandemic exacerbated the gaps in mental health supports available to Canadians, it also accelerated the use of virtual care options to help expand the availability and flexibility of those services. In April 2020, we launched Wellness Together Canada. Its online portal has served as an invaluable connection for many Canadians, allowing them to get the help they need even when they could not leave their homes, and it can be used as a stepping stone to receive advice on where to find more specialized care.

The companion app, PocketWell, also ensures that Canadians have access to the mental health and substance abuse services they need, no matter where they live, and that they are able to access resources 24-7. As of October 17, nearly three million individuals across Canada have accessed the portal in over eight million web sessions, and the app has been downloaded over 30,000 times.

A total of \$130 million was invested in the Wellness Together Canada portal between April 2020 and April 2022. Budget 2022 has provided a further \$140 million over two years, so it can continue to provide Canadians with tools and services to support them. The feedback from the users of the portal has been very positive.

Although COVID has resulted in more people struggling with mental health, it seems to also have resulted in us all becoming a bit more open to talk about our own mental health. When more people are comfortable talking about mental health, it helps to reduce the stigma that is still a tremendous barrier to seeking care, but the care must be there when they need it. We must design wraparound supports from the bottom up, listening to those with lived and living experience, together with the people who are in their communities who are doing such great work.

We know there is much more to do.

[*Translation*]

I look forward to participating in this timely and important debate. I also look forward to hearing what my hon. colleagues believe we can do to better support Canadians' mental health.

• (1830)

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I want to thank our hon. colleague for calling for this debate

tonight. As my colleagues know, mental health and suicide prevention are passions of mine, and I think, as the minister said, there is so much more we can do.

A concrete step we could do immediately as a Parliament would be to set up a mental health parliamentary committee with members from all sides so we can study and deal with the mental health issues of Canadians at committee, as we do with many other committees. I want to know if our minister will commit to setting that up or working with us to set that up as quickly as possible.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I want to assure the member that in my first years in Parliament, we set up a separate subcommittee of the HRDC committee on disability issues. I chaired that committee for five years. It was a small committee that did exceptionally good work, including on mental health and the disability tax credit.

I would be pleased to entertain that idea. Obviously we have to work with our whips and House leaders to man it and get supports and services from the House of Commons, but there is certainly a lot to discuss. As a pledge, I would be very happy to meet with the all-party mental health caucus as soon as possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Chair, listening to the minister gives one the impression that the federal government is reinventing the wheel and starting from scratch in Quebec. No one is against virtue. On November 23, 2023, the CRTC is going to launch the 988 hotline. However, Quebec organizations are concerned because Quebec already has its own lines, 1-866-APPELLE and 1-855-CRAQUER. The organizations therefore want to be assured that their resources will be able to continue to act and that their equipment will be updated somewhere along the way so as to be able to connect to this new service.

Can the minister assure these organizations that are concerned that a lack of coordination will prevent them from being able continue to offer their services in Quebec?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Absolutely, Madam Chair. Coordination, communication and collaboration with all of the provinces and territories is a priority. I think that the provinces will have the capacity to deliver therapeutic mental health services. Planning is very important. Over the next year, we need to coordinate, just as the member said.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Chair, I am really glad we are here to talk about the mental health emergency that is taking place.

Government Orders

On October 5, I asked the Speaker if we could have an emergency debate and I was not granted permission to do that. I am grateful that all parties have come together to have this important conversation.

I am going to read a quote from Ellen Cohen and Kim Hollihan from the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, CAMIMH. They state:

Mental health is an integral part of health, and Canada cannot pride itself on a universal healthcare system that does not include universal mental healthcare. The development of national standards for mental health and substance use services cannot delay the introduction of the Canada Mental Health Transfer. Instead, these standards must go hand in hand with the creation of the Canada Mental Health Transfer, rather than the sequential approach that the government is currently taking.

Since 65 national health organizations sent an open letter to the minister saying that the time is now for the government to fulfill its campaign promise, will the minister finally listen and deliver the help that Canadians desperately need and deliver on the transfer?

• (1835)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I thank the member for his amazing work on this.

One of the reasons we wanted to have this debate tonight is that his party's request did not meet the criteria for an emergency debate and opposition days can do that. We decided that we would make sure this debate took place. I thank the member for his initiative and all the hard work.

I met with the CAMIMH members the morning of the gala, when our colleague, the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, received an award, and I walked them through what we needed to do. I think a lot of them understand that we need to put in place the kind of transparency and accountability for Canadians that we see in the child care arrangements. This is something we will all be able to work on together, but it will not stop us from delivering the kinds of programs we are doing on substance use and mental health innovation, as well as the programs within the bilateral agreements, with the \$600 million a year that is ongoing.

We will work as quickly as we can to put in place the principles for that transfer and then negotiate with the provinces and territories to ensure that data comes back and that there is transparency and accountability for all Canadians.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Chair, part of the minister's last answer was where I wanted to go with my question. It is on data and the importance of the provinces and territories sharing data, not only for the federal government and for our use to understand what is going on in Canada, but for local communities to understand how their data relates to that of similar communities and the best practices that can be transferred, including for the opioid crisis and peer support workers. I know \$2.9 million is coming into Guelph for five peer support projects. They are community-driven projects for mental health.

Could the minister comment on how data can include mental health but also opioids and things related to peer support systems?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, I thank the member for Guelph for all of his advocacy and for hosting us in Guelph, where

we learned a lot about the great things happening on the ground there not only at the university but throughout his community.

We cannot pretend that we can go forward without being able to fund what works and stop funding what does not work, or without understanding the areas of greater need and being able to put additional resources there. We can only do that with data. Last week, I was pleased that the OECD thanked me for my intervention on data at the world mental health conference.

Even with the opioid crisis, at the moment, the Public Health Agency of Canada has placed federal public servants in each of the provinces and territories just so we can get data on the opioid crisis. With the pandemic, the provinces have been struggling, and we cannot do this without the appropriate data.

As we have seen with COVID, we now have better data on immunizations, diseases, emergency visits and ICUs. I hope that will transfer into a real ability, as I am meeting with the health ministers next month, for us all to understand that Canadians deserve to know what is working.

• (1840)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I am honoured to take part in this evening's debate. As those in this chamber know, I have been a huge proponent of raising mental health issues and suicide prevention issues since the first day I was elected.

I know we have made huge strides as a society when it comes to mental health, but we have so much further to go. There was a time not so long ago when people were embarrassed to talk about their struggles. Feeling sad, hurt or upset was something to be ashamed of. Growing up, we were taught to internalize our feelings. We were taught that we did not air our dirty laundry in public. We were taught that any showing of weakness was a failure of character. It was always just better to keep it inside.

I want to say that this was just a sign of the times, but I think it goes much deeper than that. I believe we felt this way because we were scared. We did not understand the full impact of depression. We did not understand the impact that mental health has on physical health. We did not understand how many people actually struggle with mental health issues.

Over my time as a member of Parliament and in the work I did previously, I have heard from first responders, firefighters, police, paramedics, nurses, soldiers and everyday Canadians that even though we can now talk openly about these issues, there is still a stigma attached to them. No one actually owns up to it, but it is still there. Even with as far as we have come, those feelings of weakness of character still persist.

Government Orders

Education has been key, and recent statistics show that mental illness will directly affect one-third of, or 9.1 million, Canadians over the course of their lives. Prior to the pandemic, in any given year, one in five Canadians experienced a mental health issue.

While statistics are not yet available postpandemic, we know that the number of Canadians who have experienced mental health issues will be more than one-third. The effect COVID restrictions have had on mental health may never fully be known, but they will last generations. Being locked up and confined to our homes is not natural. By nature, we are social beings. We need that personal interaction.

Over the course of the last few years, we have witnessed a change in how we deal with mental illness. Bell Let's Talk Day is just one example. We have tried to talk more about depression and mental health. We have talked more openly about suicide. We have talked more openly about post-traumatic stress disorder.

We see more programs, more apps and more supports being offered, and while this is good, it is not good enough. We need to work together with the provinces to find a way to put mental health on par with physical health. We need to work together to find more support services for those who are suffering from severe and persistent mental health issues. I often say there is no health without mental health. As a matter of fact, the minister just mentioned that same thing. We need government and business to work together to effect this change.

In all of the recent studies done, we see that poor mental health costs Canada \$50 billion a year in lost productivity. Mental health problems account for approximately 30% of the short- and long-term workplace disability claims. This is an astronomical sum to me. I cannot help but believe there has to be a better way.

My grandma used to say that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This old adage would seem to apply here. If we can recognize the symptoms and triggers, we can do a great deal of preventative work.

For every dollar spent on mental health, four dollars to \$10 is returned to the economy. Improving access to treatments for depression could boost our economy by \$32 billion a year.

This is why New Zealand tabled its "Wellbeing Budget" in 2019, a groundbreaking departure from the norm. This budget provided \$455 million for new frontline mental health services, and every aspect of government policy is viewed through a mental health lens. Suicide prevention received a \$40-million boost. The government worked to provide \$320 million to address family and sexual violence to improve the lives and mental health of children.

I tell people back home that I am the luckiest person alive. Being a member of Parliament feels more like a calling than it does a job. To stand here in this chamber and have the ability to effect change is truly an honour. It is truly humbling.

I have travelled the world representing our community and our country. I have seen and experienced things that most people will only ever read about, and now I am a three-term member of Parliament representing one of the largest ridings in the country. Yester-

day was my seven-year anniversary, as a matter of fact, of being a member of Parliament.

• (1845)

When I am asked how I got into politics, my answer is always the same: I never intended to be a politician. I fell ass-backwards into a position that I now feel I was born to be in, that I feel was maybe God's plan for me.

What I do know is that I live every day working tirelessly not to perpetuate the dysfunction and the abuse that filled our childhood.

In my role as a member of Parliament, when speaking to school-aged children, my goal is always to leave them knowing that, regardless of their story, background or setting, they too could one day find themselves in our nation's highest legislative chamber, an honour that is beyond words.

While I have never shared this publicly, I live every day with the emotional and physical scars of the abuse that my brothers and I dealt with back home. My hope is always that if a person finds themselves experiencing some or all of what my brothers have, that they will see that they can overcome. They are not broken, and they are not weak.

I can still remember the smell of burning flesh and the sight of my brother's skin hanging off of his hand. We were lined up to watch. We did not know if we were all getting this, or if it was just my brother Kevin.

The burner had been turned on for some time. It was so hot that it was not even red any longer, it was purple. It was a bad day. Why? I do not know. Was the canned food stacked properly? Were the dishes done? Was the garbage out? It did not matter. Whatever played in her head, we were going to have to pay for it. We had been here before. We knew what was coming.

Just a couple of weeks earlier, I had been on the receiving end of a can of soup that was thrown at me. As I entered the kitchen, as pots and pans clanged violently, the can hit me squarely in the corner of my eye, opening up a gaping gash that required stitches, all because the cupboards were disorganized.

As we stood there, tears slowly ran down our cheeks. We were all terrified. She yanked his little arm. It was barely able to reach the top of the stove. I remember thinking that he even stood on his toes to help her deliver the punishment. She held his arm in place as she placed his tiny hand onto the burner.

Government Orders

I could hear the sound of his flesh burning. Oddly, I do not remember him crying or screaming, maybe because our screams drowned out his. She did not even blink as she flung him to the side and looked directly at my brother and me. I can remember Trent and Kevin thrown into their bedroom, something that was knocked over and the slapping around, over and over, their cries and then silence. Did she finally do it? Did her anger and hatred finally boil over to end with her killing one of us?

I shared that with all my colleagues to tell us that I come at this as a non-partisan issue.

My brother Kevin was a victim of that. He lives on the streets to this day. He was shot twice with a shotgun last summer. He is gripped in our country's opioid addiction. I lost my brother-in-law to an overdose in 2008. Each and every day, I believe that if we, as leaders, share our stories and tell people and show Canadians that it is okay to come forward and share our story, we will break the stigma.

I have been a member of Parliament for seven years, and I have cried way too much in this chamber, but I honestly believe that if we throw away the talking points, speak from the heart and work on tangible things, we can show people who are struggling and suffering silently that they too could maybe, one day, regardless of where they come from, stand in this hallowed place and be a member of Parliament, that they can achieve anything, and that they can overcome the abuses they faced.

I live every day for this. It went so much better in my office when I was rehearsing, but I appreciate everything we are doing. Obviously, opening this up opens up a whole can of worms, but this is not just my story. It is my brothers' story, and it is a story of many Canadians who are struggling to this day, who are struggling right now and may be listening. To those who are struggling, I want them to know that I see them. I hear them. I am fighting for them.

• (1850)

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for Cariboo—Prince George for his moving speech and for his strong advocacy. Also, I congratulate him on his new function as the mental health critic, and I will be glad to work with him.

As the member said, mental health is health, and it is a complex issue. Does he think that a diversified approach is required to answer the needs of those suffering with mental health problems?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Chair, I appreciate the question, and absolutely, but we are not the experts here in the House. We have to work with those who are on the front lines. We have to work with those who have lived experience. We have to work with the national organizations and the true medical experts to really develop something that is tangible and can impact and help Canadians.

I know that far too many Canadians are falling through the cracks; far too many Canadians are struggling with opioid addiction, and what we are doing just is not enough. Applying a band-aid does not help it, so it has to be diversified, because what works for some may not work for others. No two cases are the same.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Chair, I want to thank and congratulate my colleague for his very moving speech. I think that everyone in the House felt my colleague's emotion and commitment, which we certainly share. I thank him.

We have been talking about the opioid crisis and what needs to be done. The member told us that we need a host of measures that depend in particular on the context and the place. I would like him to talk about specific cases.

What can be done to better combat the opioid crisis and its deadly consequences?

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Chair, that is a great question and, in truth, I do not have the answer, but I can speak from my experience with my family.

I talked with my brother last summer, after he had been shot twice with a shotgun, and he said all the right things. He said that he was going to get clean. This is someone I have taken off the street so many times over the last 20 years. I have no idea why he is here. When I sit with other family members who have lost loved ones to overdoses, they do not have the answers either; they just know something needs to be done.

This is why we need to talk about it more openly. This is why we need to share the experiences and engage the professionals to develop a real plan. An app does not do it, and in all honesty, a phone line does not do it, but they are steps and tools in a tool box that can make a difference.

We have to stop the drugs from coming into our country. We have to arm the frontline officers who are tasked with protecting us with the tools to stop those drugs and send those who are importing these drugs to jail. Let us stop that revolving-door policy and make sure we are putting the tools and resources with the frontline officers, the frontline personnel and the frontline organizations that are actually in the fight each and every day. That truly will make a difference.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Chair, I thank the member for all his work and everything he has shared this evening. It is so inspiring to me, as someone who was newly elected a year ago, to see another member of Parliament speak from the heart. It really instills a lot of hope for me in the future of our work. I also want to thank the member for his work around PTSD and the three-digit hotline.

I worked in mental health and addictions prior to coming into work as a member of Parliament, and I saw how underfunded it was. I wonder if the member could share if he feels that stigma may play a part in the lack of follow-through that we are currently seeing on the mental health transfers to provinces and territories.

Government Orders

• (1855)

Mr. Todd Doherty: That is a great question, Madam Chair. We know that just on suicide prevention alone, 11 Canadians each and every day die by suicide. We know a further 275 Canadians attempt suicide. The reality is we know that those statistics are probably even greater because of the stigma associated with suicide. The same goes with overdose and drug abuse. There is such a stigma attached to suicide, mental illness, mental health and drug addiction that many families do not come forward. They are ashamed to bring it forward. They are afraid to speak about it.

We live in a world where time is money and money is everything. Nobody has the time to really look at their neighbour and ask them how they are doing. We do not want to get involved. We are afraid of what the answer is going to be. We have to do more. We have to care more.

I shared my story today, not to bring sympathy on me or my brother. I share it because my hope is that we break that stigma and that we show families who are dealing with the same issues, or even members of Parliament who are here tonight that it is okay not to be okay, and it is okay to bring these stories forward and show Canadians who do not have the same platform that we can share that, so they can see there is hope. Right now there are so many Canadians who are struggling and families who have no place to turn. They are afraid to come forward. If they see us talking about this, maybe they will come forward and maybe they will seek help as well.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Chair, I really just want to thank the member for Cariboo—Prince George for what he has said tonight. It really does help us all try to reduce the stigma. It makes it easier for others to have the courage to share what they have suffered and to understand the role of trauma and how people like you have turned it into being an absolute passionate crusader for others. Your brother has not been so lucky. Therefore, it is just a gratitude that I want to express on behalf of all Canadians.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. minister knows that she has to speak through the Chair, but I share the sentiments.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Chair, I appreciate that from the minister.

I am 54 years of age. I had my birthday just the other week. I am ashamed to say that this is the first time I have spoken publicly about this. For many years, I did not even tell my wife and my kids about this. I just knew that each and every day I wanted to live, not to perpetuate the dysfunction. I did not want to talk about it. As I said at the start of my speech, we did not talk about this stuff. I am tired of hiding it. I phoned my brother Trent just before this and said, “This is our story. I hope you’re okay with my sharing this.”

It was 2020, so I was 52, and my brother Trent is seven years younger than me. We never talked about this, but there was something that was a catalyst to this and members will have to wait for the book to come out to read what the catalyst was. We sat in a White Spot in British Columbia, and we both started shaking and we both started crying. I was 52. He was around 47. I have a step-

brother by the name of Elvis. He messaged me last week. He is 54, the same age as me. He shared something with me. We have never talked about this. I thought I was the only one. He messaged me and he said it has been eating him up all these years and he has never talked about it. That is what we need to break. Even as brothers, we never talked about this stuff. As families, we never talked about this. We are afraid to talk about it.

