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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 27, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF CANADA

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table the 2022 Public Accounts of Canada. The Auditor General of Canada has provided an unqualified audit opinion on the Canadian government's financial statements.

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AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 8(2) of the Auditor General Act, a report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons entitled “Commentary on the 2021-2022 Financial Audits”.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to have the honour to present, on behalf of the international trade committee and in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled “Canada–United States Relationship and its Impacts on the Electric Vehicle, Softwood Lumber and Other Sectors”.

[*Translation*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-302, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (replacement workers).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House to introduce this bill that is so important to NDP supporters. The NDP has always been the party for workers.

There has been a flaw in the Canada Labour Code for years. It does not ban the use of replacement workers during a labour dispute. That upsets the balance of power to the detriment of workers.

This is not the first time the NDP has introduced such a bill. My former colleague Karine Trudel introduced similar legislation in 2016, and Scott Duvall did the same in 2019.

I am extremely pleased to introduce this bill so that we can have a robust and up-to-date Canada Labour Code that protects the rights of workers in the case of a labour dispute by preventing the use of replacement workers.

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

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to present this petition on behalf of the hundreds of York—Simcoe residents who have signed it.

Whereas high inflation rates are driving up the cost of living for all Canadians, the price of gasoline and diesel is hitting record highs across Canada, making it more expensive for Canadians to get to work, transport goods and live their everyday lives. The Government of Canada has continued to make significant revenue from high fuel costs, far exceeding what would have been projected. The petitioners call upon the government to suspend the GST on gasoline and diesel and suspend the carbon tax.

* * *

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.

Government Orders

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 2.

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: There are two motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-31. Motions Nos. 1 and 2 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

I shall now propose Motions Nos. 1 and 2 to the House.

● (1010)

[*Translation*]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Hon. Mona Fortier (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-31, in Clause 3, be amended

(a) by replacing line 17 on page 18 with the following: vices, only 90% of the payment is to be taken into account

(b) replacing lines 23 to 29 on page 18 with the following: purposes of paragraph (1)(g) is the total amount of rent paid in 2022 by the applicant.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-31, in Clause 3, be amended

(a) by replacing line 17 on page 18 with the following: vices, only 90% of the payment is to be taken into account

(b) replacing lines 23 to 29 on page 18 with the following: purposes of paragraph (1)(g) is the total amount of rent paid in 2022 by the applicant.

[*English*]

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to kick off the debate on the report stage of Bill C-31, the cost of living relief act, no. 2.

As the chair of the Standing Committee on Health, I had the honour to preside over five hours of meetings on Monday. We heard from the Minister of Health and the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion for a couple of hours, and then spent three hours considering amendments proposed by the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party. That brings us to where we are today.

I intend to begin by providing some insight as to how this will impact the people of the good riding that I am proud to represent, Charlottetown. Plainly put, it costs more to live in Canada, and Bill C-31 addresses this problem and will help millions of Canadians.

According to the 2021 census, the median household income in Canada was \$84,000, but when we look at the riding I represent, the median household income in 2021 was just \$58,000. That

is \$26,000 less than the Canadian median income, or 31% less than the rest of Canada.

While Charlottetown households have substantially less money to support their families and pay their bills compared to those nationally, P.E.I. is leading the country in the increased cost of living. There are some things in Prince Edward Island that we are proud to lead the country in. Over the last couple of years, we have led the country in per capita population growth, among other things, but leading the country in the inflation rate is not particularly a badge of honour.

In May of this year, inflation hit 11.1% in P.E.I., the highest in the country. In fact, we have had the highest inflation rate in the country every month since March 2021. Imagine the average Charlottetown family, with a household income of \$58,000, trying to absorb the costs of the worst inflation in the country. When we talk about the cost of living, these numbers reflect where the people of Charlottetown are and demonstrate the direct impact Bill C-31 would have in addressing those increasing costs.

Allow me to begin with the rental housing benefit in Bill C-31. This act proposes a \$500 top-up to the Canada housing benefit. This is a \$1.2-billion addition to the existing \$4-billion Canada housing benefit.

There is no doubt the rising cost of housing is an issue from coast to coast to coast, from St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, to Victoria, British Columbia, and everywhere in between in this country. It is also particularly acute in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. In April of this year, P.E.I.'s annual inflation rate for rented accommodation was 15.3%. Compare this to the national inflation rate for rental accommodations, at 4.2%.

Let us look at the average cost of a two-bedroom apartment. Nationally, it costs \$1,167. In Charlottetown, it costs \$1,055. Charlottetown renters are paying national prices with \$26,000 less in income. Furthermore, not only is renting more expensive, but it is also harder to find somewhere at any price. If someone was trying to rent in Charlottetown today, they would be contending with a 1.5% vacancy rate. That is less than half the national average.

What do these numbers tell us? Charlottetown renters are paying more, are finding less and need support now. That is why Bill C-31 is so important. Specifically, this bill would put \$500 more in the pockets of the same Canadians who are struggling to pay for rent, like those in Charlottetown.

We know that Canadians need help today, which is why we are not reinventing the wheel on this. Bill C-31 is a top-up on existing housing support, the \$4-billion Canada housing benefit. This will cut down on administrative barriers and save time between money going out the door and getting into the pockets of Canadians to help pay for housing.

Government Orders

• (1015)

One critique that is often repeated in the House is that it is not enough and, because of that, one certain party is not supportive of the bill.

First, the \$500 top-up is in addition to existing supports under the \$4-billion Canada housing benefit to ensure that Canadians can pay for housing, which is on average \$2,500 in direct financial support.