The first step in doing anything is being open and honest, and it is dialogue. That is the only way we are going to right the ship and do well for Canadians: being open and honest and having that open and honest conversation. We do not need the partisan politics. We all agree that the ship is broken right now and we need to do whatever we can to help put it back afloat.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Chair, I would like to begin with an aside because I was deeply touched by what my colleague said. If anyone in the House is keenly aware of mental health and illness issues, it is me.

My colleague talked about stigmatization. Michel Foucault’s monumental work, *A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, made it clear that mental illness had to earn its legitimacy. In other words, mental illness had to be construed as a medical condition. Nowadays, we say “mental health” because we want to avoid the term “mental illness”, but mental illness is an illness like any other. Unfortunately, people with mental illness were locked up, excluded, exploited, put in circuses, put in cages of put on the *Ship of Fools*. They were dispersed all over the place, set adrift. Foucault’s account of the history of madness and how those afflicted were treated paints a dismal picture of human beings.

I rise today to point out that it is not our concerns about mental health and mental illness that divide us. It seems to me that, if we really look at this properly, we would see that this is not the right legislature for taking effective action in this area.

As I said earlier in the preamble to my question, I sometimes get the impression from the minister that we have to reinvent the wheel. Of course, this matter is of particular concern right now, especially because of the postpandemic situation. Mental health has always been the poor cousin of physical health, and there are challenges to be met. Moreover, mental health is one of the weak links in our health care systems, and this became abundantly clear as the pandemic crisis played out. However, none of this justifies the federal government’s interfering in something that is none of its concern.

I want the well-being of anyone struggling with illness or mental health problems to be a priority. No one wants that more than I do. Ottawa has to be careful, however, because it is not doing any good or making things better when it meddles in action plans that are already in place. I do not know if the minister is familiar with the 2022-26 interdepartmental mental health plan that was recently adopted by Quebec.

Government Orders

At one point, I had a glimmer of hope. She talked about bilateral child care agreements. I thought that perhaps the minister would be willing to look at what Quebec is doing. Then she would see that the problem in Quebec is not the policies, the goals or the organizational structures, but the money. It is the financial resources that are lacking. There is a lack of resources to hire competent employees and to support certain frontline workers who care for people. I am thinking about employees in community organizations, to name just one sector. I will return to this later.

That was just an aside, and I will now go back to my speech. That said, there are issues there, and I sometimes get the impression that my colleagues are in the wrong legislature. The responsibilities were divided in 1867. It is clear that the federal government currently takes in much more money for its responsibilities than it offers in services. It seems to want to give in to a temptation that has been denounced by every premier who has served the people of Quebec, who form a nation.

• (1905)

That is why we often refer to Quebec's strategies as national strategies. It is not to insult Canada, which is officially recognized as a country. It is just that Quebec is a nation by virtue of its National Assembly, which put strategies in place. Do members know when the first national mental health strategy was implemented? It was in 1980, and it was the first national strategy in the world.

The people of the Quebec nation, through their National Assembly, have been trying to meet mental health needs since 1980. Over time, Quebec has developed its expertise and various national strategies and action plans with the help of many stakeholders, but what it is currently missing is financial resources. When we talk about the interdepartmental plan, that includes a large number of departments. With regard to the consultation that took place in the development of the most recent plan, or the new strategy, we spoke to community groups, researchers, stakeholders, and all segments of the population, including youth, adults, seniors, minority groups and indigenous peoples. We developed that plan in conjunction with many departments and many members of Quebec's interdepartmental working group on homelessness and mental health, including the director of criminal and penal prosecutions, which is important when it comes to Bill C-5. When we say that we are not going to penalize or incarcerate people because they have addictions, then we need to make sure that part of our informed and comprehensive strategy on mental health involves making sure those individuals do not go to prison, because we know that addictions are often related to mental health. We need to help these people.

Other contributors included the ministry of education, the ministry of advanced education, the ministry of immigration, francization and integration, the ministry of culture and communications; the ministry of families, the ministry of justice, the ministry of public safety, the ministry of agriculture, fisheries and food, the ministry of municipal affairs and housing, the ministry of finance, the ministry of transport, the youth secretariat, the indigenous affairs secretariat, the ministry of labour, employment and social solidarity, the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec, the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, the status of women secretariat, Quebec's treasury board secretariat and the Société d'habitation du Québec.

In Quebec, for the people of Quebec, for our nation, which speaks through its National Assembly, there are at least 10 departments involved in this action plan. We see mental health as an interdisciplinary challenge. Now along comes this government, no doubt well intentioned, with a mandate letter for a minister who wants to help the Quebec nation, the people of Quebec and all the stakeholders I talked about implement this action plan. I hope we will not have to wait long for the money to come through. We have been waiting for health transfers for too long. In my opinion, if the federal government had invested its fair share in health care over the past 30 years, then all of Quebec's existing action plans would probably have strengthened the weak link that was exposed during the pandemic. That is the issue. Our mental health initiatives have to complement one another.

• (1910)

That is why I am asking the minister to work in concert with Quebec rather than exploit mental health just to exert her spending power—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Chair, I would like to congratulate my colleague for his very interesting speech. We obviously have the same values.

I would like to remind him that the French author Michel Folco wrote a novel about a sad character in a book called *Même le mal se fait bien*, or even bad things can turn out well.

A question comes to my mind when I hear my colleague's comments and when I look at everything that is being done in Ottawa. It could apply to passports or to any issue. Ottawa wants to meddle in health care without adequately funding the provinces and without respecting constitutional jurisdictions.

Does my colleague agree with me that, in Ottawa, even good intentions can turn out badly?

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Chair, my colleague from Joliette has a great sense of humour.

As I said at the outset, just because someone wants to do good does not mean they are doing good, especially if they are infringing on someone else's autonomy. Usually, this applies to an individual, but it can also apply to a national government that has already thought things through and developed action plans to improve its performance and its mental health care in collaboration with community groups.

Government Orders

I want to acknowledge community groups since this is autonomous community action week. These groups are underfunded, but they are propping up the front lines. If we want to reinvigorate these essential mental health resources, then we need to offer these people decent wages and not let them burn out because of the pandemic, which exacerbated mental health needs. I commend the people working on the front lines in community action, because fixing this issue will certainly take concrete action at every level. In my opinion, these people are keeping the system going.

[English]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I wonder if our hon. colleague could tell us exactly what Quebec's provincial mental health plan is.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Chair, at least 10 departments helped develop this plan, which was divided into seven pillars. In fact, the Government of Quebec is investing \$1 billion in this plan.

The first pillar is promoting mental health and preventing mental illness. The second pillar is prevention and crisis intervention services. The third is partnerships with community organizations. The fourth pillar focuses on actions aimed at young people, their families, their loved ones and their inner circle. The fifth pillar is improving access to mental health care and services. The sixth pillar is prevention and alternatives to hospitalization in psychiatric care, and the seventh is consultation and improving practices.

I think the federal government could contribute to research.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I am working with mental health organizations in Quebec and I, too, am willing to acknowledge Quebec's leadership in this area. That is why it was recognized in the federal-provincial bilateral agreement and the action plan my colleague was talking about.

A total of \$11 million was announced in the 2017-18 economic and fiscal update, and that amount was increased to \$20 million in 2018-19 for the subsequent years in order to support the implementation of this action plan.

I would like to know whether my colleague agrees that discussions between the provinces and the federal government are important in order to properly address the crisis and mental health needs.

• (1915)

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Chair, obviously that is important, but the money needs to be there. I am not saying that we do not need to talk about or collaborate on mental health. On the contrary, I am saying that we need to do so within the limits of our responsibilities and jurisdictions. We need to take a complementary approach.

Quebec already has national standards, by the way, because it is a nation. We do not need more layers of bureaucracy. What we need is money at the ground level to take care of people.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Chair, as we are talking about this issue, it is very important that we focus on the fact that stigma is blocking so many people from getting the necessary help they need. Anyone who has done any work on trauma and the impacts it has not only on a person's emotions but also on a person's body would know that those two things must be integrated, and not see what is happening within somebody's mental state as separate from their physical state as they are together and the same.

Can the member talk about ways that all of us in this place can start to fight stigma in a meaningful way collaboratively so that we can see that change across this whole country?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Chair, I agree with the idea that we must take a holistic approach to mental health. In some cases, it is the chicken or the egg conundrum. Someone's mental health will deteriorate because of a physical problem and vice versa. We must therefore look at the person as a whole. I do think that both legislatures must take a complementary approach.

In order to give more help to people, to strengthen and reinforce the weak links in the health care systems from coast to coast to coast, including in Quebec, the federal government must give us the necessary financial resources and ensure that we have substantial, and above all recurring, health transfers. Even the Canadian Mental Health Association says that the problem is that the government makes one-time investments. It takes stability and predictability to rebuild the system and make action plans that will actually be effective in helping our people.

[English]

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Chair, I apologize to my friend, but perhaps he could state this one more time.

I just want to know again the amount of money that Quebec has committed to its mental health plan, as well as the seven pillars. I am not quite sure I heard that there was anything in them for addictions or recovery. I wonder if Quebec is seeing the same things that the province of British Columbia is seeing in terms of the opioid crisis that is spiralling out of control.

Perhaps our colleague could take the next minute and a half to speak to that.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Chair, I do not know whether my colleague remembers what I said about my NDP colleague's bill, but the Bloc Québécois is very much in favour of approaches designed to divert those cases. The purpose of diversion is not solely to free up space in courts and jails, though. Diversion will only work with adequate funding and the concerted action required to ensure that these people do not wind up out in the streets with their problems. Decriminalizing drug dependency is not enough to clear anyone's conscience. That is not what this is about.

That is why Bill C-5 is a step in the right direction. I do not know if the Conservatives voted in favour of Bill C-5, but it seems like a step in the right direction to me. With that and the necessary resources, we will make progress in dealing with this issue, but there has to be money for this. To me, the leader in best practices for drug dependency is Portugal.

• (1920)

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Chair, we know the mental health crisis has been referred to as the parallel pandemic. This House has not had a debate on how to respond to this. Earlier this month, I rose and sought an emergency debate on Canada's mental health crisis, but unfortunately it was denied.

I want to thank the minister, as she acknowledged tonight we have never had this conversation about mental health until tonight and we have never had a proper debate. I want to thank the Conservatives and the Bloc and their House leaders for agreeing to have this important conversation, because it took all parties to agree to do this take-note debate.

Over the last two and a half years, the mental health of Canadians has been negatively impacted by the loss, social isolation and financial strain the pandemic has brought. We all have constituents struggling with their mental health, and many of us have loved ones who are as well. My good friend from Vancouver Kingsway always says that there is not a family not touched by the mental health or substance use crisis in this country.

I really want to thank my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George for sharing his personal story about his brother Kevin and his brother-in-law. We hear those personal stories from our constituents every day as parliamentarians, and it is painful to hear.

We know we are going into a period where we are seeing a lot of impacts right now on people's health. The cost of living is rapidly rising and likely we are going to see a recession. The stress Canadians are facing has not abated. Just yesterday, the Minister of Finance warned Canadians of difficult days ahead and suggested the federal government might not be there to help.

Now more than ever we must recognize that mental health is health, and we need to take steps to ensure Canadians have equitable access to the services they need. This month, the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction released a joint report on the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of Canadians, which detailed some alarming findings.

According to polling conducted for the report, 35% of respondents reported moderate to severe mental health concerns. We see that as parliamentarians. It also found that fewer than one in three people with current mental health concerns accessed services. That is alarming. The report identified key barriers to accessing services as “financial constraints, not having readily available help, not knowing how and where to get help, and long wait-lists.”

The report identified financial concerns as a top stressor during the pandemic and discussed the links between income and unemployment with mental health concerns. Given the current economic forecast, there is a real risk the mental health and substance use crisis will worsen in the months ahead. That is scary. As my colleagues have identified, 10 Canadians die a day from suicide and 21 from a toxic overdose.

We also know health care workers and first responders have been raising the alarm that our health care system is under tremendous pressure. Unfortunately, too many people struggling with mental health issues are left with nowhere to turn but crowded emergency rooms. A worsening mental health and substance use crisis will only push our health care system closer to collapse.

It is clear we need to make sure people can get help in their communities before they are in crisis. While there are many great organizations working hard to support Canadians struggling with mental health issues, we know they are running on fumes. The demand for mental health services has increased since the onset of the pandemic, but that demand cannot be met under the current system when frontline organizations are having to worry about keeping the lights on. They need help and they need help now.

We need system change that will finally bring mental health care fully into our universal public health care system once and for all. We need sustainable funding to ensure all Canadians have access to services when they need them.

In the last election, the Liberals made a promise to Canadians that they would take steps to improve access to mental health care in Canada. A cornerstone of the Liberals' promises on mental health was to establish a new permanent transfer to the provinces and territories to expand publicly funded mental health care and address backlogs. Canadians were told an initial investment of \$4.5 billion over five years would be made in the Canada mental health transfer.

Government Orders

● (1925)

Now, \$250 million of that funding was supposed to be delivered in 2021-22, with an additional \$625 million in 2022-23. To date, of that money, no funding has been delivered. There has been no transparency from the government on when the money would get out the door.

Last week the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, with the support of 65 organizations from health and allied sectors, wrote an open letter to the minister expressing concern about the delay in establishing the mental health transfer and calling on the government to take immediate steps to fulfill this important and critical campaign commitment.

The minister has taken the position that national performance standards must be developed prior to the creation of the Canada mental health transfer. However, the open letter I referred to demonstrated there is a clear consensus from the mental health community that the development of these standards should not delay the Canada mental health transfer. There is an urgent need for increased mental health services in communities right across the country. Wait times for publicly funded mental health services are unacceptably long.

In Ontario, where we are right now, there are more than 28,000 children on wait-lists for community-based mental health services. The wait could range from 67 days to more than 2.5 years, depending on the service, exceeding clinically appropriate wait times. For children and youth, delays in accessing care could have lifelong impacts for them, their family and society. Tragically, it could also be a matter of life and death.

According to Stats Canada, suicide is the leading cause of death among youth and young adults aged 15 to 34. This has touched my life and those of many people here in this chamber, as we have discussed tonight. UNICEF has reported that Canada has one of the highest rates of youth suicide in the world. We heard my colleague from Nunavut just two days ago share that tragic story of someone who could not find housing. This is unacceptable in a wealthy country like Canada. It is preventable.

For those struggling with substance use disorders, waiting could also be a matter of life and death. Across Canada the average wait time for adult residential treatment for substance use is 100 days. Every day that someone must wait for access to treatment or harm reduction services, they are put at risk because of the toxic drug supply.

The Canada mental health transfer would provide an infusion of money for services that could save lives now. It is urgently needed, but there is other critical work that must be done to transform mental health here in Canada. Beyond the mental health transfer, mental health advocates have been long calling for legislation to enshrine law parity between mental and physical health.

Last month I tabled private member's Motion No. 67, and I hope my colleagues will second it, calling on the government to finally develop that legislation and urgently fulfill its promise to establish the Canada mental health transfer. I hope all members of the House will recognize the crisis we are in and support these urgently needed calls to action.

Untreated or inadequately treated mental health carries significant social and economic costs. The Mental Health Commission of Canada estimates that mental health issues and illnesses cost Canada at least \$50 billion a year, not including the more than \$6 billion in lost productivity.

Relative to the disease burden caused by mental health and compared to our G7 and OECD peers, Canada is underspending on mental health. France spends 15% of its health care budget on mental health, whereas the U.K. spends 13%. Canada, depending on the province or territory, spends between 5% and 7%. We are falling way short.

For the well-being of Canadians, for our economy and our communities, mental health cannot wait. It is time to invest in the care Canadians deserve, and to truly treat mental health like health. We need to listen to the experts. We need to listen to the expert task force on substance use. We need to listen to the 67 organizations. I hope that together we can do that.

● (1930)

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Chair, what can we do as federal members working with municipalities, provincial bodies and organizations to better coordinate our efforts? That is one of the biggest challenges that we have, I believe, as parliamentarians: provincial, territorial and federal government coordination.

Does the member have any advice for the House on what we could be doing differently?

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Chair, that is an excellent question. I want to thank my colleague who had the courage to support my bill and listen to the experts on substance use, Bill C-216, a health-based response to substance use.

We need to listen to the experts, listen to the local knowledge in this country and listen to indigenous knowledge about how we move forward. Those 67 leading organizations are ready to deliver mental health now, but they are running on fumes as I stated. Injecting the mental health transfer, getting it out the door to those local experts, will save lives.

We have an opportunity to save lives right now if we come together, collectively, and not wait for everything to be perfect. It will not be. What we do know is that those organizations save lives now and they can prevent the loss of further life. We need their help and we need to listen to them.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I want to thank our hon. colleague from Courtenay—Alberni for his speech and his passion in this area as well. I know we share that.

Government Orders

One of the very first debates I took part in after being elected in 2015 was in 2016 on the Attawapiskat First Nation and the suicide epidemic it had there. I remember standing up and saying in my speech how suicide had negatively impacted my life. One of the members from the Liberal Party, the government, stood up. He was a member for 28 years. One of the very first debates he had was on the suicide epidemic in first nations communities. Sadly, all these years later, we are still so far behind and there is still so much more to do.

I struggle that, even in the seven years that I have been elected, we have made some ground, but sadly, we are still seeing children as young as four take their lives and take part in suicide pacts. There is so much more to do.

Would my hon. colleague like to talk about the suicide epidemic we see in first nations and marginalized communities?

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Chair, I want to thank my colleague for his really important work on the three-digit hotline and on PTSD. I worked with him on the PTSD bill right after we got elected. We are both from the class of 2015, and I really appreciate his leadership when it comes to mental health and working collaboratively.

It is not something that I have not been a witness to. I do not have a lived experience of living as an indigenous person or in an indigenous community, but I do live in a region that has been heavily hit with suicide. I have not been to Attawapiskat, but certainly, watching that, it brought me back home.

Part of the reason I ran for Parliament back in 2015 was that I had been to, I think, 15 funerals in my region for people who had passed from either substance use or suicide. When we go to a funeral for someone and we know it is a preventable loss of life, there is just an empty feeling. We know that we need to do better. Certainly, there are not enough supports.

As a parliamentarian back in 2016, one of the Nuu-chah-nulth nations was going through a suicide crisis. I had to go home and be with the people there. They do not have adequate supports. They need resources. They have solutions. They have healing journey solutions that they want to implement. They just need resources.

We are failing when it comes to mental health, and we are failing on reconciliation. We really need to listen to the communities themselves. Each community has ideas on how its members can heal from the trauma endured in residential schools and the colonial laws that were implemented and forced upon them.

• (1935)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Chair, first of all, my colleague is a real humanitarian, and I commend his compassion. He has done some very interesting work on drug addiction. His bill was very interesting.

Now, on the subject of mental health, some experts who appeared before the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying talked about mental health and the chronic suffering associated with certain mental illnesses. Some people may be struggling with intolerable suffering that cannot be treated with therapy. The

experts told us that it might be better to give these people autonomy and the right to decide what to do about their suffering, as well as extending MAID to these individuals, who are few in number, rather than leaving them to contemplate suicide.

I know my colleague is a great humanitarian. I wanted to hear his thoughts on this, because, in the long run, if we cannot do this, people will slip through the cracks. Not everyone with mental illness can be cured, because there are illnesses that are incurable and irremediable. I would like to hear his opinion on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Chair, I have worked with my colleague. He as well had the courage to support moving forward on substance use with a health-based response and listening to Canada's leading experts. The Bloc voted for Bill C-216. I am very appreciative of the opportunity to work with my colleague, who cares. He is open to learning and working together. We may not agree on everything, but he is trying to find ways to work together and we can do a lot more. We are just embarking on that conversation.

When it comes to people making decisions about suicide or suicide by accident when they are really struggling and maybe using substances, we have all heard of those stories or know somebody who has been impacted by that. We need to provide people with supports so they have a pathway out. We talk about the stigma. When people cannot get help in their own communities, they are going to make bad choices.

There are 500,000 Canadians right now who are off work due to mental health alone, and it is getting worse. We need to make sure we are providing supports and services for people. That is what we are calling for, to ensure that we get the \$4.5-billion transfer in place and get the resources out to community-based organizations so that they can provide the supports and people can access the help they need.

Do I think it is perfect? Do I think everybody can get all the help they need? That might not be possible, but I can assure everyone that if we do this transfer, we are going to save thousands and thousands of lives. We know it is the right thing to do because mental health is health, and we need parity between physical and mental health.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Chair, the member for Courtenay—Alberni is my neighbour back home and I thank him for his incredible work on mental health, dealing with opioid addiction and all of the challenges we are seeing across Canada right now.

Government Orders

The member mentioned something in his speech that is really important to me and the communities that I have lived in, which is indigenous mental health. We know what the reality is with all of the history that we have all been apprised of. Indigenous communities have a particular reality that they face every single day. We know that the deaths that happen by suicide in indigenous communities, especially by young people, are profound, far too numerous and leave a weight on communities.

I remember speaking to one chief who felt that he was not getting a good deal from a level of government and he told a representative when they were discussing this that if the representative wanted any agreement from the chief, they were going to go to the bridge where more than one kid, unfortunately, had hanged themselves. When we talk about that, we must recognize this particular pressure.

I am wondering if the member could talk about what resources are needed to be acknowledged in indigenous communities to make sure that these deaths stop, because they are happening far too often, and Canada is directly to blame.

• (1940)

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Chair, I think back to the community in my riding that was going through that crisis. It did not have mental health supports in place and was desperate. When I came here, I had to beg to get a mental health support worker for one year. The federal government and the minister at the time said it was not their problem and that it was the province's problem, but I explained that it was the minister's problem as she writes the cheque to the First Nations Health Authority in British Columbia. I asked her to pick up the phone, which she did, and it helped, but it is not enough.

We need to listen to communities. We need to provide the resources for healing, and we need to ensure that there are mental health supports in community. We need to listen to them. That is part of reconciliation.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak about a vital issue, to put it mildly. I am glad that the House is taking up the issue of mental health tonight. I have enjoyed listening to the reflections of all members.

I should tell you at the outset that I am splitting my time with the member for Don Valley East.

Where I want to start is on the issue of stigma. I think it is fair to say that, as we discuss this tonight, I hope it adds to the lifting of stigma in some small way. Perhaps it could, depending on where things go. However, it is quite fair to say that over the years Canadians, through their discussions, openness and honesty, have been helping to lift the stigma in very significant ways. What does that mean for us in this House as parliamentarians? I think that very real phenomenon we have seen in Canadian society, where people are much more comfortable speaking about mental health and the particular challenges they face, has direct implications for us in politics.

It is often said, and it is a truism, whether it is politics or specifically government, that the first obligation of government is to ensure the security of its citizens. With the lifting of stigma I think we

take that insight and expand it to understand that mental health needs to be part of that conversation and that focus as well, because security, if it is to be ensured, must include not just the physical security of individuals but also their mental health. That is where I think government has a fundamental role to play.

We have a short time to engage tonight. Usually, we have more than the five minutes that is allotted, but it is a take-note debate so I will keep my comments centred on one particular group that I think deserves a great deal of attention and that is youth. Young people in particular faced with poverty struggle with mental health issues. I do not think we can say that poverty in and of itself is the cause of mental health challenges faced by young people, but certainly it is a key factor. Added to that of course is the trauma that so many young people endure. When those two forces come together, the result is very real mental health challenges.

I have mentioned already the importance of government, but community organizations play a fundamental role because they are on the ground and have wonderful staff members. I will speak about two organizations in London that I have a great deal of respect for, who have the expertise to engage youth and help them transform to something better.

Over the years, I have had the chance to get to know the Youth Opportunities Unlimited organization in London. It is led by a wonderful leader, Steve Cordes, in London. This is someone who has devoted his life to helping young people. He has been the executive director for many years, but engaged and involved with YOU, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, since the early 1980s. The organization, through its work, through the work of the board and its staff, has focused on housing services. It has built a wonderful youth shelter. I was thrilled to see federal funding secured for that. It also provides job training, which the federal government assists to fund as well.

There is another great organization, the Boys and Girls Club, in London. Its CEO, Chris Harvey, deserves enormous credit as well. It runs sports programs for kids. It runs art programs for kids, particularly drama, the visual arts and music as well. Importantly, it runs self-esteem programming. One of the programs that stands out in that particular category is the work it has done to help youth understand the importance of body image and the way that modern media helps to shape those notions. It is a very sad thing, to put it mildly, that the self-esteem of young people is so often negatively impacted by the images they see particularly on television, but these days it is online. Anything to counter those negative images is something that I think can further contribute positively to mental health. Organizations that take up that challenge I think need to be applauded, so I wanted to put that on the record tonight. There are many other organizations I could have talked about in London. There is such a great community there, but YOU and the Boys and Girls Club do outstanding work.

I am thankful for the opportunity to engage. I look forward to further reflections from colleagues tonight. It is a pleasure truly to listen and participate on such a key issue.

Government Orders

• (1945)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, back in the summer, we learned of a veteran who had reached out to Veterans Affairs in a time of need who was counselled by a Veterans Affairs employee to perhaps consider medical assistance in dying.

We know that recovery is always possible, and we have to manage through recovery, whether it is addictions or mental illness. I do not agree with our colleague from the Bloc. I believe that recovery is always possible.

I wonder if our colleague across the way could comment on the issue of a Veterans Affairs employee counselling veterans in their time of need to perhaps consider medical assistance in dying.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Chair, I did not have a chance to cross the way and shake my colleague's hand after the speech he gave earlier, but I think he touched everyone tonight in a very real way, and I say that to him sincerely.

I am not sure of the specifics of the particular case the member raises. I am happy to have a further conversation with him and learn a little more about what he is talking about there.

However, I have always said that medical assistance in dying, or MAID, ought to be, of course, a last resort. When people need help, it is incumbent that they receive the supports necessary for them to live a dignified life, and I think that everything the government has done as part of the MAID policy has been in that direction. Certainly, it is fundamental that people have access to those basic needs, particularly housing, to have that dignity which should be guaranteed to them. MAID must be a last resort, and I have always felt that way.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Chair, I heard what the member had to say, and I really appreciate it, but we do know that a lot of those frontline organizations are really struggling to keep their doors open. They do not have the resources, and so many people are losing their lives. They are losing their opportunities, and they are getting into cycles that continue to bring them down a path that is not good for their mental health. I wonder if the member could talk about the urgency that those organizations are feeling in requiring the funding to do the work they must do.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Chair, there is no question that there is enormous urgency. This morning, I had a meeting with the YMCA in London, a virtual meeting of course, and we engaged in a conversation about some of the challenges they are facing. They are also an outstanding group that deserves attention and positive comments.

What I can say to the member is that, throughout the pandemic, this government stood up for frontline organizations like no other government ever had. It was truly impressive to see fundamental and emergency funding flow to organizations that helped Canadians through. Certainly, yes, they are faced with a difficult time right now, and government should continue to be there for them as much as possible.

There is a need for fiscal restraint, and I think we all should understand that, but that does not mean that organizations cannot con-

tinue to receive support. I think all of us can collaborate to find ways to ensure that outcome.

• (1950)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his speech.

We know that having access to mental health services at the right time, when we need it, is important. During COVID-19, we saw with Wellness Together Canada that there were more than two million visits to the portal we put in place.

Does my colleague think that working on accessibility to mental health services puts us on the right track to moving this important issue forward?

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for the question. I know how passionate she is in her work as parliamentary secretary. I think that she was engaged in such issues before she became an MP and deserves a lot of credit for that work as well.

I think that accessibility is fundamental to the issue, and whatever government can do to further ensure that is very important. This is something that relates to stigma as well. I do not know if even 10 years ago we would have had these kinds of discussions or the sort of policies that bring to life what the member is talking about, so yes, there is more to do, but I am glad to see that we have, in many ways, gone in the right direction.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is a real privilege to be here today. I want to thank the member for Cariboo—Prince George for getting us on the right track with this discussion. For people at home, we call this a debate, but really it has been a wonderful discussion around a serious issue.

I think the fact that partisanship has been removed from this conversation, and we can actually sink our teeth into a very sensitive and very important issue, means a lot to me. This is one of the first times over the course of the year where I can say that it seems like we are all 100% on the same page, and that is to help people who need help.

We know that the world is becoming more challenging for people. We can see it outside. When we go to the grocery store and talk to people, we can see the stress people are having. It is up to us as parliamentarians to look for ways to find solutions.

I served as a school board trustee in Toronto. I was a youth worker. I was also the minister responsible for children and youth, so I was responsible for children's mental health in Ontario. From what I have seen over 20 years in politics is that it comes down to a disconnect between the entire system. In my city, at least a few years ago, there were 47 different providers in the city, and there was no coordination at the time. That is happening right across this country in many ways.

Government Orders

We need to look for ways to bring people together. The member for London actually spoke about his area which, in many ways, is getting it right because they have a collective impact model, where 170 youth-based organizations come together under an entity called the London Child and Youth Network. They work together by setting similar goals and looking for ways to work with each other to accomplish a set of goals. I think that we need to continue to look for ways to share best practices across this country, to build a framework that connects school boards, municipalities, the federal government and the provincial government together, and really look for ways to move forward.

I will not go through some of the numbers. We know the impact of mental health and its cost of billions of dollars. I think two members have referred to \$50 billion in lost productivity in this country. There is a cost to standing still. If we do not continue to invest, it is going to cost more and more.

We know in a place like Ontario that the wait-list has grown to almost three years. Postpandemic, the wait-list has grown by three times. We have a crisis on our hands, and we need to look for ways to go back to our provinces, gather information and bring it back here. I do think we need to look for ways to work together. It is a key piece in this whole equation.

In addition to that, the member for Cariboo—Prince George said something that I thought was very important. There is not one solution for everyone. It is an important piece. If we look regionally or culturally, or look at different age groups and situations in life, there are so many different lenses that can be applied to looking for solutions when it comes to mental health. I know that in Ontario there has been funding that has gone specifically to culturally based groups because stigmas are very different in different communities.

We are in this room today. What may apply back in one person's community may not apply in someone else's community. We need to build that flexibility and that collective impact across this country and look for ways to build a flexible system that allows for regions to continue to build, share best practices and coordinate those services.

● (1955)

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Chair, like most Canadians, those in the mental health community are also divided on the issue of MAID. Does the member opposite believe that doctors should be forced to provide MAID referrals if they do not personally believe in it?

I would like to have the hon. member's personal views on this. Are his views in line with the views of the Liberal Party?

Mr. Michael Coteau: Madam Chair, this issue of mental health is such a complex issue. The layers of complexity go from very simple solutions to very complex solutions.

I will not stand here as a member of Parliament and give the member medical advice on what someone should be doing. That is up to doctors. What we need to do in the House is debate legislation that either allows people to legally do something or not, and that is what I am here to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Chair, in his speech, my colleague across the way talked about the fact that the longer we wait to fund the services, the worse the situation will become. In the middle of the third wave, experts came to the Standing Committee on Health to tell us that we absolutely needed to quickly shift from one-time funding to ongoing, stable and predictable funding to reinforce our health networks. There is consensus not just in Quebec, but in every province. Quebec is certainly advocating to have health transfers increased to 35% with 6% indexing.

Will my colleague pressure his government to get that money on the ground as soon as possible? As he said, the situation is deteriorating day by day.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Coteau: Madam Chair, if I heard the question correctly, and the member is asking if it is a matter of my applying pressure to the government to ensure more long-term stable funding, the answer is absolutely yes.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Chair, I appreciate my colleague, whom I work closely with on the committee. We are in a crisis in this country. No family or community has been left untouched. As many have mentioned tonight, dozens of Canadians die every day as a result of the mental health and addictions crises. This is a crisis that has had a profound impact on so many families and so many communities.

The government acted so promptly for the banking sector when COVID hit, with \$750 billion in liquidity supports. However, for this mental health crisis, which is an acute crisis that is killing Canadians, we have still not seen the Canadian mental health transfer. Why is the government so slow to provide those vital supports that so many Canadians need when it was so quick to meet the needs of bankers and the banking industry?

● (2000)

Mr. Michael Coteau: Madam Chair, the member and I do work on the committee together. I know his question is sincere, and he has a sincere approach to looking for solutions, so I want to thank him for the work he is doing.

The member has really spoken to an issue that is widespread. Not only in Ontario, across this country or in America, but also around the world, there is a stigma that has been traditionally attached to mental health funding. It was something that was hidden in most cases, and over the last few decades we have seen a transformation in the removal of stigma. Governments are now looking for ways to better position themselves to look for solutions in a very open and transparent way. I am proud to be part of a government that is taking this approach.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Yorkton—Melville.

Government Orders

Millions of Canadians live with a mental illness. Tragically, each year more than 4,000 Canadians commit suicide, the vast majority of whom suffer from a mental illness. Concerningly, many more Canadians who suffer from mental illness will have their lives prematurely ended as a result of the Liberal government's ideologically driven, evidence-free expansion of MAID in cases where mental illness is the sole underlying condition.

It was not long ago that the Minister of Justice himself cautioned against expanding MAID in cases where mental illness is the sole underlying condition. In this very place, when Bill C-7 was debated, he said that there are “inherent complexities and risks with MAID on the basis of mental illness as the sole criterion, such as suicidality being a symptom of some mental illnesses”. What has changed? Those inherent complexities and risks remain. What has changed is purely political.

When Bill C-7 went over to the Senate, the Senate adopted a significant amendment to drastically expand MAID in cases of sole mental illness by way of a sunset clause that would come into effect in March 2023. Despite having spoken of “inherent complexities and risks”, the Minister of Justice, incredibly, did a 180° turnaround and accepted the Senate amendment, despite the absence of meaningful study and the absence of meaningful consultation. Then, the Liberal government shut down debate to ram through the bill and ram through this radical expansion of MAID.

By law, in order to qualify for MAID, it must be established that the patient suffers from a “grievous and irremediable” condition that is “incurable”, in which one is in an “irreversible” state of decline. In other words, in order to qualify for MAID, it must be established that one cannot get better.

The Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, of which I am a vice-chair, has heard testimony from medical experts, including psychiatrists, and the evidence is that it is not safe to move ahead. That is because it is not possible, or at the very least it is difficult, to predict irremediability.

Even the government's own expert panel concluded as much. On page 9 of the government's own expert panel report, the expert panel said, “it is difficult, if not impossible, for clinicians to make accurate predictions about the future for an individual patient” in cases of sole mental illness. That means persons who are suffering from mental illness who could get better and go on to lead happy and productive lives will have their lives prematurely ended.

As such, I submit that it is reckless and irresponsible for the government to move ahead. What the government should do instead is take the evidence of the expert panel, listen to the experts who have come before the special joint committee and put a pause on this significant and, I would submit, dangerous expansion of MAID. Anything less would be a betrayal of some of the most vulnerable people in this country.