Second, to not support the bill, because some members say it is not enough, is quite frankly an insult to the very same Canadians who need the additional \$500 top-up today in regions where incomes and vacancy rates are lower and inflation is higher, like in Charlottetown.

Housing is not the only area where people need financial support. Dental care is financially inaccessible to many low- and middle-income families in this country. Right now, Canadians are falling through the cracks trying to access dental care. Bill C-31 is a solution to close that gap through the dental benefit act. Specifically, this benefit will provide \$1,300 per eligible child over two years. It will be targeted for uninsured Canadians with a family income of less than \$90,000 annually, for their children under 12 years old, which is most of the families in the riding I represent.

Regardless of family income, location or employment, Bill C-31 will provide financial support for those under 12 years of age to ensure access to dental care in this country.

Income is one determining factor to whether Canadians can access dental care. We know that one in five Canadians are not receiving needed dental care due to cost. This means that seven million Canadians, because of their income, cannot get the basic dental care they need.

Employment is another determining factor with respect to access to dental care. It is true that 55% of dental care services are paid by private insurance through employers. While this provides financial support to pay for dental care services for many Canadians, 45% of Canadians do not have that option. Employment status should not determine whether an individual can afford dental services.

Finally, location has increasingly become a deciding factor regarding which Canadians get dental care and which do not. Some provinces have made strides to publicly fund dental care programs, such as for low-income families. For example, Prince Edward Island, home to my riding of Charlottetown, has a provincial dental care program that provides a sliding scale coverage for low-income families and seniors based on family size, income and other criteria. More than 15,000 Islanders, less than 10% of the population, have applied to use this program. While programs like these have been useful, not all provinces or territories have them, creating an inconsistency of access across the country. That is where the Government of Canada must and will step in to create consistency of access coast to coast to coast.

This is one step of many to come. This new benefit is a bridge to a long-term goal of dental care for all Canadians. We are starting with children first to address current issues and alleviate long-term

oral health problems. An estimated 2.26 million school days each year are lost due to dental-related illness.

Increased costs have meant Canadians are making tough decisions, such as choosing between food on the table and dental care. Increased costs have meant paying out of budget rent prices to simply keep a roof over their heads. Bill C-31 does not fix all affordability issues, but tangibly targets key areas to put money directly into people's pockets where they need it. That is why I urge my colleagues to continue to support Bill C-31.

• (1020)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member from Prince Edward Island went to great lengths in his speech this morning to describe how Islanders are paying so much more and receiving so much less from the current government.

Has the member ever spoken out publicly about the costly NDP-Liberal coalition and the homegrown inflation caused by their reckless spending habits and policies? Is he another Liberal MP unable to speak out on behalf of his constituents, who are having to pay more and receive less from the government he is a part of?

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for that question, because it gives me a chance to address the fallacy that has been created by the Conservative Party that inflation in this country is something that exists only in this country, which is patently untrue.

Inflation is a worldwide phenomenon, and Canada is faring significantly better than the other G7 countries. I would be most interested in hearing from the party opposite about which of the measures we put in place to help Canadians through the pandemic that they would have cut.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to know how my colleague feels. Bill C-31 provides for a \$500 rent assistance cheque, but it excludes 87,000 people who live in social housing. We are talking about seniors, women who are victims of domestic violence, people with mental health issues. These people are totally excluded from Bill C-31. We have tried to get them to drop the 30% requirement so that these people can receive this cheque.

I would like to know how my colleague feels about the fact that this money will not be sent to very vulnerable people in Quebec.

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, as part of this bill, we have developed a program to help the most vulnerable. We have also created rules to get this assistance out to the most vulnerable as quickly as possible. We want it to be more efficient. It is very important to consider the urgency of this situation. That is exactly what we have done.

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[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member rightfully points out that housing costs are very expensive now for Canadians and in fact have been for some time. Many Canadians find themselves in the situation where they cannot find secure, safe and affordable housing. The \$500 one-time benefit is something that the NDP absolutely supports and has pushed the government to go forward with, and we are pleased about that.

Regarding the ultimate goal of ensuring that housing is in fact a basic human right, which the government agrees with in the national housing strategy, would the member then support action in the upcoming fall economic statement and budget to reflect that, with resources and investments in affordable housing and co-op housing?

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Vancouver East for the very constructive role she played at the health committee to present amendments that would improve this bill.

The \$72-billion national housing strategy has been critically important in increasing the housing stock in Charlottetown and right across the country, without a doubt. Her direct question was whether I would support further investments in the upcoming fall economic statement. The answer is unequivocally yes.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the member for Charlottetown pointed out in his speech how house prices and rents are far outpacing any wage gains. Kitchener renters need support just as much as Charlottetown renters. It is why I will support the measures in this bill. We also have to recognize that a one-time \$500 benefit is a drop in the bucket.

Does the member for Charlottetown agree that more needs to be done to ensure that homes are places that people live and not simply investments for corporate investors to trade, for example, by removing—

• (1025)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thought the member was ending there, but I will have to cut him off.

The hon. member for Charlottetown, a brief answer, please.

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, the brief answer is yes. Homes should not be used as a financial tool, especially given the condition of the market at the present time. The government has taken substantial steps in this regard. In terms of housing for the most vulnerable, probably the most effective program has been the rapid housing initiative, something that we have seen with results on the ground.

There is absolutely no question the member makes a fair point. We need more of that.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise here in the House of Commons to debate legislation. I have reflected upon this bill. We had time to see it in committee, though very little time I might add. We had little time with stakeholders and very little time in front of min-

isters to debate this bill, which is, sadly, a gateway to spending \$11 billion of taxpayer money.

For that fact, here in the House, having a motion to end debate on this bill very quickly and have it rammed through is a difficulty. That is the same experience that we had in committee. I am unsure why there is an urgency with this bill, other than it really panders to the political aspirations of those across the aisle and their costly coalition dance partners, which, as I mentioned, will jack up the costs for all Canadians as we move forward.

Everybody in the House wants to have their sound bites and their clips for social media. All that type of stuff is potentially important. What I am going to say, I know, will be taken out of context and that is why it is important to preface it in that sense.

There is not a dental crisis in the country. There is no reason we had to run this bill through in this warp-speed manner and try to ram it down the throats of those of us who would suspect we need much more prudence in how we approach spending money in this House and exactly where we spend it, which is important. It would have been much nicer if this were a mental health and rental bill as opposed to the dental health and rental bill. Why would that be more important? We know, and everyone in the House can attest to it, that there is a mental health crisis in this country that is not being addressed and that is the darn shame of it all. This is about where we choose to spend our money in the House, and the difficulty is that we do not have unlimited amounts.

I always liken this to my own finances. When there are urgencies, when the roof is off the house, people have to put the roof on before they put the front step on. Sure, they are both absolutely important, but we have to look at priorities. We have to understand that a roof on the house is, sadly, more important than the front step. Do we need them both? Yes, we do.

That being said, there is a mental health crisis in this country. One in three Canadians throughout their lifetime will have significant problems with their mental health. We see it in the news every day. We see it from our loved ones every day. We know that the government is not funding mental health. It is an odd fact that the commitment the Liberal government made in its 2021 platform with respect to mental health has not been spent or committed to in its current budget. That is a huge difficulty. The irony is not lost that the cost of that Canada mental health transfer would be about \$875 million. When we look at the costs in this bill, the exact amount is very ironic. This money could have been spent on the Canada mental health transfer, which would have done so much for Canadians who are in that significant crisis.

We need to look further at all of those things that we hold very dear here in Canada, and one of those things is people's access to our great Canadian health care system. From the president of the Canadian Medical Association, we know that this system is on the brink of collapse. It too is in crisis. It is a catastrophe. It is a disaster and, sadly, any other negative superlatives that I could come up with.

We know that in my home province alone, 100,000 people, or 10% of the population of Nova Scotia, do not have access to primary care. The sad fact is that we also know, when people do not have access to primary care in Canada, it becomes very difficult to access care for mental health. Further to that, we know that there are approximately one million people in Ontario who do not have access to primary care. Therefore, is there a crisis out there? Yes, there is.

• (1030)

I know that my words will be taken out of context and misconstrued; however, that being said, there is a crisis. It is not in dental health care. It is in mental health care and in the health care system in general. I would be so bold as to say that, if we wanted to ask Canadians how we should spend their money, I would suspect that they would say to spend it on mental health care and spend it on health care, and once that part of our house, the roof of our house, is in better shape, we can put on a front porch or a front step. That makes perfect sense.

I think the other part around the dental part of this program is understanding that 11 of 13 jurisdictions in Canada do have dental programs for their citizens. I think it is also important that the Canadian Dental Association stated that a better idea than creating this “Ottawa knows best” federalist program would be to actually help tweak those provinces that are struggling and look at provinces that have excellent dental health care programs, and then help other provinces better understand how they could make a better program.

I think the other part that flows very nicely into that is understanding that the administration of this program, although purported to be very simple, is in the hands of a government that cannot manage other simple programs, even programs that have been in existence for decades.

Let us talk about passports, for instance. The passport system, as far as I can discern in my own life, has worked in an excellent fashion for a very long time. We would get a piece of paper in the old days. We would then sign it. We would get a guarantor, and we would put it in the mail to send it away. Lo and behold, almost as if by magic, our passport would show up in the mail. Nowadays, we do not need guarantors. It has become even simpler than that, but the government has bungled that as well.

It is the government of “everything is broken”. The immigration system is broken. We have an arrive scam app of \$54 million that the Liberals cannot even account for. Not only is it exorbitant in its cost, but they also cannot even account for \$1.2 million. Who got paid? Who got rich? Those questions cannot even be answered.

How can we ask them to administer another supposedly simple program? If we cannot even run the programs that have existed for decades, how can we create a new program and say there will be no problems with it? How can we tell people to look at how easy it is and that anybody would be able to access it, when we know we cannot even get a darned passport in this country?

We know the immigration system is broken. We hear that 40,000 Afghans are going to come to Canada, but less than half of that number of people have been admitted to this country. This is a crisis. The Liberals cannot function in a crisis, and we know perhaps

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that is the difficulty. They are unsure, unaware or uncertain of exactly what the definition of the word “crisis” is. I think that, perhaps, is the difficulty.

We also know the Liberals have bungled the whole greenhouse gas and carbon emissions situation. We know they have not met any of their targets, and we now know their provincial Liberal cousins in Nova Scotia are railing against them. We know that for the average Nova Scotian, the premier of Nova Scotia rejected the carbon tax for a more robust, complete and overall well-performing system. He rejected their carbon tax system. Even though it is being rammed down the throats of all Nova Scotians, it would appear it is going to cost \$400 per year extra on top of the insane prices of home heating fuel, and we know that is going to create significant difficulties for Nova Scotians this year.

The rental program, we know, is in response to the Liberals' failed housing strategy. We know it is a band-aid approach, and when the patient is haemorrhaging, putting a band-aid on it is like the old story with the little boy with the dike. We will run out of fingers eventually.