• (2005)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Chair, I submit to my hon. colleague that he has spent quite a lot of time in rooms with experts discussing this issue, and far more than I have. I am new to this conversation. It is uncomfortable. It is in-

timidating. It is scary. We are not experts on mental health in this room, but my hon. colleague has heard from many.

I wonder if he can articulate to the chamber this evening what he has heard on the other side of the argument. I do understand that there is a valid case to be made, from medical experts, psychologists and psychiatrists, that it is discriminatory to withhold medical assistance in dying from people whose sole underlying affliction is mental health. For the purpose of a thorough debate, I wonder, given his expertise, if he could provide the House with some insight on what he disagrees with some of these experts on.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Chair, the parliamentary secretary is right. There are those who would make the argument that he just made, on the basis of section 15, or that he asserts some who have come before the committee have made. That is fair. However, the issue is whether this can be done safely, and the balance of evidence before the committee is that it cannot, at least at this time.

What the government should have done all along is undertaken the appropriate review instead of rushing ahead and saying it was doing this and now we are going to study it. In short, I would submit that the government put the cart before the horse, and unfortunately vulnerable people are going to be put at risk. There is an opportunity still, because it is not March 2023 yet, for the government to—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Montcalm.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Chair, although I do respect my colleague, he has some gall to have made that speech.

First, when parties were discussing the deadlines for the committee's work, it was the Conservatives who refused to have the committee continue its work past the date set at the outset. Then they accepted June 6. We finally agreed on February and today they are saying that we must take the time needed. Meanwhile, they were not open to immediately planning the work to be done up to that point.

Second, I listened to the same experts and read the same expert report. Even though at the beginning I was not at all convinced about accessibility when mental illness is the only reason given, that is not what the experts stated in this report. We will continue our work and our soul-searching.

My colleague says that the government is ideologically driven, but the government can speak for itself. I believe that my colleague's speech is very ideological because he cites just one part of the report. When we examine the set of criteria to be met for someone with a mental health issue to gain access, we see that it is available to a very small number of people. People with suicidal ideation do not fall into that category.

Government Orders

• (2010)

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Chair, I respect the member for Montcalm, who has made many important contributions to that committee, but I have to say that I am confused as to what he is saying, as if we are somehow delaying this. The committee agreed that we needed more time to study the many complex issues, and now what we have is a sunset clause that will expire at the same time that we are tabling a report.

That is incredible when we are talking about an issue like life and death. It underscores the need for why the government needs to extend the sunset clause so that we protect vulnerable people, ensure that we get this right and ensure that people do not fall through the cracks. After all, we are talking about life and death.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Chair, we would all agree in the House that we are in a mental health crisis. We would all agree that there have been no federal government resources applied to provide supports for Canadians who are suffering from this mental health and addiction crisis, dozens of whom are dying every day.

Would my colleague agree, as a representative of the Conservative Party, to having the House move unanimously to direct the government to provide the \$4.5 billion in support for the Canadian mental health transfer immediately?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Chair, I would concur with the member for New Westminster—Burnaby that there is inadequate federal funding. Only about 10% of all health care funding relates to mental health, so what is important is for the government to work to step that up and work collaboratively with the provinces to ensure that gaps are closed.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Chair, I am so pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this take-note debate on mental health this evening. I will focus my comments on the challenges that our Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP veterans, and indirectly their families, face with mental health injuries.

Our veterans have unique challenges to their mental health that very few civilians face. They embody the emotional and mental toil of having been deployed to many theatres where they or their comrades face peril, injuries and death. They participate in and witness violence that they cannot and do not want to begin to share with anyone outside of those who have also lived that experience.

Many have experienced mental, physical and sexual abuse from those they thought were their mentors or had their backs no matter what. Many come home with physical and/or mental and emotional injuries after serving and struggling to cope. They struggle on a whole other level, as they know they are failing in their relationships with their spouses and children. Many struggle with trying to fit into a civilian world, where, from their life experience and perspective, they struggle to find their place.

Then there is a challenge that is so counterintuitive and disturbing to me. Having served for seven years on the veterans affairs standing committee in this place, this is something that grieves my

heart and keeps me awake, as I think of the added injury sanctuary trauma inflicts on so many of our veterans.

Sanctuary trauma is what happens to the spirit and mind of a veteran when they experience the failure of the government to fulfill its promise to take care of them and their families. The number of veterans who take their own lives is a significantly higher percentage than that of the civilian population. These are the ones who have been failed the most. The recent revelation of a VAC employee pushing a veteran to choose MAID to end his struggles with a brain injury and PTSD shows just how broken our duty to care is.

I will share only one of so many instances where the needs of the veteran are undervalued because those who are making the decisions about their care failed—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I need to interrupt the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Is there a problem with the interpretation?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Chair, the interpreter is saying that the member is speaking far too quickly. As the member is also holding the paper near the microphone, the interpreter cannot provide the interpretation.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member is speaking a bit too fast and the papers shuffling near the microphone are causing issues for the interpreter. I will ask her to slow down a bit.

The hon. member has three minutes left.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Chair, I have so much to say in so little time.

I will share only one of the instances where the needs of the veterans are undervalued, because those who make the decisions about their care fail to consult the best sources for the answers, answers to the dilemma of backlogs, the best treatment, and how to release, retain and enlist with dignity. I will give one example of an instance of inflicting sanctuary trauma.

An article posted by the Canadian Press on August 7 stated that the federal government is “reimbursing a record number of veterans for medical marijuana”. This article prompted VAC to immediately limit when veterans can order their product within their monthly prescription. This caused veterans to suddenly not have any marijuana products for three months and caused a loss of cannabinoid buildup. For three weeks, veterans suffered physical pain, lack of sleep, nightmares and mental anguish. Why? It was because Veterans Affairs responded to a news story without any consultation with veterans who had turned to using cannabis rather than pharmaceuticals. Every veteran had to suddenly reconfigure their usage. VAC conducted a snap internal audit and now, because of another article in September by the same journalist, veterans are going to face harder thresholds to qualify for cannabis, as well as losing certain products that they depend upon.

One veteran from my riding said, “I need dry cannabis, CBD oils, concentrates, topicals and edibles. I use each product for a specific purpose and now it will be taken away.” He asked, “Why? Is it to save money? It can't be about the veterans' health, because they didn't consider consultation with them a priority in their response to what the media reported.” He spoke to the difference in quality of life for him and asked why veterans are then being required to use pharmaceuticals. He said that he felt like a zombie under those conditions, and now with his cannabis prescription his life is so much better.

This is something we need to consider and research at VAC, and we need listen to veterans. What is the difference in outcomes? What is the difference in the cost of treatments?

The government reassessed its decision and the ordering period has been changed back to the original format. However, the original decision needs to be evaluated. Who authorized this change to the ordering period, and what did they base their decision on? Whoever it was had no perspective on how they ruined thousands of veterans that day and in subsequent weeks. It sent them into a very deep state of anxiety.

The veteran who shared this issue with me is only one of many veterans who have had to face heightened anxiety, depression and battles within their minds about the value placed on their lives after service. I will end with a very brief description of his service, so that perhaps those who hear it will more deeply appreciate his amazing service.

In 1996, he joined the Canadian Forces and then after a year of boot camp in the PPCLI battle school, he was posted to the 2nd Battalion in Manitoba. From 1998 to 2004, he was deployed to Bosnia, and in 2002, to Afghanistan. He was on the first Canadian combat mission since the Korean War. He was also deployed to Operation Peregrine, a domestic firefighting mission in B.C., in 2005. He was promoted to master corporal and posted as an instructor to the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in Quebec. In 2008, upon promotion to sergeant, he was posted to the 1st Battalion in Edmonton, where he deployed to Afghanistan as headquarter commander. Sergeant Perry attended a year-long French language course and upon—

● (2015)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Unfortunately, the time is up.

Government Orders

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Madam Chair, having served with the member opposite on the veterans affairs committee, I would like to thank her for bringing this issue up, because it is incredibly important. I know that she ran out of time, and so I would like to give her a moment if she would like to finish her thoughts.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Chair, I will continue with the veteran's service.

Upon promotion to warrant officer, he was posted back to the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School where he was course commander for the next generation of army officers. In 2014, he survived a domestic terrorist attack in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec. He was the “other person”. After that event, he retired in December 2016. Throughout his career, he deployed on countless exercises and training courses. He has earned three Operational Service Medals as well as individual recognition, having received the Canadian Forces' Decoration, the Sacrifice Medal and the Governor General's citation. He currently resides in my riding, in Spalding, with his wife. I think this is a man we need to listen to.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Chair, does the member agree that as part of the conversation we are having this evening about mental health, it is important that we look at the holistic picture around mental illness prevention and invest in the social determinants of health, such as housing, livable income, healthy and nutritious foods?

I wonder if you could offer some thoughts around the importance of wraparound supports for Canadians.

● (2020)

The Deputy Chair: I would ask members to address their questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to members.

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Chair, it is absolutely imperative that we create an environment, a culture and a society where people's basic needs are met. Certainly, in this circumstance, all of those things apply. A veteran without a home cannot heal. A veteran with family concerns struggles. It is a known fact that when veterans deploy, what they eat is not all that great. I went up north and experienced it.

When they get home, one of the first things they should have is an opportunity to go somewhere where their bodies get to heal and they get the food, nutrition and supports they need. In the broader sense as well, that is of absolute importance.

Government Orders

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for her passion on this file.

Since we were elected, she has been one of the loudest voices in terms of standing up for veterans who were prescribed mefloquine and the mental injuries they have faced from that drug.

While we are on the topic of veterans, we know that when our veterans serve, their families do as well. Perhaps the member could talk about some of the mental health challenges that families of veterans face as well.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Chair, I so appreciate the work that my colleague does on this file.

That is one of the things that broadens that sense of sanctuary trauma for our veterans. They come home; they know they are not well; they want to get well; they see what they are doing within their own families and their spouses and children suffering greatly. It makes it that much worse for the veteran when they realize that. Sometimes I honestly think that is the tipping point for many of them.

Therefore, it is absolutely crucial that we realize that when we send someone into theatre, we are sending the whole family, and we need to make sure they are cared for in ways that they ask us to care for them.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Richmond Hill.

This is a hard conversation for many us in this chamber, many of us. It is tough to follow my colleague, who just gave an incredible speech about veterans.

As many people in this chamber know, I am the mother of two serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, the mother-in-law of a member of the Canadian Armed Forces now, the daughter of a firefighter and the spouse of a firefighter. As I said in 2016 when the incredible member for Cariboo—Prince George brought forward Bill C-211, I was one of the first members of the government to say I am in, because, unfortunately, PTSD has a chair at my kitchen table.

When we come together tonight to talk about mental health, we are talking with one voice. Whether it be occupational stress from serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, emergency responders or people who face trauma, we all have someone in our lives who has suffered from mental illness, maybe even someone in this room, and we need to share those stories. We need to be together when it comes to mental health.

[*Translation*]

The last two years of the pandemic were really difficult for some people. Our young people had a lot of difficulties. When I talk with parents, I see that they fear for their children.

[*English*]

We need to make sure the supports are there when they are needed, and not three weeks later and not here as a referral paper. I am delighted that we are going to be moving forward with a three-digit suicide hotline number, thanks to my friend from Cariboo—Prince

George, because when time is of the essence those supports need to be there.

This debate is so important because people are feeling anxious, whether it is because of the pandemic or because of inflation and the rising cost of living, which is a huge stressor. Financial insecurity and breakdowns of relationships all play a factor in suicide ideation. We have heard of this.

Therefore, we need to come together. We will put the partisanship aside, and together we are going to come up with a solution to get the supports to the people who need them and the families who are watching, because the families are the first who are seeing it. We have heard this time and time again. For the veteran who is suffering in their basement, self-medicating because they are hurting, it is the families who are dealing with it and looking for help, and we need to be there for them.

I am committing tonight, in front of my colleagues around this chamber, that I will always stand to support those who need us. We did it in the past. Let us continue to do this. Let us get it right. Let us make sure those who are suffering have the support they need when they need it and that those who care about them are getting the supports. We have all received those calls in our offices to talk to that person. I am not trained in this field, but when I get the call that there is a veteran in crisis, I am taking the call. We have all been there.

I want to thank the opposition for bringing this debate forward. Again, as my colleague said, it is not a debate; I think we all agree. Therefore, let us put it aside. Let us figure out how we can get this done, because coming out the pandemic my fear is that the need for mental health supports is going to be much larger than we are even anticipating. We need to be ready. We cannot be reactive. We need to be proactive in this regard.

I know we can do this. We have done this before, and we can do this. When it comes to mental health, we all agree. With that, I welcome questions.

● (2025)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Chair, the last two speeches focused on our veterans. I think every single person in this chamber can agree that the veterans who have fought for this country and who have served this country deserve the best. With the \$4.5 billion, what would the hon. member like to see sent to veterans? What would she like to see be the priority for the government when it comes to our veterans and mental health?

Government Orders

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Madam Chair, I want to thank my fellow military mom for that question. It is pretty hard for me to put a price tag on this, to be honest, because that was the reason I ran in 2015. I was not happy about supports available for veterans. I knew my kids in the service would be taken care of, but God forbid they should need support when they got out. Would it be there? Therefore, I am really a bit biased on this one because, to me, one cannot put a price tag on the supports we need to give those who put their lives on the line for our freedom and the families who support them. I cannot answer that with a dollar figure, because to me one cannot put a price on that.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Chair, I appreciate my hon. colleague's impassioned speech. I know the member knows about my colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke's bill on changing the National Defence Act and some of the wording in regard to members of the armed forces who commit self-harm. It goes back to some archaic language and, ultimately, when there was conscription. It was to prevent soldiers from harming themselves so they did not have to go to war.

We know now, in this present modern context, that it holds a much bigger mental health issue. The army, the navy and the air force all treat it in a way that is punishable, so we are looking to change that. The New Democrats have a bill. I would like the member's opinion on that bill and to know if she will be supporting it.

● (2030)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Madam Chair, I served on the Standing Committee on National Defence with the member who is bringing forward the bill. We have had many conversations and he knows I support removing self-harm from the National Defence Act. Someone who is hurting needs help, not punishment.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, my hon. colleague across the way was the first member from the government who stepped forward to do whatever she could on her side to champion my bill, Bill C-211, and she has assisted us along the way with our other initiatives we have put forth.

This is a question I asked one of her colleagues earlier, and I think it is relevant now because I know her passion in standing up for our veterans. Earlier this year, we found out that a veteran who was in need and phoned Veterans Affairs was counselled by the Veterans Affairs employee to perhaps consider MAID. That is an absolute travesty.

I would like to give our hon. colleague some time to give her views on that.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Madam Chair, I want to thank the member for bringing that up. I will be honest that when I read that, my first thought was that person should not be working anywhere near veterans. That is my position. That person who suggested to a veteran in need to consider medical assistance in dying should not be working with veterans.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is a great honour for me to stand tonight to take part in the take-note debate on mental health, addressing the gap. This topic is close to my heart. I do not think five minutes will do it justice, but in the short time that I have been allotted, I would like to talk about the

disparity between the non-indigenous and indigenous people who live in Canada.

First, I would like to say that tonight I am here not only as the member of Parliament who represents the amazing riding of Richmond Hill, but also as a person with lived experience, both personally and through family and close friends. As the focus of my intervention tonight is on the indigenous, let me start by saying *kwe, kwe. Ullukkut. Tansi. Hello. Bonjour.* I would like to also acknowledge that Canada's Parliament is located on the beautiful unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

We indeed need to have this conversation and debate tonight. It has been long overdue. Mental health is an urgent and critical issue that impacts non-indigenous as well as indigenous people across this country. We need to acknowledge and look closely at the states of emergency that have been declared in many indigenous communities in recent years as they suffered the horrific loss of their young and other loved ones.

Suicide rates have consistently been shown to be higher among first nation, Inuit and Métis people in Canada than among non-indigenous people. In fact, the rates among first nations are three times higher than that of non-indigenous people. For the Métis, the suicide rate was approximately twice as high as that of non-indigenous. For the Inuit, the rate was approximately nine times higher.

Behind each of these statistics are stories of unspeakable grief and loss, but also strength and resiliency. The historical and ongoing impacts of colonization, the forced placement of indigenous children in residential schools, the removal of indigenous peoples from their homes, families and communities during the sixties scoop and the forced relocation of communities has been well documented. This resulted in the breakdown of families, communities, political and economic structures, loss of language, culture and traditions, exposure to abuse, intergenerational transmission of trauma and marginalization, which are associated with high rates of suicide.

We know these high rates are linked to a variety of factors, but we also know the way forward is to address the disparities in the determinants of health and also help indigenous people find a sense of hope and belonging. I was glad to hear that the determinants of health was a topic of a question that was raised in the House.

Government Orders

Closing the gaps in the areas of education, housing and health care will go a long way to promoting mental well-being. The government knows that the first nation, Inuit and Métis people have suffered the effects of inadequate housing, education and health and as a result there has been an impact on their mental health outcomes. That is why we have been working with indigenous partners to determine what is needed to close the housing, education and health gaps for the non-indigenous and indigenous communities.

The work to co-develop distinctions-based indigenous health legislation is part of this government's commitment to address the social determinants of health and advance self-determination in alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We know that the way forward is working with indigenous partners to address the disparities in the determinants of health and help people find a sense of hope and belonging.

● (2035)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Chair, my question is around why we have seen such a delay. If this is such a crisis, if we have known about it for so long and the recommendations have been made, why does the member opposite think it has taken so long to do anything or take any action related to mental health?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Chair, as the founder of the all-parliamentary mental health caucus, we have been advocating, and I am glad to see so many of my colleagues from the class of 2015 participating in this debate. I am so proud to be serving with them. We have been advocating for mental health services since 2015.