We know the average rental cost here in this country is \$2,000 per month. We know the cost of housing has doubled, and we know people are living in their parents' basements. The unaffordability is just astronomical, so we have a government that is spending money. Not to be disparaging to drunken sailors, but the Liberals are spending like that. I apologize to drunken sailors.

The Liberals cannot run programs, and now they want to create another “Ottawa knows best” federally directed program that is likely to be a significant debacle.

• (1035)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, talk about being out of touch with what Canadians expect of the government.

Here we have supports at a time when Canadians are looking for leadership in Ottawa, and the Conservative Party continues to want to frustrate Canadians through these tactics and the policy flip-flopping that takes place.

Why does the member not support children under the age 12 having support in getting dental care? This would prevent children from having to go to the hospital. This would allow children to get the dental work they need. Why is the Conservative Party opposed to these children under the age of 12? Shame on them.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I love children under the age of 12. I have had three of my own who were once under the age 12. I also have two grandchildren under the age of 12. I love them very much.

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It harkens back to understanding that the government very clearly does not understand there is a mental health crisis, and it will not commit to the Canada mental health transfer the Liberals promised in their platform since the election in 2021, which of course, we all know was called during a pandemic and was unnecessary. They refuse to commit that money. Why did it take them so long to create a three-digit suicide prevention hotline? Why do they hate people who have mental health issues?

I do not know, but as I said before, understanding that, if the roof of one's house is off, then trying to fix the front step, does not mean it is not important, but it means that one has to fix the most important thing first. That is the crisis we have in the health care system and for those suffering with mental health here in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and congratulate him on his speech.

At the beginning of his speech, I was listening and thinking that if he lived in Quebec, he would surely be a member of the Bloc Québécois, because he defends many of the Bloc's arguments.

I heard him speak about the unwieldy system and the interminable debates we have on issues that could be settled much more easily. I am thinking more specifically about seniors and about mental health and dental care. Curiously, these are all sectors that are under the provinces' and Quebec's jurisdiction.

The federal government could agree once and for all to meet Quebec's and the provinces' unanimous request to increase health transfers, so that these issues could be addressed by those who are responsible for them. Does my colleague not agree that this would be much simpler, and that it would save us a lot of time, allow us to talk about other things, and have constructive debates like the one we had the day before yesterday on the monarchy?

[*English*]

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his input with respect to this. There are certain things that I really enjoy in my relationship with my Bloc colleagues, and there are certain other things, of course, that make me sad inside as a Canadian to understand the difficulties that we have. I wish we could all hold hands, sing Kumbaya and live in much more harmony in this great country, because we do have an absolutely fantastic country.

This morning, I got to my office at eight o'clock so that I could take French lessons, which happen twice a week. I think it is important that we as Canadians embrace the great culture that we do have here.

I also think that there are certain provinces that are not going to be helped by this proposed dental program. For instance, Nova Scotia has a great dental program now, and the amount of money that we would actually receive from this program is very minimal when other provinces would benefit significantly. I do not think that the "Ottawa knows best" approach is any way to continue to do things.

• (1040)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am astonished by the speech from the member for Cumberland—Colchester. He pits people with mental health challenges against families who need dental health care.

If we actually took the money that we spend, that we waste, on fossil fuel subsidies, and if we made corporations pay what they owe in terms of taxes, we would have far enough funds in this country to pay for both dental health care and mental health care. Why does the member try to pit Canadians against each other?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I do not think that is the point. Maybe the member was perhaps not listening carefully, but we are not trying to pit people against each other.

The sad reality is that, in spite of the fact that the costly coalition thinks money grows on trees in the backyard and can be poured out of a firehose, it is just not how any economy works. We know that we have to pick and choose where money needs to be spent and, again, if the roof is off of one's house, one does not put a front step on. That only makes sense to me. I am trying to make it as simple as possible, and I am unsure why people have a difficult time understanding economics 101.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the much-discussed Bill C-31 introduced by the Liberal government. What to think about it?

This is an unusual bill. On the one hand, it proposes helping families with children under the age of 12 access dental care. On the other hand, it provides rent assistance to those who are struggling to make ends meet because of inflation. In essence, these are ideas we cannot very well oppose. The bill is positive, and the intention is laudable.

The question, however, is why and how it was done. I think that how it was done is more important, because although people may have good intentions, the way they carry them out can be less than perfect.

In this case, the Liberal government says that it introduced this bill because of inflation. However, the real reason they introduced the bill is that the Liberal government across the aisle made a deal with the NDP, and the NDP sold out for a pittance. The NDP promised that they would force down anything put in front of them without a peep. They promised they would close their eyes and bury their heads in the sand even if it made no sense. All the NDP asked for in return was that the government implement a dental care program.

2021 is over and done with, and we are now at the end of 2022. The government was not going to do it, and, understandably, the NDP was disappointed. The NDP therefore asked the government to at least pretend to respect the deal under which it gave the Liberals carte blanche.

The government then agreed to develop a program, which it basically scribbled on the back of a napkin. It presented a program that had several problems. Actually, it is not really a program, because all they are doing is sending out cheques. Are they really enabling people to access dental care by sending out cheques? Will people really have less trouble paying their rent if the government sends out cheques? These are reasonable questions. If we take a closer look at the bill, we may be able to answer them. It is even more important to know who will be receiving those cheques. Another issue is how the money will be distributed.

Rent assistance should help everyone. The government plans to send a \$500 cheque to families who earn less than \$35,000 a year. I must say, it is very difficult to make ends meet when you earn less than \$35,000 a year, especially with ever-increasing rental costs. According to one of the program's eligibility criteria, families who earn less than \$35,000 a year must allocate at least 30% of their income to rent.

Therein lies the rub, and it is the same thing for dental benefits. In Quebec, we decided to help our people, but Canada has decided to adopt another approach. In Quebec, for example, we have co-operative housing that fosters sharing. People often pay rent based on their income. Some people pay higher rent to compensate for those who pay lower rent. We try to avoid having people pay more than 30% of their income on housing. That does not mean that these people are fabulously wealthy or that they are driving Ferraris. It simply means that there are people helping them make ends meet.

Unfortunately, these people are not eligible for the assistance in this bill, and that is disappointing. The same is true for people who live in low-income housing. In Quebec, we decided to finance social housing so that many people could have access to rental housing and put a roof over their families' heads. These are people who do not have a lot of money. Some of them are retired and live solely on their federal pension and a few cents from the guaranteed income supplement. They can barely put food on the table.

The government says that it will help everyone except these people, the very poorest. They are telling those who are struggling the hardest to make ends meet that, since they are already getting assistance, the government will help someone else instead. That is disappointing, because many Quebecers will be completely ineligible, since Quebec has a social safety net and the federal government across the way did not take that into account when it developed its program at the kitchen table. Naturally, the New Democrats are rubbing their hands together with glee because they can say they gained something. It is disappointing, because, in the end, Quebecers will be the losers, and they will lose out even more with the second component of the program, the dental benefit.

• (1045)

The Bloc already had reservations about this bill, but it is even more worried about the dental care benefit. I will tell members why. When people think teeth, they do not automatically think federal government. They think that dental care is a health issue and that the health system is under the Quebec government's jurisdiction. This is even mentioned in sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867.

Government Orders

The Liberals are certainly very familiar with the Constitution. They wrote it themselves in 1982 when they patriated it. They added a few bits and pieces to it, but they must have looked to see what was already in it before adding other bits, to make sure that it all made sense. They are the guardians of the famous Constitution they imposed on Quebec in 1867 and again in 1982. They can say what they want, but there was no referendum in Quebec before the Constitution was adopted in 1867. There were even major debates about whether it was a good thing or not. The vote had a very low turnout, unlike all the other votes, and they wanted to avoid putting the question to the ballot box and to Quebecers.

Sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867, are important. I remember hearing members across the aisle yesterday saying that it is crazy, that we cannot vote on the monarchy, we cannot sever ties with the King, because we would have to open the Constitution. For them, the Constitution is like the Bible. They lie in bed at night reading and praying to the Constitution. We cannot overlook that fact. It is obvious. However, when we see the great bills introduced here on a daily basis, we realize that the Constitution is practically used as toilet paper. Clearly, when it does not suit them, they do not respect their own Constitution.

That is sad, because under the Constitution, health care is the purview of the provinces and Quebec. If the Liberals had said that they were going to give dental benefits to indigenous people or military members, that might make sense, because their health care actually is a federal responsibility. However, it is outrageous for them to meddle in matters that are none of their business when, as we know, they are not even capable of providing us with passports. People want to take flights, but they have to wait in line for days to get a passport. Once they get to the airport, they have to wait for hours to collect their bags. Then they have to stand in never-ending lines to board the plane, and when they get out, they do it all over again.

I went on a flight very recently, and I was amazed to discover there was no waiting in line in Europe. Everything moved quickly. I was really surprised. I wondered how this could be possible, since we were told that the problem was global. Apparently, we are different from the rest of the world. Canada has even ranked among the worst countries.

The federal government is not even able to provide the services it is actually responsible for. It can take years to process immigration applications for temporary foreign workers, leaving businesses are on the verge of bankruptcy. They are calling us in a panic because they cannot get the workers they requested a long time ago, and yet this federal government is telling Quebec that it knows how to deal with the problems. It says that it knows better than Quebec about things Quebec is already doing. It says it will impose a new system on top of the system that already exists in Quebec.

Government Orders

Let us not forget that all children under the age of 10 are already covered in Quebec. There is already universal coverage in Quebec for youth who need dental care, so this federal program does absolutely nothing for all children under the age of 10. The sad part is that Quebecers will continue to pay their taxes to the federal government. What will happen? The federal government will take Quebecers' money and send it elsewhere, because Quebec already helps its residents. What I was saying earlier about rent will help happen again with children. Ultimately, we are getting shafted.

The federal government will not only cover children under the age of 10, but children aged 10 to 12, as well. We are talking about a two-year gap. It could be argued that getting a little something for children between 10 and 12 is worthwhile, but that emphasizes another difference between Quebec and the rest of Canada. We have a much higher unionization rate than the rest of Canada. The NDP should be happy about that, but that is not reflected in their support for the bill. Since Quebec has a much higher unionization rate, that means that Quebecers often have better working conditions and are able to negotiate to obtain better coverage, including dental care. As a result, many children between 10 and 12 are already get dental coverage.

• (1050)

It is sad because, once again, they built—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The member's time has expired. I tried to signal him. I am sure he will have some time during questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the separatists in the House of Commons do not want a national program that provides dental care for all Canadian children under the age of 12, which does not surprise me. They are the same members who would argue that the federal government has no role in this, even though the Canada Health Act deals with health care in the provinces. Canadians expect a national government to provide the type of care that is needed.

If the member is so convinced that the province of Quebec would not benefit from this program, would he then agree that the money allocated to Quebec under this program will be covered by the salaries of members from the Bloc? It is silly for them to say that children in Quebec will not benefit from this program, because the member knows better. Would he not agree that children in Quebec will benefit from this program?