The government initially supported this movement with \$5 billion. Unfortunately, we have not seen the result, as a result of, in my opinion, the lack of co-operation among the provinces and territories in making sure that the services are designed to deliver the specific need community-based support.

We definitely need to do a lot more work and it has to be in collaboration. It has to address the need of the community through various models that have been proposed over the last seven years that I have been in Parliament.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would first like to acknowledge the great work the member does with my colleagues from Courtenay—Alberni and Edmonton Riverbend for Father's Day on the Hill, which focuses on improving men's mental health. I think that is great work. *Qujannamiik* for that.

Knowing that professional certified mental health services are not adequately meeting the needs of indigenous peoples, does the member agree that the federal government needs to also incorporate existing lay counsellors and volunteer counsellors who are indigenous into the health care system so they too can be paid for the great work that they do?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Chair, I thank the hon. member for her acknowledgement.

Indeed, we need to do everything in our power to make sure that we not only focus on parity between mental health and physical health, but also resolve the issue of the disparity that exists specifically for the indigenous community. I have been advocating for parity since 2015. As I am becoming more aware and more educat-

ed on the issue of the disparity that exists among indigenous and non-indigenous, I felt that it is time for me to also advocate for the indigenous and, indeed, make sure that we have not only the support at the professional level but also the support at other levels.

I talked about the social determinants of health being housing, being education, being support and being community. All of those will go a long way in helping to address the disparity that exists.

● (2040)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I must have misunderstood or misheard my hon. colleague in reference to a question that was asked earlier about one of the challenges we are facing with respect to the government's dollars and why they are not flowing. I think I heard him say that it was an issue with the provinces. I am wondering if he could clarify that.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Chair, to my colleague, who I have had the honour of knowing since 2015 and working with him, let me clarify.

Health care and specifically mental health is a multi-jurisdictional issue. It is the responsibility of the federal government as well as the provincial government. We need both partners to come to the table and focus on the outcome, which is the health and the mental health and well-being of all Canadians, indigenous and non-indigenous, rather than squarely blaming the provincial government.

I thank the member for correcting me if I came across in that way.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time today with the member for Brandon—Souris.

Five minutes to talk about mental health is certainly not enough time. I appreciate the grace and vulnerability that has been shared tonight. I also appreciate that every single member in the House has been touched by mental health. I appreciate that everyone acknowledges that this is a crisis.

However, my frustration and anger is at a bubbling point, just like many Canadians around this country. We do not need more advocacy. We need leadership. This week, 31-year-old Burnaby RCMP officer, a member of the detachment's mental health and homeless outreach team, just three years into her career, Constable Shaelyn Yang was fatally stabbed while attending a homeless campsite before 11 a.m., in broad daylight.

I want to tell the House what our Prime Minister said. This is a quote from yesterday in question period:

We need to do more to step up on our mental health funding, as the hon. member before mentioned.

He was referring to the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George, who has been an advocate and has done great work. The Prime Minister went on to say:

Government Orders

We need to make sure that we are giving our frontline police officers the tools to be supported as they encounter difficult situations. We need to make sure they are not the only mental health workers out there accessible to so many people. Unfortunately they have been. They have been extraordinary at it, but we need to provide better support. The provinces and the federal government need to work together to fund more mental health supports.

That is Prime Minister Justin Trudeau—

The Deputy Chair: Members cannot use names. I just want to remind members to please respect the rules of the House.

The hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Chair, we cannot use names. I appreciate that.

My frustration lies in that, if the Prime Minister is not able to do more, then who is?

Who is able to do more, if at the highest level of our federal government, we cannot do more? There are two things that a leader needs to do: listen and act. There have been countless people coming here to committees. For years and decades, people have been telling us, parliamentarians, what is wrong. Why are we not listening? Why are we not acting. We need leadership.

I want to focus on the UNICEF report card, 2020 release. These are quotes from the report card:

...Canada is worlds apart from other rich countries in providing healthy, happy childhoods for every child. Canada ranks among the countries with the best economic, environmental and social conditions for growing up, but the poorest outcomes for children and youth...

Canada falls below average in more than half the measures of child well-being.

I also says, “Canada ranks lowest in child survival”, ranking 35 out of 38 in teen suicides, and 33 out of 38 in child violence, including homicide. The UNICEF report card rates Canada as not making progress relative to other rich countries. It says, “Canada has been making little to no progress in reducing child mortality, obesity or bullying” and “Canada has been falling backward in children’s sense of well-being” and in the quality of their close relationships.

It also says:

Canada is one of only a handful of countries...that have better economic, environmental and social conditions but worse child well-being...

Canada’s governments spend less on families and children than most wealthy countries.

If this does not disgust the House, I do not know what should. If we do not take care of our children, we do not have a future. How can our children be taken care of when the adults are not taken of? We have made so many strides in overcoming stigma. People are ready to go ask for help, but when they do, there is nothing there for them.

I am sorry. I adore the work my colleague has done on this file. He is so passionate about mental health, like so many people in the House are, but when our lead is mental health is health, that is 20 years behind where we should be. We know mental health is health. Why are we not transferring the \$4.5 billion promised by the federal government to make a difference?

On the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health recommendations, listen and act. That is leadership. Listen to what

they are asking. Take immediate steps to create a mental health transfer allocating permanent, ongoing federal funding for mental health services starting in budget 2023. This is consistent with the multi-year funding promised in the 2021 election platform. People are dying. What more is needed?

There is action we could take today, and I call on the government and everyone in the House. This is non-partisan. This impacts everyone of us. Make the difference today. We need leadership. We need to listen, and we need to act.

● (2045)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is really heartening to be here in the House tonight and to hear all of us agreeing on the desperate need for having more done in this field, but it often comes down to spending. I often hear from the members opposite the need for fiscal restraint, the need for us not to spend as much, that our spending is causing inflation and that the things this government is doing to help all Canadians and to try to help people with these issues are problematic.

I am wondering how the member opposite reconciles that with the calls now, considering we have already given \$5 billion in bilateral agreements for mental health since this government was formed in 2015.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Chair, what we do on this side of the House is make sure money is spent well. We know where money should go. When we have an app that should have cost less than \$250,000 and it cost \$54 million and the government does not even know where it is, that is what we are talking about when we talk about fiscal constraint.

There is so much wasted money, and money is a sliver of the piece of the pie. One needs political will, a strategy and a plan. It is absolutely insulting for the member to say that when there is so much wasteful spending. That is not what we are talking about. There is a promised budget of \$4.5 billion from the Liberal government and we have not seen it.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Chair, I really appreciate my colleague speaking to the sense of urgency. I have a quote from Children’s Mental Health Ontario, CMHO, which reads:

Kids have borne the weight of this pandemic. They continue to wait on lists for care that were already too long pre-pandemic—some waiting as long as two and a half years in parts of Ontario. The longer kids wait for care, the worse their outcomes are—increasing the likelihood of a mental health crisis or having to visit an emergency room for care.

We can do better.

Government Orders

We can do better, and I think we all agree children need to be our priority. The Liberals say they cannot get it done because the provinces and territories cannot get an agreement. They were able to do it with child care. Does my colleague agree that the stigma is the problem? If this was truly a priority, they would have the provinces and the territories at the table and would have negotiated an agreement by now.

● (2050)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Chair, my hon. colleague has done so much work, and we definitely share similarities in how we feel about this.

There is a lack of political will. There is too much virtue signalling. He is absolutely right. There is an opportunity to do it and it is not being done. If we do not take care of our children, what are we saying to our country? I really agree fully with what my hon. colleague said.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Chair, I know this colleague. I have worked with her very closely when we talk about mental health, especially with women and girls. One thing we have been talking about lately is self-regulation. Perhaps she can share with this House one of the aspects of what we can put into a policy.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Chair, I love that question from my hon. colleague, because it is about action and accountability, which is what we are really missing here, and that part of leadership.

When we talk about self-regulation, this is one of the many tools we could be building into a national framework to educate parents, caregivers, coaches, teachers and frontline workers, who are all burnt out. Every one of our frontline workers and service providers are completely burnt out. They are supposed to be the calm provider of counsel, and they cannot do that because they themselves cannot regulate.

Under the work of Dr. Stuart Shanker, which we have learned about in the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, we know self-regulation is a very effective tool that would be used to teach and help long term. It is a sustainable model that will change how we all manage stress and it is an excellent tool. We need to start practising action.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Chair, I want to thank my colleagues for initiating this take-note debate on mental health. While we may have different ideas on ways the federal government can assist the provinces, municipalities, organizations and families, it is imperative that we do not let this issue fall by the wayside, which has been addressed in many of the questions that have come up this evening.

As we all know, there are significant challenges when it comes to helping those who desperately need access to mental health and addiction services. We have all had our mental health impacted from various circumstances, but particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19. Breaking the routine of our daily lives impacts us all.

In the last election, I ran on a few specific mental health proposals that I felt would help improve the lives of those who need that help. We proposed that the federal government partner with the

provinces by dedicating a significant portion of stable, predictable health funding to mental health to ensure that an additional million Canadians can receive mental health treatment every year. I noted the Liberals were also offering something similar, as has been talked about this evening, which was the introduction of a mental health transfer of \$4.5 billion over five years. Unfortunately, that has yet to materialize, but, hopefully, the conversation we are having tonight will spur some action.

In the last election, we also proposed that the government encourage employers to add mental health coverage to their employee benefit plans by offering a tax credit of 25% of the cost of additional mental health coverage. We know that the government cannot solve this problem alone, and we must leverage existing benefit plans to help add capacity and funding to the system.

Another idea was to create a pilot program to provide grants to non-profits and charities delivering mental health and wellness programming. In communities and neighbourhoods across the country, there are already non-profits and charities supporting those in need. If the government can provide small grants for them to expand their operations and to use their existing infrastructure and networks, it could have an immense and immediate impact for those they serve.

Just this past week in the city of Brandon, my hometown, the Samaritan House Ministries, which does fantastic work under the leadership of Barbara McNish, announced that it has reached a crisis point. It goes without saying that the people of Brandon and area are incredibly generous and kind. From grocery stores to everyday citizens, people are stepping up to donate what they can. However, the demands coming through the door at the Samaritan House are so great that it needs help too. Tonight, I am here to plead with the federal government to immediately make the financial resources available to places like Samaritan House to ensure no one goes without a bed this winter. As the cold weather will soon be on its way, it is in desperate need of expansion.

In the past couple of years, the number of people in need of emergency housing in the city of Brandon has doubled. There are many reasons for this, such as addictions, mental health issues, poverty and food insecurity. The people at the Women's Resource Centre in Brandon also say the centre is working with a record high number of women experiencing homelessness. With the dramatic rise of energy, food and housing prices, it is only expected these numbers will continue to grow.

I am also here to call on the federal government to immediately work with local organizations in the community to build more co-op housing. The co-op housing model works. In the city of Brandon, the federal government will find willing partners who are ready to build if the funds are made available.

Government Orders

Like many communities, we are also seeing an increased number of people who are battling addictions. Not only do we need to send a strong message to organized gangs who are bringing and distributing illicit drugs into our communities, but we need to offer people suffering addictions a way out. We need to revise the federal government's substance abuse policy framework to make recovery its overarching goal. We also need to orient the Canadian drugs and substances strategy toward ensuring that everyone suffering from addiction has the opportunity to recover and lead a drug-free life.

● (2055)

In the last election, I ran on a commitment to create 1,000 residential drug treatment beds and build 50 recovery community centres across the country. Without timely access to addiction services, we will never be able to help people recover.

In closing, I urge members to go back to their caucuses and be a mental health advocate. I ask my colleagues in the Liberal caucus to please review the ideas I have put forward and adopt them.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I would like to offer my hon. colleague a little bit more time to finish his speech.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Madam Chair, I offer my thanks to my colleague. I had two more lines.

Communities such as the city of Brandon and, in particular, organizations such as Samaritan House, need the federal government to step up to help. I am willing to work with any member of the government to get this done. My door is always open, like all of my colleagues, I am sure, in the whole House, but we need help. The government has the power to bring these issues forward, get the mental health transfer in place and begin action on a whole host of solutions, which I have put on the table tonight.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Chair, I appreciated the member's thoughtful speech and concrete suggestions.

There is one issue which really has not been raised that I am curious about. We have heard a lot about the shortage of nurses, especially post-COVID. We know that people who are in distress need friendship, support and compassion from the people around them, but they also need qualified professional help.

I am just wondering what the state of the availability of expertise is in this country. I am not suggesting that the member would have the answer to this. It is more of a rhetorical question. Do we have enough qualified individuals, mental health workers and psychologists in this country to fill the need, which is obviously a glaring need and probably a growing need?

I think this is something we need to discuss because it does not seem to have come into the equation very often.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Madam Chair, I certainly am very glad that my colleague asked that question because it is a very important one, and it is one that I did not have enough time to fully flesh out in my speech earlier this evening.

I spoke to Chief Balcaen, the head of the Brandon police, this past week as well. I got caught up on the situation that has caused a lot of the homelessness, which puts a lot of stress on everyone's

mental health. I also mentioned the increasing prices of food, heat and energy.

The other area we are struggling with is in our rural areas. Number one, even if there were enough health workers to meet the need, people would have to travel great distances to get that service. There are not enough support workers in, I would say, just about any area of Canada. There are certainly not enough psychologists or mental health workers in other areas.

There has been an increasing number of people who are dealing with homelessness and mental health issues. As I said, in Brandon it has doubled over the last number of years. From the statistics I have seen, I know that is relevant to just about every city in Canada. We certainly do need an increase in the number of health workers in the mental health field.

● (2100)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, the member mentioned the challenges in rural communities and the lack of access. In urban centres, and most definitely in rural communities as well, there are individuals who cannot access services because of language barriers. That is one of the most difficult things I have been hearing about from a lot of people, especially in the face of COVID. I have had seniors come up to me who are distressed. They have experienced trauma, yet they cannot get the mental health support they need because of language barriers.

Would he support a call for the government to also fund interpretation and supports in language to access mental health support?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Madam Chair, my colleague has worked at the immigration committee for a long time. I was there a few years ago, and we worked together then.

That is a very good question. I certainly believe that part of the mental health transfer of that \$4.5 billion over five years could go toward that kind of education and opportunity because that does put a lot of stress on people, particularly when they cannot communicate. I think the communication part is just as important as providing health workers so that people's particular circumstances can be understood.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Chair, as many of my colleagues have said, five minutes is far too little to speak to this issue, but it is a privilege to be here in the House this evening representing the riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill to speak in this take-note debate. Before I begin my comments, I would like to inform the Chair that I will be sharing my time with the member for York Centre.

Government Orders

I am a new member of Parliament, so I was somewhat astounded when I heard people say that this is the first debate we have had in the House on mental health. It is such an important issue, and as a member opposite said, we are far beyond talking about whether mental health is health. We all agree it is, and we know it is an urgent issue. I appreciate the vulnerability and the candour of everyone sharing their personal experiences.

I too have lived experience with mental health challenges in my family, and I know the effects they can have on people leading to a serious disease. There is such a range when we talk about mental health. We talk about mental health and mental illness, but while talking about severe mental illness and talking about trauma, whether for veterans or those living with abuse, these all have different manifestations, so I think just saying “mental health” sometimes does not really do it justice, because it would be like, in other areas of health, just talking about cancer. There are so many types, so many treatments and so many needs.

I agree with all I have heard this evening on the urgent need for more support and more funding, but I would also like to say I am very proud to be part of a government that has the first Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. We have made considerable commitments in this area. We have already spent over \$5 billion on new bilateral agreements. In addition, during the pandemic, we had support for organizations that were providing mental health, and one area I would like to talk about is women and mental health, because COVID was often called a “she-cession”. I think it affected women in many ways, and one of them was women's mental health.

In my riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, there are organizations that have done such great work helping women to cope with mental health crises, and as we know, the health crises and health challenges women are facing affect the entire family, in particular children. The work the Women's Centre of York Region has done, along with that done by the Yellow Brick House and the Sandgate shelter, has been so important for supporting women during this pandemic.

Also, the CMHA in our area is working with women, but it is also developing one of the first mental health crisis hubs in our area, and this is an innovative hub that will be an alternative to emergency rooms for families and will connect families and individuals with the supports that are available in the region. This is so important, because as we know that immediate help is often needed.

I believe our government has committed \$4.5 billion in continued health support for mental health, and we have a responsibility to ensure that this money is used effectively and efficiently, and that there is transparency, so we are continuing to work with the partners, territories and provinces to ensure that there is clear and transparent reporting and that there are standards that we will all work together and collaborate on to address this mental health crisis.

It is really amazing to hear all of us here agreeing that there is a need for this kind of support, and I think that we can all work together to move this forward and to ensure these needs are taken care of urgently, so the people out there who need the help can receive it.

• (2105)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, we know that millions of Canadians right across our country do not have access to a family doctor. Family doctors are very often the first point of contact for those who are struggling with mental health.

Does our colleague feel there is more that is needed to be done by the government and other governments, and what can be done to perhaps provide more medical professionals within our country and entice more medical professionals here so that, as our colleagues mentioned earlier, when people call for help, there is help available, and when they try to get help, there is help available.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Chair, it is a very important first line. Most people do go to their family doctors, and there are too many Canadians who do not have access to a family doctor. We need to do more. We have to work with the College of Physicians. We have to work with the provinces.

We also need to help people who have come to this country who have qualifications to be working in this field. I agree with the member opposite who spoke about funding lay people to work in this field. Certainly, we have a lot of expertise. We also need more medical schools. I am in consultations right now with the president of York University. We are talking about building a new medical school in our area.