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, the question asked by the hon. member across the aisle is interesting, because he is playing word games. He says that we should support the program because Quebecers will get money. It is true, some Quebecers will get money.

The problem is that, on average, Quebecers will receive half the amount per child that people in the rest of Canada will get. On av-

erage, Quebecers will receive about \$80 per child, while people in the rest of Canada will receive \$160.

We are being shortchanged, and the NDP is complicit. That is a problem. The hon. member across the aisle himself clearly said that Canadians expect the federal government to implement large-scale national programs. What it is doing is imposing its views on the provincial governments, even though there is a Constitution that he himself was ardently defending just yesterday. It is crazy.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the discussion we are having, especially when I listen to government members on this. I am wondering if the government actually did any consultations with the provinces and territories about these programs. I know the Canadian Dental Association has also pushed back, saying it would like to see an extension of the programs that already exist in the provinces. I do understand the member from Quebec, because we have a government that is speaking about federal stuff that really is within the provincial realm.

I would like to hear from the member as to whether he thinks the province was even consulted on any of this.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, my Conservative colleague asked a very good question. Were the provinces consulted?

To my knowledge, the Canadian Dental Association must not have been consulted. If it was consulted, no one listened, because what it recommends is more funding to enhance existing programs. I want to emphasize the words "existing programs", because that makes all the difference.

The sad thing is that, not so long ago, the federal government decided to overstep its jurisdiction and say that it would fund day care. We were a little skeptical, but when it said that it would compensate the provinces that already had their own system, we were more understanding. After all, at least it understood that Quebec already had its own program.

Why was the government not able to do the same thing for dental care? I cannot think of a reason other than a desire to assert its power, or maybe it messed up and does not want to admit it.

• (1055)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, as the saying goes, it is better to laugh than cry. We are getting a glimpse of the Bloc Québécois's despair at not being able to achieve anything concrete for Quebecers.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 71,000 children in Quebec will benefit from the dental care program. Some 480,000 Quebecers will benefit from the rent allowance.

Government Orders

Is the Bloc Québécois member really saying that he is against direct assistance for 71,000 children and 480,000 renters?

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, what I would like to know is whether the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is okay with Quebec receiving half as much money as the rest of Canada, despite the fact that we pay our taxes like everyone else. It is outrageous.

The federal government is overstepping its jurisdiction. I look forward to seeing the hon. member try to defend this to the Quebecers in his riding and across Quebec, saying that he clapped and boasted about Quebec not receiving its fair share of a federal program.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join in the debate this morning on Bill C-31.

As members know, Bill C-31 has two provisions to it. One is to ensure that children under 12 in families with limited incomes will be able to get support for their oral health. We have heard that the Conservative members are opposed to this. I have heard them say over and over again that dental care is not a priority. I have heard them say, very specifically, that children who cannot access dental care do not need it. I can hardly believe it, yet I hear it over and over again. In fact, the member for Cumberland—Colchester said at committee, “I think very clearly we’ve obviously established there’s no dental crisis here.”

I do not know which rock the Conservatives have been hiding under because the reality is this. Over 500,000 children cannot access dental care because their families do not have the financial means to do so and they do not have the coverage. Children miss school, they suffer and they are in pain because they do not have access to dental care. People end up in emergency rooms because they need dental care support.

Just because the Conservatives, including their leader, have had dental care support covered by the taxpayers for decades does not mean that there are people who do not need it. I have met families in my community that need this service. They are very thankful. The dream of the NDP, the vision of Tommy Douglas, who brought all of us national universal health care to years ago, was always to see dental care included along with pharmacare. Now, 60 years later, in a minority government, the NDP has forced the Liberals to deliver exactly that, and I am very proud of this work.

The other provision related to this bill is with respect to housing. It is not everything I want, but it is something. The NDP was able to force the government to provide a one-time payment to low-income families, a \$500 housing benefit for approximately 1.8 million people across the country.

I also moved four amendments at committee. Three of them passed, which is why we are back here debating the amendments today. I am glad the government supported these amendments and that the minister has, on the two that require royal recommendation, undertaken to do that.

What are these amendments?

One is with respect to the application process. Bill C-31 originally only provided a 90-day window for people to apply. I was very worried about that, because people have technology issues. They do not have access to technology or some may not even be technology literate. Many seniors in my riding also have a language barrier. Therefore, my fear was that 90 days would not be enough time for people to access this program, because they have to apply for it. It is not automatic. Therefore, I moved an amendment to change the 90-day requirement to 120 days to give that bit of extra time for people to make the application. I am glad it was supported and the motion passed, not because of the Conservatives but because of the Bloc and the Liberals. I am thankful for that.

• (1100)

The other amendment I moved at committee was about the provisions related to eligible rent that a person could claim if they were in a room and board situation. The original bill said they could claim only 75% of that rent. I was able to move an amendment to change it to 90%, to increase it slightly. Why? If people are paying room and board with other services like utilities, the utilities may not be 25% of their total rent, yet 25% will be deducted from their claim. My view was that we needed to close that gap, so I moved an amendment to change it from 75% to 90%.

I am very glad the government and the Bloc supported it, wanting to support people who need this one-time housing benefit to help them out. I am very thankful for the passage of that amendment.

Lastly, the amendment that also passed with the support of the Bloc and the Liberals was to ensure that families who are in a co-habitation situation are able to claim the benefit according to the actual rent the respecting partners pay, not 50%. The original bill says they can claim only 50% of their total rent. To me it should be according to the amount they pay, not some arbitrary number like the 50% the government had put forward. I am glad that an amendment to say it should reflect the actual rent was adopted with the support of the Bloc and the Liberals.