There is a desperate need for more doctors. I believe we can work collaboratively with the different organizations, provinces and territories to try to address this very severe need, one that is more in the north and rural areas.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Chair, one of the things I was surprised about, and I was approached by a constituent about this, was that counsellors, therapists and psychotherapists have to charge GST and taxes on their services, whereas other mental health professionals do not. This is actually a classification from CRA. It is a very simple change the government can make.

It is a drop in the bucket of what is necessary, but it would help those who are struggling to pay for some of these services. Until they are made far more available and without the idea of having to pay for them, which is also my goal, it is something that the government could do very quickly.

I have a private member's bill on that. It is Bill C-218. Would the member be open to supporting that bill?

• (2110)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Chair, we need to do all we can to try to make these services more accessible for all Canadians. I will certainly look at the bill and consider it. The intent of the bill, I support, but I have not seen the language. We need to expand the number of people who can provide this help and be covered by our health system.

Government Orders

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, tied to both our physical and mental health are the social determinants of health. The lack of housing and people's inability to survive because of food insecurity and so on is causing great distress. The government has promised that housing is a basic human right, yet we do not deliver the resources to ensure that it is.

Would the member support the call for the government to act in accordance with its promise that housing is a basic human right with corresponding resources to match it?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Chair, I do believe that the social determinants of health are very important. It is why we are now providing Canadians with additional support on housing, and why we have a national housing strategy and are committing resources to it. We have to be sure that Canadians have what they need to have good health, and that includes those things.

The Canada child benefit is a major part of providing that kind of support for Canadians in terms of the social determinants of health.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am honoured to rise in the House this evening to take part in this debate on how we can work together to improve the mental health of Canadians.

Much has come up already in tonight's discussion, and I want to acknowledge that I, along with the member of Cariboo—Prince George, and many members of the all-party mental health caucus, have made a commitment, time and again, to address the serious challenges of the mental health of Canadians together.

As some in this House know, when I came into the chamber, mental health and the well-being of Canadians was one of the key issues I wanted to work collaboratively on with colleagues, because as we all know, the need has never been more urgent than it is right now.

The pandemic laid bare that decades of stigma over generations of families, friends, children, youth and loved ones struggling in silence have taken a tremendous toll and that no longer could suffering in silence be an option. While stigma has been a barrier to access for many, access to services, particularly dedicated community mental health teams, has been out of reach due to lack of resources and capacity, which is in part why we are here tonight.

I do not know a single family where mental health, mental illness and addictions have not been a part of life at some point. It is the story of so many Canadians: mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, nieces and nephews.

Like other members of this House, it is my story too. Today, my nephew would have been 23 years old, just out of university and with so many opportunities ahead of him. However, no amount of an endless lifetime of love could help him. We lost him to suicide on April 6, 2014, at the age of 15.

Suicide prevention is anchored in the dedicated community mental health teams that tirelessly fill the gaps and fight to keep their doors open every single day. On that day, my heart and my family's hearts were broken, and it was community mental health that has helped us heal.

He was brave and strong for all the right and all the wrong reasons. He fought to keep his illness out of his public life and to be a champion of all that is good. He fought against his inner anger and loneliness. He fought against himself, his fears and his anxiety, all at far too young an age for his years. While these battles raged inside him, he fought with those closest to him struggling to get him help, and the tragic war inside of him won. The system at the time, underfunded and understaffed for youth and their families, was helpless.

Between 2017 and 2019, there were approximately 4,500 deaths by suicide per year in Canada, which is the equivalent of 12 people dying by suicide every single day. The numbers have continued to rise.

My nephew, like so many Canadians, is more than a number. I know we can do more and I have hope, because we are doing more. A three-digit national suicide prevention number is one of the many steps we are taking.

Alongside these steps, the most important work we are doing is speaking to Canadians in our communities and to those with lived experience. We know the current federal suicide prevention framework of 2012 needs to be enhanced, modernized and driven by data and by our stories. It also needs to be actioned, and I am hopeful and supportive of the minister's commitment to implement the new strategy next fall.

We need an evidence-based federal suicide prevention strategy to save lives, no matter where Canadians live, in every part of this country. Our government is committed to ensuring that mental health care is treated as a full and equal part of our universal health system. The \$5 billion over ten years that we have committed to for Canadians is starting to make a difference by expanding access to community-based mental health and addiction services for children and youth, and integrated services for people with complex needs.

I invite everyone in the House to do more. We can do more. We have all said that mental health is health, and it must be the guiding principle in our conversations, in our communities and in this House.

I look forward to working with all members.

• (2115)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Chair, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her presentation tonight and the personal experience she shared with us in the House. Many of us have had similar circumstances in our families with relatives and those close to us.

Government Orders

There are many things I would like to ask her, but as she mentioned a 15-year-old in this case, I want to ask what she thinks we should do for the youth side of mental health, given that about one in four people impacted by mental health is under the age she mentioned and this is more than just an education process.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Chair, really, this is about youth, because when we take the space to understand where our youth are sitting in this mental health crisis, we understand that the mental health of our youth is part of a holistic approach to the mental health of our families in this country. This is why, in my many conversations with the minister and in our conversations at the all-party mental health caucus, I have a wraparound service approach in mental health where the whole family is cared for.

What is going on with our youth is going on in their homes, going on in their playgrounds and going on among their peers. We cannot get to the heart of this if we do not get to all of the members who are a part of it and start talking and working with them together.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I thank the member for sharing her story. It is a very important one and one that too many Nunavummiut relate to, because the youth suicide rate in Nunavut is quite high.

Having said that, I know that one of the things that seem to be most effective for addressing suicide is to make sure that youth actually realize there is nothing wrong with them, because the way that suicide prevention works is to treat people as if there is something wrong with them.

I wonder if the member agrees with me that when it comes to programming for youth, what can be more effective is to allow them to learn to express themselves in a healthy way and to help them with positive coping skills so that we are actually teaching them to withstand whatever challenges might come their way.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Chair, I had the honour and privilege of travelling through Iqaluit this summer with the member to see her work on the ground with youth and mental health in Nunavut and with young Inuk, and she is absolutely right. We should give our young people the tools to self-care and self-love, to be strong and to be proud of their heritage as indigenous youth and youth from new countries who make Canada home. If they do not feel they have a place here with the resources, hope and supports they need, whether it is peer to peer, peer to mentor or within a wraparound framework, as I mentioned previously, then we are failing them.

As my colleague said earlier, this is not a partisan issue. We all get it. We are here because we get it, and we understand that there are many pieces of the puzzle. It takes a village to raise a child, and this Canadian village really needs to step up for its youth.

• (2120)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for sharing her story.

I want to give her an opportunity to elaborate a bit, given the fact that we have had a global pandemic with isolation and a lot of young people did not have the experience of graduating with their

class or seeing their classmates. Has this actually increased the likelihood of seeing the supports needed for youth and mental health? Could she elaborate on that?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Chair, as a single mother to two teenage daughters, and one who just graduated, the answer is absolutely yes, it has had an impact on them. This is why an approach of building resiliency, communication, social skills and life skills for our young people is so crucial now more than ever.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Chair, I am thankful we are having this debate tonight because one thing we have heard, time and time again, is that mental health is affecting each and every Canadian. Whether it is a family member, a co-worker, a friend or a neighbour, we must recognize this.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Battle River—Crowfoot this evening.

I remain the chair of the status of women committee, which is doing a very important study on the mental health of young women and girls. I would like to talk about some of the work that we are doing on the study, but also about some of the things I am finding out with every single member who sits on that committee. There are 11 members, one male and 10 women, and I feel like I am sitting among friends. I feel that I can talk about mental health, as we are tonight, recognizing that there are many issues.

One thing I am finding is that now is a time of camaraderie. It is a time when I am listening to people who many times I may oppose, but we are all sharing stories and that is so key for me.

I am a mom. Like so many other people here, I am a parent and we have children. We tried to get through COVID-19 as best we could, but we know the impacts on our children. When I think of me and my five children, I can say that the last two and a half years were horrible. There is another word that starts with an “h”. It was just not a good place to be.

I am not feeling sorry for members of Parliament, but we were there when people were going through a crisis. We were there when businesses were saying they had to lock their doors, when families were saying a family member was sick or a loved one passed away, and when people were separated from their loved ones because of border challenges. I think about those things.

Last week at the status of women committee, we talked a lot about how children being out of school due to COVID was the worst thing possible. The kids needed to be together. The committee talked about dopamine today with Dr. Shanker. All of the things that kids need to grow were taken away from them for two and a half years.

I hope my son is not listening to my speech tonight because I do not really like to talk about him, but he is a kid who played four sports. Whether it was volleyball, basketball, soccer, badminton, whatever he could play with a racquet or a ball, that is what he was doing. He was told that they were not playing sports anymore at his school. Not only was he not going to school, but they were not playing sports. Then they were told that they could not go to the playground to run around and throw hoops. My son was 17 at the time and that kid needed to get out.

Today at the status of women committee we talked about how kids turned to social media and played video games, which was only hiding the pain and did not fix anything at all. When kids needed it the most, they were separated from people. We know that there is going to be a long journey back.

I went through another crisis, and I am proud of it. I am proud and will never be ashamed of some of the things that happened to me and my family in the last two and a half years. I can talk about my own experience. I have turned my book over because I think it is time to just talk.

When my family was going through a crisis, three moms called me that week because they too were in crisis and they had no one to turn to. I was so fortunate because I have the most amazing family, an awesome husband, phenomenal children and friends and neighbours who surrounded me. They watched as I was going through my own turmoil, while knowing that other parents needed us as well. That is why I am telling every single person here to be there when somebody needs them, to be there when one of their colleagues is going through something, because they never know when the shoe is going to drop for them. One never knows.

In the first week of my little trauma, I really got to see that there were no services available when people really needed them. When I went through the crisis, there was nothing to help me, and when people were calling me, I was doing everything I could. We need to do more and I am urging the government to get that \$4.5 billion out of the coffers, start directing it to the organizations that need it and start ramping up some of these services for our health care workers who are exhausted. They cannot be there any longer and are burning out. We need to do it now because the crisis is right at the edge, and it is only going to get worse.

• (2125)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Chair, I thank the member for sharing with us her personal experience of what she saw with her children and the importance of having mental health supports in place.

I am also a parent and one thing I have noticed that has been impacting the mental health of a lot of children and youth is climate anxiety, which is basically the impact of climate change and the increase in anxiety as a result. I wonder if the member could share if she is hearing that from constituents and how she feels we could best address the impact of climate change and how it impacts the mental health of youth.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Chair, that is a really interesting question. We know that when children see hurricanes or floods it is very concerning. I think right now there are multiple things that are concerning children. It is not just climate change, but definitely

Government Orders

things like the economy. There are mental health issues children are going through. I am talking to kids who are working to put food on the table with their parents. I am speaking to people who are not getting their medication because they have not done their taxes and they do not have a health benefit card and are falling behind.

There are so many things when it comes to this. Climate change is absolutely one out there, especially for our youth, and I think that we have to provide them hope for the future. Where we are right now, I am not trying say we are alarmists in a bad way, but what we have to do is look for healthy solutions that will help our children through this as well.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to thank the member opposite for sharing her story. As the chair of the status of women committee, I am sure she has some insights for us regarding the impacts of gender-based violence on mental health. Would she like to touch on that? I know it is a huge subject, but could she share any thoughts on that?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Chair, I thank the member so much, because I was going to talk about gender-based violence as one of the biggest issues when it comes to mental health. We know that over 60% of young women and girls are victims of sexual violence and unwanted harassment right now and that it has an impact on their mental health because they have had something taken away from them. In many cases, they have been stripped of their dignity. One hundred per cent we know there is a strong correlation between that and mental health.

I would have liked to read an excerpt from the testimony of Carol Todd, Amanda Todd's mother, who was at one of our meetings, because when I look at Amanda Todd and her mother, it is right there. This is the type of work we can do for families and we need to do more.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I want to thank my hon. colleague not just for her intervention today, but also for the passion she has shown since we were elected in 2015.

I know she does a lot of outreach work within her communities. There are some strong mental health organizations within her community that do incredible work on the ground. I know she is a champion of them so I want to give her an opportunity to talk about some of these incredible grassroots organizations that would benefit from the \$4.5 billion that needs to flow to the provinces.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Chair, the member's question has me really excited because I think of the organization #ivegotyourback911 in St. Thomas. It deals with the post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by our frontline workers. It is an absolutely incredible organization that is doing fundraising within our communities. It talks about those frontline workers needing those supports as well. Places like that are doing an excellent job.

Government Orders

I also think of great organizations like the London Abused Women's Centre, and a variety of other organizations, such as the Rainbow Optimist Club of Southwestern Ontario. All of these different organizations have mandates. Some are helping youth in the LGBTQ community. Some are helping our professionals who are frontline workers. All of us need to come together. This is the great work we can do.

• (2130)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Chair, as always, it is an honour to enter into debate in this place, especially when we are talking about something as important as mental health. As we have listened to much of the discourse that has taken place over the course of the evening, we have heard the common agreement and the importance of seeing that this issue is addressed, not in a partisan way or a political way, but truly and meaningfully addressed.

As we look at the pure facts, about one-third of Canadians face some sort of mental health challenges. Literally, if we look to our left and we look to our right, it is one of the three people: the person on our left, ourselves, or the person on our right. This is the definition of something that impacts everyone. It is important that we acknowledge that mental health is health and the important distinction when it comes to addressing the specific aspects of what mental health care looks like. That needs to be at the core in the overall strategy by which we approach it from the federal perspective as we partner and work with the provinces and the municipal governments, and the many stakeholders involved.

We looked at the many implications that mental health has and the consequences when there is not early intervention and early action. We see addictions. We see suicides. We see abuse and domestic challenges and many other effects that have significant impacts on every Canadian. There are very few things that affect every Canadian, but this truly is one of them.

Between the ages of 15 and 35, the leading cause of death, tragically, is suicide. As we talk about the dynamics associated with mental health, I know we can look to family members. I have close experiences with members of my family and it is truly something that is very personal. Of course, there are the dynamics of access to things like care and there are the challenges associated with rural areas.

In this very short intervention, I want to also talk about the fact that I am proud to represent Camp Wainwright, a military base, and the dynamics associated with mental health. We look back throughout the history at things like shell shock. There was a lack of understanding around many of those issues throughout much of our country's history. When it comes to warfare in general and military service in general, we see the importance.

Now we have the opportunity to work with some veterans to try to help them navigate what can be a very complex system to get the supports that they need. Regarding PTSD or the other challenges that come along with service in the military, we note how important it is. Many of us read over the course of the summer that a veteran was offered MAID. It breaks my heart that somebody would be offered death as opposed to hope. I hope that would be a wake-up call for all of us to ensure that we are actively working toward making

sure that mental health and care needed for veterans as well as for every Canadian is offered. We need to get down to the brass tacks of what we do about it.

I was pleased in the last election how each and every party had a mental health plan. Although Conservatives got more votes, we did not win the most seats, but I am glad that each party represented in this place did have a mental health plan. Certainly, I hope that when it comes to the mental health transfer we can get those details sorted out, because those dollars need to get to the provinces so that they can get the supports that are needed. There is the 988 suicide helpline, which I am so proud to be a part of with the member for Cariboo—Prince George. I am so proud to serve in a caucus where we have that advocacy.

I wish there would be more opportunity to share the other ways. I will simply wrap up by saying that this is a great conversation to have, but it has to result in action. I hope we can do that together.

• (2135)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Chair, I have more of a comment than a question. I do not want to put the member on the spot.

One thing I have observed is that there is a lot of expertise and a lot of insight in this House, at the federal level, into the problem of mental health. I know that typically, when we have funding for health-related initiatives, provinces say they are closer to the situation, therefore they do not want any directives associated with the transfer of funding.

This is a case in which I believe there is a great deal of expertise at the federal level, and we should fine-tune our initiative and transfer of funds to make sure all aspects of this extremely complex ecosystem that is mental health receive the measure of support they need to be truly effective.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Chair, part of the reason there is so much expertise represented is that there are 338 people: By the pure numbers, over 100 individuals in this House have personally experienced mental health challenges, and we all know and have walked alongside those who have as well. There is a lot of expertise, and that needs to help to make sure we can get dollars out the door.

I would just offer this. Health care in our country is provincial jurisdiction. I hope that as we discuss both the Canada mental health transfer and everything associated with the mental health action plan and everything that is needed to ensure that the supports get out the door, like 988, etc., we will not get lost in the details, but rather make sure that supports get out the door. Let us work as partners, not as dictators in saying how provinces should or should not spend dollars, but truly work collaboratively in a partnership to ensure that those supports can simply get out the door.

Government Orders

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Chair, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot could attest that it is very rare that we get along or find common ground on issues, but this is one tonight on which I really do appreciate his speech. It was excellent. He talked about a sense of urgency. He shared his personal story and his vulnerability. It was very generous.

We have an issue that we are seeing around this House, which is the need to deal with the patchwork of the provinces that deliver health and the urgency of the need to get resources out to them. We saw that urgency when it came to child care, but the government has not demonstrated that here, on this issue.

Margaret Eaton, CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association, stated that even if the immediate impacts of COVID-19 are subsiding, the mental health effects persist and will likely continue for years to come. The community mental health and addictions sector cannot meet these growing needs with the current patchwork funding and disjointed service delivery model. It is time to overhaul our mental health system.

I cannot say enough about how much—

The Deputy Chair: I am sorry, I do have to allow for one more brief question after this. I want to allow the member to respond to the comments.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Chair, often we do disagree on things, policy-related and whatnot. However, I am so pleased that there is common agreement.

We may differ a little on what that action looks like, but I am so pleased that in this House, and across the country, we could find significant agreement with our provincial counterparts to ensure that we simply get to work.

With respect to the consequences of COVID, although we are seeing the pandemic-related measures subside, the consequences of the mental health side of things are going to be long felt. That certainly has to be addressed when developing both the frameworks surrounding the health transfer and other related areas of policy regarding mental health in Canada.

• (2140)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Chair, earlier I mentioned that I did not think we had enough resources all across the country, but particularly in rural areas. I know my colleague comes from a rural area in Alberta.

I wonder if he could expand on that as well.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Chair, absolutely. We need to ensure that rural has equitable and full access to these services. That is part of the reason I was so excited.

I represent about 64 self-governing municipalities in rural Alberta. The majority of them passed motions at their village councils, saying that a 988, although in many cases in their debate and whatnot it was said that it would not be a solution, was such an important tool to ensure that there was a consolidation of services. It made sure that especially in rural areas, where they could be an hour or two from a hospital or three or four hours from a police

call, those resources are accessible by simply pressing three buttons on a phone. Among many other things, that was an important part.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Chair, I am happy to be here today, and I am honoured to share my time with the member for Milton.

I am honoured to rise today and speak in the take-note debate brought forward by my NDP colleague and member of Parliament for Courtenay—Alberni around the mental health crisis that is having a ripple effect on Canadians across the country. I am inspired by the tremendous work, dedication and heart that my colleague shows every day in his work to address the mental health and toxic substance emergency we are currently facing. I am also proud to see all parties coming together to debate this important issue.

We know that 50% of Canadians experience a mental illness by the age of 40. However, compounding and interconnected with the mental health crisis is the climate crisis. Just this week in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, there was another air quality warning, with smoke blanketing our beautiful island. It is currently nearing late October, a time when residents of Vancouver Island are normally outfitted in their favourite rain jackets and rain boots, but instead the grass is dry and the sky is smoky with the unusually warm and dry weather conditions being experienced by much of the province of British Columbia, and this has been happening for weeks.

Extreme and unseasonable weather in B.C. and across the country continue to be more and more common. These catastrophic weather events, including flooding, fires and droughts, do not only impact our physical health, damage our homes and threaten food crops, but they impact our mental health.

As expected, the prevalence of climate anxiety continues to rise. Climate anxiety was never more evident than in my work directly with children and youth in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith. As the effects of the climate crisis unfold, the anxiety that follows continues to rise. I hear loud and clear from youth in Nanaimo—Ladysmith public schools, for example, that they are worried about their future and are demanding all levels of government to step up and make the changes and decisions necessary to save our planet and their future. Instead, these youth watch as the government purchases pipelines and billions of dollars of subsidies are handed to big oil and gas, which further exacerbates the climate crisis.

Government Orders

Youth in my riding are sharing with me that they are feeling hopeless that those who are in positions who can make a difference today to ensure a future for tomorrow are choosing to continue on with the same patterns of behaviour that have resulted in the climate crisis we are experiencing today. They are hopeless that the leaders today are choosing profit over the health of the planet. Hopelessness is a significant indicator of suicidality. These youth deserve better. These youth deserve hope.

As the climate crisis continues to impact us all, the health and well-being of Canadians will continue to be impacted. Instead of prevention, health care workers are left to respond to often preventable and complex health conditions within an overwhelmed health care system. While Canadians continue to feel the impacts of COVID-19, more and more Canadians are experiencing mental illness, and substance use is steadily on the incline.

The toxic substance crisis continues to tragically take the lives of loved ones. On average in B.C., six or more people die a day. Again, that is six people a day. We are losing loved ones at a rate like never seen before in this toxic substance crisis. These are deaths that could have been prevented if the recommendations of health experts were being followed, recommendations such as access to harm reduction supports, affordable and accessible mental health care, decriminalization of substances and on-demand treatment, to name just a few. Canadians so desperately need to see leadership at the federal level to give much-needed hope that we are in fact a country that takes care of one another.

It bears mentioning once again what Margaret Eaton from the Canadian Mental Health Association said. She said:

Even if the immediate impacts of COVID-19 are subsiding, the...mental health and addiction sector cannot meet these growing needs with the current patchwork funding and disjointed service delivery model. It's time to overhaul our mental health system.

This current patchwork system will continue to be seen in our provinces and territories until we see federal leadership through the commitments made by this government to provide the mental health funding required.

We know that positive mental health and well-being allows us to fully enjoy life, better cope with stress and bounce back from setbacks. Canadians need this government to follow through with their election platform to create a permanent mental health transfer to the provinces and territories to expand and improve mental health care. The commitment of \$4.5 billion over five years would save lives and make a positive impact on the health and well-being of Canadians. Let us give Canadians hope.

• (2145)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am glad my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith focused on children tonight. It is an important subject of conversation. Unfortunately, children are often forgotten in society. I am also glad she connected the climate crisis to kids and their mental health. My question is about children.

We all know that kids spend a little too much time on their phones. I spend too much time on my phone too. One way that we can spend time on our phones and check in with ourselves is to use

the PocketWell app. I used the PocketWell app this year and it has helped me.

Has she had any experience with the PocketWell app? Has she had a chance to talk to any of her constituents who have?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, I was trying to understand what it was exactly that the member was asking. I am not sure if that is an app, a program or something that can be used on our phones.

To answer based on the information I have, absolutely, mental health concerns with children are on the rise. Technology use is definitely a component in that. There are benefits to technology that can be used, like for education purposes. There are ways to stay connected through technology. It is definitely a factor that is being looked at by educators and support workers in the community. If we had the health care transfer put into place in the provinces and territories, that could be further looked into in ensuring that youth and children are getting the support that they need to stay at their healthiest.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Chair, I have a question that maybe sums up why we should find the money for the \$4.5-billion mental health transfer. Poor mental health costs Canada about \$50 billion a year. We are talking about not even a tenth of what it costs us in lost quality of life, work and other areas that take people away from things because of mental health situations. Could the member expand on that?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, that is such an important point, which I completely agree with. When individuals do not get the mental health supports they need, it does not just impact those individuals, but it also impacts us as a whole, as well as their loved ones and our communities. It costs us all money. There are ripple effects and costs associated with us not living to our full and healthiest capacity.

We spend a lot of time right now, in light of the pandemic, reacting to mental illness, rather than putting in place the prevention that can actually save us money, if we want to look at the economic benefits. My hope is that with these conversations today, we can come together and make sure that Canadians have access to the supports they need.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Chair, I cannot thank my colleague enough for her speech, but also for her work on the ground in the mental health sector and in addictions.

She knows too well that non-profits are literally surviving on breadcrumbs. The government is delaying the transfer and is worried about getting everything right, but there are 67 national organizations that are saying they need resources as they are surviving on breadcrumbs. Would my colleague describe what those resources could do for those organizations on the front lines that are doing the hard work and how quickly they could deploy resources to support people?

• (2150)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, my background prior to becoming a member of Parliament was in mental health and addictions, and also around many of the symptoms of poverty. It inspired me to want to get involved in federal politics.

On the ground, we see the trickle effect of the federal government underfunding provinces and territories, which then seeps into municipalities and local school boards. When we do not have the federal leadership at the top or we do not have funding provided at the top, it impacts those who are trying their very best to provide supports to those who need it on the ground.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is an honour to rise in the House today to take part in this debate on such an important issue, which is the topic of how we can collectively improve the mental health of Canadians. As we take part in today's discussion, I want to recognize we share a common commitment in this place to address this serious challenge together. Indeed, we all ran on a commitment to our neighbours, and I am encouraged tonight. This has not been a political evening. This has not been a partisan evening. This has been an evening where members came to share personal stories, personal concerns, priorities from their communities and messages from those who they have heard suffering.

Before I start, I want to acknowledge the leadership in the House from colleagues from different parties. I would like to acknowledge my friend and colleague, the member for Cariboo—Prince George, for his leadership on suicide prevention and on the three-digit hotline. We probably would not be this far along if it were not for that member's work, and I want to thank him for it. I heard him on CBC the other day. It was nice to hear his voice when I was in my car commuting.

In addition to the member for Cariboo—Prince George, I want to acknowledge my friend from Courtenay—Alberni. His leadership on the opioid epidemic and toxic substance emergencies across this country has been remarkable and inspiring, and I want to thank him for that leadership.

I would also like to focus my energy a bit tonight on some local leadership in Milton. I was filming a video during the last campaign on a bridge in a park in Milton. It was a beautiful place. I was talking about important investments we plan to make in mental health. Dr. Nathan Pillai from Bayridge Kids was within earshot, and he came to talk to me afterward. He said that he had heard me talking about mental health and told me he was a mental health worker. He then asked if he could help. We exchanged a couple of emails afterward, but another conversation is overdue, so I expect to hear from Dr. Pillai sometime soon.

Government Orders

Angelo Posteraro, Rod McLachlan and their group of amazing volunteers for the Play On! ball hockey tournament raise money for the Reach Out Centre For Kids every year, and it is an exciting tournament I love to engage with because it raises money for a really important issue.

I also want to acknowledge Michael Burns and everyone at Re:soul, which is a drop-in centre in Milton. They do extraordinary work supporting kids.

As I have said on other issues, I do not think our country should or can rely on charity for basic services we are all in agreement are essential. Many of the leaders I mentioned are engaged in fundraising activities, and many of our colleagues here are too, but we should not be relying on charity for services we all know are essential.

We have been working hard to provide people in Canada with supports that are free and available whenever and wherever they are in Canada. One of those was that in 2020, in response to the pandemic, we launched the Wellness Together Canada portal to provide Canadians with access to those free 24-7 resources and supports, including counselling, on the convenience of one's telephone. The companion app, PocketWell, connects seamlessly to the portal and provides another way to help Canadians access online mental health resources. It has been a game-changer for me personally.

This year, I turned 40. I have heard that prevention is treatment. I did not know how I was going to feel when I turned 40, but my life has gone through some changes recently. I used to be focused on personal endeavours, personal fitness and going as fast as I could in my little boat. I am here in a much more serious capacity, in my view, supporting my neighbours and being their voice here in Ottawa. It has been challenging at times. This job is tough. Lots of jobs are tough. Lots of Canadians are struggling for lots of reasons.

That little app helps me check in every once in a while and reminds me what I need to do. It reminds me I have some needs. I need to exercise. I need to listen to music. I need to make sure my nutrition is good, and I need to make sure I am hydrated. Those things make my mental health a lot better. We do not need to be suffering to check in with ourselves. We owe it to ourselves to check in on our mental health and the mental health of those we love.

I would like to focus on kids. School has seen a massive disruption over the last couple of years, and we are finally getting back to normal. That is why I was so thrilled to meet with Children First today. I met with Jamie, Meghan and Josephine. They talked to me about their struggles over the past couple of years with anxiety, eating disorders, depression and their sense of fitting in and belonging when they went back to school.

Jamie, Meghan and Josephine are identified as gifted. They are intellectuals, and they are leaders. They are to be commended for coming forward to talk about these important issues on behalf of all of their classmates.

Government Orders

Our government remains fully committed to investing a further \$4.5 billion over five years for the new Canada mental health transfer. However, we know we have a lot more to do.

• (2155)

We can improve. We will save lives. We need to work together on a holistic approach that addresses all aspects of mental health, not just the symptoms. Prevention is treatment, and I am so encouraged tonight by the collaboration evident in this House.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Chair, I sure am proud seeing everybody here debating so late into the night and for everything we have shared today.

I am wondering if the member can share if he believes in the importance of having mental health and physical health parity. We know that our bodies and our mental health are interconnected in so many ways. If so, how can he help us move forward and reach that parity within our provinces and territories?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Chair, the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith knows exactly what I love to talk about in this House, and that is the power of physical activity, primarily for kids.

I am a kinesiologist. I was an athlete, and one of the things that is missing from my life, as much as it used to be, is physical activity every single day. When I talk to kids, like Josephine, Meghan and Jamie today, they talk to me about how a bit of activity, exercise or sports, and it does not have to be competitive, in fact, it should not be at first, just improves their lives.

It improves their mental health, their physical health and their sense of community at school, and it is absolutely essential. If there are any school board trustees, people running for those positions or ministers of education out there, daily physical activity in schools ought to be essential. Physical literacy is just as important as numeracy and reading and writing. It is a life skill that is so ingrained in our physiology and our biology that it should be a necessity.

People often ask athletes if it is all mental or all physical. It cannot be one without the other. Our brains are connected to our bodies, and there is a symbiotic relationship. We have to take care of the whole organism.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I am going to take our hon. colleague's last comments a bit further. I am where I am today because of the volunteers, the sports I was in and the cadet program I was in, which essentially provided me an outlet and a safe place from the dysfunction I was growing up in. The reason I am not on the street, in a gang, in prison or dead is due to this: the importance of these volunteers and the importance of these organizations. Perhaps maybe what we should also be doing as part of this is focusing some of the funds on these minor programs that provide such great and important services to Canadians far and wide and even Canadians who are marginalized.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Chair, the member is once again after my own heart.

I am proud to stand up and talk about the community sport for all program, which I was fortunate enough to work on with support from our caucus. The community sport for all program has invest-

ed \$80 million, half of it so far and \$40 million next year hopefully, in community sport programs across the country focused on disadvantaged youth, youth who are vulnerable and youth who do not have access.

There are three main categories of barriers to access to physical activity for Canadians. The first is environmental. It is a cold country, there is climate change and we are spread out, so it could be a lack of infrastructure or whatever and there are a lot of reasons environmental barriers exist. There are financial ones, as sports and physical activity are expensive and out of reach for too many families. Third, there are socio-cognitive and cultural barriers, where people just do not feel like they belong, and that is a tragic thing.

We need to change hearts and minds. We need to create inclusive spaces. We need to encourage diversity in sports. Physical activity programs have to be made accessible for people with a disability, people from minorities, newcomers, people who feel afraid and people who feel like they do not belong. Sport is absolutely essential.

• (2200)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Chair, my colleague touched on youth. He mentioned he turned 40, and I am eight years older than him. Thank God, I did not have social media when I was a kid growing up. Would he like to elaborate on the impact of social media, cyberbullying and so on, in terms of children's mental health?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Chair, I know we are not supposed to use props, but these greasy rectangles of glass in our pockets are devastating for children. They distract them. They keep them on those things, and they keep them from developing that physical literacy I was talking about. They can be an encouraging way to keep in touch with their friends and make sure their parents keep track of them, but we have to encourage technology literacy as well, and that means limiting access to these things and some of the impacts that social media has on their psyches.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I will be sharing my time with the member for Vancouver East.

As parliamentarians, we must recognize indigenous-led mental health services. Colonial mental health services are not having the same effect for Nunavummiut as they may for other Canadians. Since time immemorial, first nations, Métis and Inuit have used their own practices to support each other. Our mental wellness practices as indigenous people are valuable but need more recognition.

Government Orders

In Nunavut, community members do not have the specific spaces that provide secure and confidential mental health services the same way certified professional mental health providers do. The infrastructure may be there but unavailable to indigenous providers. If a psychologist were to travel to a community, they would leave people on a waiting list with little to no support. Practices that work for southern communities cannot be the only option for indigenous peoples.

There are indigenous-led services that are making a huge difference with the people they help. An Inuit mental health project funded by the Mandala Institute for Holistic Mental Health is beginning to offer Inuit-led services. This institute has a huge impact on Inuit across Canada. Inuit elders, activists and advocates have long been calling for Inuit-specific mental health training programs. These programs need to be available to Inuit across Canada. Decolonized mental health programs are needed to address mental health crises that are leading to increased depression, addiction and suicide rates.

The Mandala mental health funded project is looking into piloting a heal the healer program. This program would train Inuit to support their communities with expertise in mental health. Projects like these need to be funded. There need to be financial resources dedicated for indigenous-led mental health practices. These services need to be recognized by the government to make sure the burden is not on Inuit. We cannot continue to ask indigenous community members to volunteer their time and space because the government does not recognize their expertise. The government has allocated \$600 million for innovative mental health care for Canadians since the start of the pandemic. There must also be a focus on providing funding for indigenous traditional health practices.

My communities are not seeing the support and training they need to support themselves. This is not acceptable in this time of reconciliation. We as parliamentarians need to demand more from the government and all future governments. We appreciate kind words, but significant investments for indigenous-led mental health services are urgently needed.

As parliamentarians, we must stop placing the burden on Inuit and indigenous peoples who do not have the housing, who live in poverty and who lack the infrastructure to do the work of the government. In the meantime, first nations, Métis and Inuit can access the Hope for Wellness help line at 1-855-242-3310. I have used it myself, and I will be forever grateful for receiving counselling in Inuktitut from Hope for Wellness.

• (2205)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Chair, I want to go back to one of the things that the parliamentary secretary for health just indicated, which is the importance of nutrition with regard to mental health activities. These numbers are from the Canadian Mental Health Association. It says that Canada lags behind some other countries because it spends only about 5% to 7% of its overall health care budget on mental health, whereas some of our OECD colleagues, like France, New Zealand and the Netherlands, spend 10% to 13%.

I wonder if the hon. member could just elaborate on her thoughts with regard to the importance of nutrition, given the cost of nutrition in her home region.

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I have asked several times in the House about the nutrition north program, which is a federally funded program that is subsidizing for-profit companies, rather than helping people in poverty. Because of the subsidy that is being given to for-profit companies, people who are in poverty are suffering and are continuing to live in mental health conditions that they should not have to.