These are the enhancements we were able to bring forward as New Democrats to this bill. That is what we are debating today.

There are people, the Conservatives, who say no, they do not support it. I keep hearing them say we cannot afford it. That is their underlying message. Despite the fact that the oil and gas sector made \$147 billion last year, they will not have any discussion about imposing a profiteering tax and making sure those companies pay their fair share so that those who are most vulnerable and in the greatest need in our community will have a bit of support during this time.

Government Orders

Who are the people who will benefit? We are talking about people whose income is less than \$35,000 a couple or less than \$20,000 for a single person, who are paying more than 30% of their total income toward rent. It is a pittance, if we think about it, \$500 to support them, yet the Conservatives say no, we cannot afford it. My goodness, how could we? The roof is falling in. We cannot even fix our steps. What are these steps? These steps that we need to address are the very people who have the greatest need.

To all the members of the House who oppose this, let me just put on the record how many people would benefit from this in their respective provinces: In Newfoundland, 16,800 people will benefit from this; in P.E.I., 4,000; in Nova Scotia, 45,400; New Brunswick, 28,500; Quebec, 568,800; Ontario, 718,400; Manitoba, 63,700; Saskatchewan, 49,500; Alberta, 130,900; British Columbia, 159,600; all together, 1.785 million people. That is the number of people who could receive this housing benefit.

We are talking about a \$500 housing benefit at a time when inflation, the cost of living and the cost of food are skyrocketing. That is what we are talking about. Can we really find it within ourselves to say we cannot afford it? Can we really say that those people do not deserve some help at this critical time?

I know the Conservatives might be frustrated with my comments. They should be, because they are being called out. They are being called out on their approach to this. I get that being in government is about determining where the priorities are. New Democrats are here to help people. That is what this bill is all about.

• (1105)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the manner in which the member has amplified how these programs are going to have a direct impact on so many Canadians in all regions of our country.

I would highlight the fact that when we take a look at inflation rates, even though Canada, in comparison to the world, is doing relatively well, we still need to take direct action to support Canadians. That is really what Bill C-31 would be doing, while at the same time establishing a national dental program for our children. I am wondering if the member can expand on its true value and how it is helping in a time of need but also providing future hope for a more permanent dental program for Canadians.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the Liberals finally saw the light about the importance of a dental care program. The truth of the matter is the Liberals and the Conservatives voted against this when the NDP introduced it just last year. Here we are. I am glad 24 New Democrats were able to force the government to act.

This bill is the beginning of bringing dental services to Canadians. This year, it is for children under 12 in families with incomes of less than \$90,000, then next year it will be available to seniors, people with disabilities and people under 18, and then the year after that for other adults. This is what we are talking about, and it is exactly what Tommy Douglas envisioned, which was to bring forward a national dental care program for all Canadians.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not think Tommy Douglas would be

very happy right now if he saw the state of medicare in Canada, with a quarter of Canadians without a family doctor. That is a crisis.

I would like to hear my hon. colleague's response to the following question. How many Canadians would be affected positively by fixing medicare versus the positive effects of the dental care program, especially when it comes to mental health, which is a real crisis? I congratulate her on the figures she rattled off, and I am sure she has a great researcher. I hope she is giving that researcher a raise, because her researcher is struggling with the cost of living. We have a cost of living crisis. We have a mental health crisis. We have so many things happening in this country that need to be addressed, and I do not know how Tommy Douglas would feel about the coalition. I think the hon. colleague—

• (1110)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will allow the hon. member to respond.

The hon. member for Vancouver East has the floor.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, first off, the great researcher is the Library of Parliament. I thank it for that excellent information. That is an aside.

Tommy Douglas would be absolutely astounded at the fact that the Conservatives, under the Harper administration, did not deliver the health care transfers they promised they would. In fact, they cut them. I think Tommy Douglas would be appalled at the idea of the Conservatives wanting to pit communities against communities and say that somehow, because there is a need for health care, for mental health, we do not need dental services. On this side, we New Democrats are saying that all those services need to be provided, and the government could afford it if we would just tax the rich.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will ask the member a brief question.

What I am having trouble understanding is that the government is trying to pass a flawed bill that in no way takes into account what Quebec is doing with its social safety net and to help people, while the federal government neglects its social safety net, employment insurance and programs for seniors and workers.

Is that the right solution for helping people in need?

Government Orders

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, let me be very clear. New Democrats have called for and will continue to fight for those other programs, like for changes to EI, and not only during this period of time. We have been doing it for years now. We will never give up on those provisions. This bill is what we have been able to force the government to take action on, and we will continue to drive for more action to support Canadians, including Quebecers.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I am proud to speak to the government's plan to make life more affordable for hard-working Canadians from coast to coast to coast, through Bill C-31, an act respecting direct financial support for dental care.

It is fundamental that I begin my remarks by reminding the House why this legislation is essential for Canadians as we make the cost of living more affordable. In a time of global inflation, families are having to make challenging decisions at the grocery store, when paying rent or other essential bills, and with all aspects of their daily lives.

Inflation is a global challenge that is not restricted by borders and does not discriminate based on socio-economic status. It is a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and exacerbated by Russia's unprovoked and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine, and the government is committed to helping families weather the impact of the higher cost of living by putting more money back into the pockets of middle-class Canadians and those who continue to work hard to join them.