I really hope that we can do better to make sure that especially Arctic communities in my riding are able to have access to healthy, affordable and nutritious food.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Chair, I cannot thank my colleague enough for her work around mental health, especially for Inuit, first nations and Métis people. She talked about reconciliation. In the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action number 21, it is explicit. It states:

We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.

Does my colleague believe there will be true reconciliation until this call to action is actually implemented and fulfilled?

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I would like to thank my colleague for all the work that he does in the area of mental health, as well.

Reconciliation is going to be a very long journey because of the deep impacts that colonialism continues to have. Definitely, better funding, healing centres and healing programs will take that step forward quite a bit, but that will not be sufficient. There are too many investments and too many promises that have been broken, too many people who live in overcrowded housing situations and too many people who live in mouldy old housing units.

I think that making sure there is a focus on those healing centres would definitely take that step forward, but it will not be enough.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, I want to offer our colleague another opportunity.

Today in question period she brought up a tragic case of a young mother who was pregnant, I believe, and could not find housing in her community. Sadly, this young mother died by suicide.

We must consider the importance of housing, the importance of clean water and the importance of, as my colleague said, nutrition in our rural and remote communities. Sadly, I think those are such high contributors to the suicide epidemics that we see in our first nations communities and our rural and remote communities.

I just want to offer my colleague another opportunity to bring this forward in tonight's debate.

Government Orders

Ms. Lori Idlout: *Uqaqtittiji*, I really appreciate the space that the hon. member has given me to retell a story that is still so fresh in my mind that it still brings me to tears, which I was told by the Taloyoak Housing Authority. When, unfortunately, this young pregnant Inuk woman was told that, no, she was not getting a house, she died by suicide because she felt so hopeless.

It brings to bear just how much of a burden we are placing on our communities by the government failing our people. This is what I have been trying to focus on. How do we alleviate all of that burden that we are putting on the decision-makers when they have to choose who gets to live in what house because there is not enough funding for all of the houses that need to be provided?

• (2210)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, I will build on what I heard from my colleague about the need for the social determinants of health to be addressed, because that is intrinsically linked to both our physical and mental health.

The reality is that there are so many people in our communities who do not have access to basic supports that should be a basic human right, such as housing. When people cannot access housing, they are in turmoil. Pregnant mothers feel so hopeless because they cannot have access to housing that they take their lives.

I have had situations in my own riding of Vancouver East where mothers and families who are trying to get away from domestic violence are not able to access housing. There is desperation when sending them back to the abuser because they have no other choice. I have met mothers who lost their children, and not because they are bad parents but because they do not have access to safe, secure and affordable housing. Let us imagine for one moment the trauma associated with that. What does that do to their hearts, to their minds and to their mental health? Those are the realities that people have to live with every day across Canada and most definitely in my riding of Vancouver East.

I have met children who have gone through life into adulthood without access to early diagnosis. As a result, they suffer from mental health issues. Some of them have ended up homeless in the community. Some of them have ended up in a situation where addiction is tied in. In fact, in Vancouver, a homelessness count was done, and the latest statistics we have, from back in the 2020 study, show 44% of the participants self-reported a mental health condition or illness as part of the challenge they face and 60% reported addiction as an issue.

In my riding of Vancouver East, the homelessness crisis has shot through the roof. I have never, in my 30 years in public life, seen it as bad as it is today. Those are the realities that people are faced with.

Just this summer, my daughter got a distress call. It was almost by accident. A friend she had from high school sent her a call that she thought was weird and odd. Luckily, she picked up on it and called for an intervention and a life was saved. That was what happened, and it was so close to home in so many ways. That young woman was struggling to try to find housing. She was trying to escape an abusive situation in her home and trying to find safe hous-

ing. She felt so hopeless that she could not get it. Those are the realities that people are faced with.

When I see and learn that the government made a promise to provide resources of \$4.5 billion and then it did not go out into the system to help the people in greatest need, one cannot imagine the distress, the anger, the sadness and the frustration I am going through and that I know many members of this House are going through. More to the point, I think of the people who so desperately need the supports. I cannot imagine what they must be going through, and the loved ones who see their family members struggling.

We have to tie the social determinants of health to this. When we say mental health is a health issue, we have to treat it as such. We have all said it in this House. Let us make sure that when people need the support, it is actually provided. Let us make sure that it is part of the overall universal health care system. Let us make sure that housing is a basic human right so that we do not hear any more about the tragic and devastating stories that my colleague has just shared with us. It is time to act and we need to save lives. Let us always remember that.

• (2215)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Chair, earlier this week, on Tuesday as a matter of fact, we heard about the death of Constable Yang, a three-year veteran with the RCMP, a mental health and outreach worker. She was somebody who was so passionate about doing everything in her power to support those who were struggling with mental health and addictions, a dedicated member, a committed volunteer and a champion in her community.

I know it was close to the hon. member's area. I just wondered if our hon. colleague could talk about how that murder, that senseless act of violence, has impacted her community.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Chair, I thank the member for his excellent work in advancing supports and awareness around the issue of mental health for all Canadians.

The situation that took place in the Lower Mainland is devastating. Those are the realities of what people are faced with. In this instance, a young woman who was on the job, helping the community, lost her life. This cannot be acceptable.

When we mourn her life, when we celebrate her life, when we honour her and her family, and those who are frontline workers in the community, we need to make sure the resources are there. That is what really matters for the federal government to take action on.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Chair, I am always so grateful for my colleague's incredible advocacy on housing. She is also our critic in our caucus for immigration.

One of the things I am constantly hit with in my riding are folks who are dealing with mental health issues and who are desperately trying to turn to family who may live in another country. Unfortunately, because of a lot of the problems we are seeing in our own immigration system, they cannot have family visits and they cannot go and visit. It is soul crushing. I find it cruel to keep families apart.

Could the member briefly describe some of the fixes that we have been putting forward and some of the things she has seen in the relation to that, and how that impacts the mental health crisis that we are talking about today?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Chair, there is no question that our immigration system is actually in crisis. It is in complete chaos, and processing delays are keeping families apart. It is costing people both their physical and mental health.

What the government has to do is cut the red tape. We could actually regularize people. We could streamline the processes. We could make sure that those who have long wait times in the processing delays are processed expeditiously. That means additional resources in the system and cutting the red tape to find efficiencies.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Chair, I want to thank my colleague for her presentation. I have had the opportunity of being in her Vancouver East riding. I know there are mental health issues across the whole country, but she has some exceptional circumstances in her region, in her constituency and around her.

Could the member elaborate, with respect to the mental health transfer of \$900 million a year, \$4.5 billion over five years, what she thinks the main issue would be as far as the priority for spending in her constituency?

• (2220)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Chair, support services are absolutely critical. We need early diagnosis for young children, to catch the ill-

Government Orders

ness and the challenges that they are faced with, and to support them and their families all the way through.

In our communities we need to make sure we do not discriminate. The fact is that people cannot access mental health supports. The lucky ones who have extended health care can access it. However, a lot of people do not have extended health care. Access to mental health care is about the ability to pay in that regard, because it is so expensive. We need to make sure people can access services.

I would be remiss if I did not raise this issue as well. I live in a community where there are a lot of people who speak different languages. Having access to support services in their language is absolutely critical. The language barrier is real as well, and we need to break down those barriers. Funding needs to be in place to enhance access to supports.

The Deputy Chair: It being 10:21 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, the committee will rise and I will leave the chair.

(Government Business No. 21 reported)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:21 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, October 20, 2022

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House

Public Accounts

Mr. Williamson	8561
Mr. McCauley	8561

Customs Act

Mrs. Lebouthillier	8561
Bill S-7. First reading	8561
(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)	8561

Petitions

Fisheries Licences

Mr. Small	8561
-----------------	------

Biodiversity

Mr. Boulerice	8561
---------------------	------

Railway Safety

Mr. Bachrach	8562
--------------------	------

Indigenous Affairs

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	8562
--------------------------------------	------

Electoral Reform

Mr. Johns	8562
-----------------	------

Health

Mr. Lamoureux	8562
---------------------	------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux	8562
---------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply

Opposition Motion—Tax Exemption on Home Heating Fuel

Mr. Poilievre	8562
Motion	8562
Mr. Lamoureux	8564
Mr. Trudel	8564
Mr. Green	8565
Mr. Hallan	8565
Mr. McDonald	8566
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	8567
Mr. Bachrach	8567
Mr. Blois	8567
Mr. Small	8569
Mr. Trudel	8569
Mr. Green	8570
Ms. Dabrusin	8570
Mr. Perkins	8571
Mr. Champoux	8572
Ms. Gazan	8572

Ms. Paucé	8572
Mr. Lamoureux	8574
Mr. Lehoux	8574
Mr. Johns	8574
Mr. Barsalou-Duval	8575
Mr. Gerretsen	8576
Mr. McLean	8576
Mr. Julian	8577
Mr. Julian	8577
Mr. Gerretsen	8580
Mr. Tolmie	8580
Mr. Perron	8581
Ms. Gazan	8581
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	8581
Mr. Lehoux	8582
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	8583
Mr. Lamoureux	8583
Mr. Johns	8583
Mr. Champoux	8583
Mr. Small	8584
Mr. Lamoureux	8585
Mr. Trudel	8585
Mr. Green	8586
Ms. Saks	8586
Mr. Carrie	8588
Mrs. Vignola	8588
Mr. Johns	8588
Mr. Coteau	8588
Mr. Lamoureux	8588
Mr. Arnold	8590
Mr. Champoux	8590
Ms. Gazan	8590
Mr. Stewart	8590
Mr. Gerretsen	8592
Mrs. Vignola	8592
Mr. Johns	8592
Mrs. Kramp-Neuman	8593
Mr. Coteau	8594
Mr. Perron	8594
Ms. Gazan	8594
Mr. Morrice	8594
Mr. Gerretsen	8594

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Track Cycling World Champion

Mr. Valdez	8596
------------------	------

Abbotsford Rugby Football Club

Mr. Vis	8596
---------------	------

Municipal Elections in B.C.

Mr. Aldag	8596
-----------------	------

Medal for Meritorious Acts	
Ms. Bérubé	8596
2SLGBTQ+ Community Activism	
Mr. Serré	8596
Affordability for Students	
Mr. Abouttaif	8597
Small Business Week in Yukon	
Mr. Hanley	8597
Autism Awareness Month	
Ms. Koutrakis	8597
Tourism	
Mr. Baldinelli	8597
Constable Shaelyn Yang	
Mr. Beech	8598
Small Business Week	
Ms. Rood	8598
Home Ownership	
Mrs. Roberts	8598
National Small Business Week	
Mrs. Shanahan	8598
Labour	
Mr. Green	8598
International Poetry Festival of Trois-Rivières	
Mr. Villemure	8599
The Economy	
Mr. Barlow	8599
Curling	
Mr. Duguid	8599

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy	
Mr. Poilievre	8599
Ms. Bhandari	8599
Mr. Poilievre	8600
Mr. Holland	8600
Mr. Poilievre	8600
Mr. Holland	8600
Mr. Poilievre	8600
Mr. Holland	8600
Mr. Poilievre	8600
Mr. Holland	8600
Democratic Institutions	
Mr. Blanchet	8601
Mr. Lametti	8601
Mr. Blanchet	8601
Mr. Rodriguez	8601
The Economy	
Mr. Singh	8601
Ms. Bhandari	8601

Telecommunications	
Mr. Singh	8601
Mr. Fillmore	8601
The Economy	
Mr. Hallan	8601
Mr. Beech	8602
Mr. Hallan	8602
Mr. Beech	8602
Mr. Chambers	8602
Mr. Beech	8602
Mr. Chambers	8602
Mr. Beech	8602
Mr. Berthold	8602
Ms. Bhandari	8602
Taxation	
Mr. Berthold	8602
Ms. Bhandari	8603
Democratic Institutions	
Mr. Blanchet	8603
Mr. Rodriguez	8603
Public Safety	
Mr. Fortin	8603
Ms. Damoff	8603
Mr. Fortin	8603
Ms. Damoff	8603
Carbon Pricing	
Ms. Lantsman	8603
Mr. Guilbeault	8604
Ms. Lantsman	8604
Mr. Guilbeault	8604
Mrs. Vien	8604
Mr. Guilbeault	8604
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Ms. Kwan	8604
Mrs. Lalonde	8604
Climate Change	
Mr. Cannings	8604
Mr. Guilbeault	8604
Small Business	
Ms. Bradford	8605
Ms. Tassi	8605
Justice	
Mr. Moore	8605
Mr. Lametti	8605
Mr. Caputo	8605
Mr. Lametti	8605
Ms. Dancho	8605
Ms. Damoff	8605
Ms. Dancho	8605
Mr. Lametti	8606
Climate Change	
Ms. Pauzé	8606
Mr. Wilkinson	8606

Ms. Michaud	8606
Mr. Guilbeault	8606
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Barrett	8606
Ms. Damoff	8606
Mr. Barrett	8606
Ms. Damoff	8606
Mr. Baldinelli	8607
Ms. Damoff	8607
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Dubourg	8607
Ms. Joly	8607
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Barrett	8607
Ms. Damoff	8607
Taxation	
Mr. Melillo	8608
Mr. Wilkinson	8608
Mrs. Gallant	8608
Mr. Wilkinson	8608
Small Business	
Mr. McLeod	8608
Mr. Vandal	8608
Taxation	
Ms. Barron	8608
Mr. Beech	8608
The Environment	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	8608
Mr. Guilbeault	8609
Business of the House	
Mr. Scheer	8609
Mr. Holland	8609

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply

Opposition Motion—Tax Exemption on Home Heating Fuel

Motion	8609
Mr. Gerretsen	8609
Mr. Kurek	8609
Mr. Ste-Marie	8610
Mr. Bittle	8610
Ms. Thompson	8610
Mr. Kmiec	8612
Ms. Pauzé	8612
Ms. McPherson	8612
Mr. Hallan	8612
Mr. Chong	8612
Mr. van Koeverden	8614
Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné	8614
Ms. Zarrillo	8614
Mr. Deltell	8614

Ms. Taylor Roy	8616
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	8616
Mr. Desjarlais	8616
Ms. Taylor Roy	8617
Mr. Kurek	8618
Ms. Pauzé	8618
Mr. Morrice	8619
Mr. Bittle	8619
Mr. McLean	8620
Mr. Villemure	8620
Mr. Desjarlais	8621
Ms. Lantsman	8621
Mr. van Koeverden	8622
Mr. Ste-Marie	8623
Ms. Zarrillo	8623
Mr. Morrice	8623
Mrs. Stubbs	8623
Mr. Lamoureux	8625
Ms. Pauzé	8626
Mr. Desjarlais	8626
Mr. Ste-Marie	8626
Mr. Lamoureux	8627
Division on motion deferred	8628

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Citizenship Act

Mr. Hallan	8628
Bill S-245. Second reading	8628
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	8629
Ms. Saks	8629
Ms. Kwan	8630
Ms. Saks	8630
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	8631
Ms. Kwan	8633
Mr. Kitchen	8634
Mr. Lamoureux	8635

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Mental Health

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 21, Mrs. Alexandra Mendès in the chair)	8636
Ms. Bennett (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)	8637
Motion	8637
Mr. Doherty	8638
Mr. Thériault	8638
Mr. Johns	8638
Mr. Longfield	8639
Mr. Doherty	8639
Mrs. Brière	8641
Mr. Ste-Marie	8641
Ms. Barron	8641
Ms. Bennett	8642
Mr. Thériault	8642

Mr. Ste-Marie	8643	Mr. Maguire	8658
Mr. Doherty	8644	Mr. Doherty	8659
Mrs. Brière	8644	Mr. Scarpaleggia	8659
Ms. Blaney	8644	Ms. Kwan	8659
Mr. Johns	8645	Ms. Taylor Roy	8659
Mr. Coteau	8646	Mr. Doherty	8660
Mr. Doherty	8646	Ms. Mathysen	8660
Mr. Thériault	8647	Ms. Kwan	8661
Ms. Blaney	8647	Ms. Saks	8661
Mr. Fragiskatos	8648	Mr. Maguire	8661
Mr. Doherty	8649	Ms. Idlout	8662
Ms. Blaney	8649	Mrs. Romanado	8662
Mrs. Brière	8649	Mrs. Vecchio	8662
Mr. Coteau	8649	Ms. Barron	8663
Mr. Small	8650	Mrs. Romanado	8663
Mr. Thériault	8650	Mr. Doherty	8663
Mr. Julian	8650	Mr. Kurek	8664
Mr. Cooper	8650	Mr. Scarpaleggia	8664
Mr. van Koeverden	8651	Mr. Johns	8665
Mr. Thériault	8651	Mr. Maguire	8665
Mr. Julian	8652	Ms. Barron	8665
Mrs. Wagantall	8652	Mr. van Koeverden	8666
Mrs. Romanado	8653	Mr. Maguire	8666
Ms. Barron	8653	Mr. Johns	8666
Mr. Doherty	8654	Mr. van Koeverden	8667
Mrs. Romanado	8654	Ms. Barron	8668
Mrs. Vecchio	8654	Mr. Doherty	8668
Ms. Mathysen	8655	Mrs. Romanado	8668
Mr. Doherty	8655	Ms. Idlout	8668
Mr. Jowhari	8655	Mr. Maguire	8669
Ms. Ferreri	8656	Mr. Johns	8669
Ms. Idlout	8656	Mr. Doherty	8669
Mr. Doherty	8656	Ms. Kwan	8670
Ms. Ferreri	8656	Mr. Doherty	8670
Ms. Taylor Roy	8657	Ms. Mathysen	8670
Mr. Johns	8657	Mr. Maguire	8671
Mrs. Vecchio	8658	(Government Business No. 21 reported)	8671

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