When the government came into power in 2015, we understood how critical it was to cut taxes for the middle class and raise them for the wealthiest 1%. We have continuously stood with Canadians during the most challenging times, and we will continue to provide essential support through the implementation of Bill C-31.

The current oral health care system does not provide equal access to services for Canadians. We know families have made the challenging decision to forgo essential dental treatments due to the high costs. To ensure that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities have access to dental care, we have proposed Bill C-31, an act that will deliver more than \$900 million to support oral health through the Canada dental benefit.

Beginning in 2022-23, children under the age of 12 without insurance will be eligible to receive dental coverage. Advocating for improved access to the Canadian oral health care system is essential to Canadians. We understand that many families find themselves in a difficult position when they consider seeking oral health services. We do not want parents to find themselves in the position where they must decide between their children postponing or forgoing dental care at a time when their teeth are still developing.

In Canada, dental surgery performed under general anaesthesia in pediatric hospitals is the most common day surgery. This procedure accounts for one-third of all surgeries performed on children between the ages of one and five. We know that 57% of children aged six to 11 have had a cavity, with an average of 2.5 teeth affected by decay.

In more severe cases, tooth decay in young children can lead to an infectious disease, one that causes pain, interferes with their sleep and growth, and causes lifelong impacts to oral and general health. It is the children in our communities who have experienced the painful and detrimental effects of poor oral health. It is our responsibility to ensure that no child, present or future, will experience the pain of not receiving essential dental treatments.

The Canada dental benefit will ensure that children who have not had access to routine oral health care will have improved oral health and an improved quality of life by reducing the potential need for more invasive and costly treatments later on in life. The benefit proposed in this legislation would help break the cycle of poor oral health for the youngest Canadians.

The Canada dental benefit would provide direct payments to eligible applicants, totalling up to \$650 per year per child for families with an income under \$70,000. An estimated \$390 will be provided for families with an income of \$70,000 to \$79,999 and \$260 for those with a family income of \$80,000 to \$90,000.

It is estimated that over 500,000 Canadian children could benefit from this targeted investment of over \$900 million. To access the Canada dental benefit, parents or guardians of eligible children would apply through the Canada Revenue Agency. Applicants will need to confirm that their child does not have access to private dental coverage and that they will incur out-of-pocket dental care expenses for which they will use the benefit.

To be eligible for the funds, people may not have received a full reimbursement for treatment under another government plan. They will also need to provide documentation to verify the out-of-pocket expenses incurred during the benefit period. This may include providing receipts to the CRA.

• (1115)

Our government will take action to ensure that Canadians receive the benefit as quickly as possible, so that children may begin receiving necessary dental care. This legislation will give the Minister of Health authority to implement this application-based upfront benefit payment to eligible Canadians later this year.

Our government has established December 1, 2022, as the target implementation date of the Canada dental benefit, pending parliamentary approval and royal assent. The benefit will retroactively cover expenses from October 1, 2022, as long as the child remains eligible until December 1.

In addition to our government's commitment to this program, we will continue to support oral health in Canada for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We will continue to work with partners and stakeholders in providing oral health services and making life more affordable.

Government Orders

In budget 2022, our government committed \$5.3 billion over five years, and \$1.7 billion ongoing, to provide dental care for Canadians who otherwise could not afford it. Our government is working diligently to design and implement a long-term national dental care program to ensure that every Canadian can have access to oral health services.

It will take time to ensure that this complex national program is sustainable long-term. However, it will remain a top priority for our government. We will continue working closely with key stakeholders, industry partners, academics and dentistry associations and organizations to help inform decisions on implementing a national dental care program. Until such time, the proposed Canada dental benefit would provide parents with children under the age of 12 with financial support to help address the children's dental care needs and increase their quality of life.

To provide the time necessary for Health Canada and the CRA to make the necessary preparations to deliver the benefit to Canada, the legislation we are proposing needs to be approved urgently.

I trust that all members will agree that oral health services are essential to Canadians, and join us in supporting this bill that will help thousands of families from coast to coast to coast.

Our government understands that parents want to do what is best for their children, and that financial barriers should not prevent them from accessing the necessary dental care their children require. Passing this bill is an important step toward protecting the oral health of children throughout Canada and ensuring that we eliminate the cycle of forgoing necessary dental care.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I also want to remind all my colleagues in the House of one thing: Bloc Québécois MPs are sent to the House of Commons by Quebecers to defend the interests of Quebec. Speaking for Quebec is priority for the Bloc Québécois.

When a measure is good for Quebec, we vote in favour; all the better if it is good for the rest of Canada. When it is bad for Quebec, we vote against. It is not complicated. We therefore choose how to vote after assessing a bill.

We voted in favour of referring this bill to committee. We wanted to give the bill a chance. However, in committee, everyone rejected our amendments. That is interesting.

With respect to dental care, I see that a child in Quebec will receive half of what a child in Canada will receive. How can Bloc Québécois MPs vote in favour of such a bill?

[*English*]

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Madam Speaker, Canadians elected me to represent my riding and to represent the interests of Canada. Unlike the members of the Bloc, who are only interested in their province and only if it helps them, our responsibility in the House is to make sure that all Canadians get the care they need.

The Canada dental benefit is there for all Canadians, and it will be there. If members from Quebec feel that there are some issues that would impact them differently from the rest of Canada, they are more than welcome to submit them.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that this \$500 one-time benefit is going to help so many Canadians, as my colleague said. It is a step in the right direction, but it is not going to solve the bigger issue of the financialization of housing that we are seeing.

In my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, we recently sent a letter to the Minister of Housing, Diversity and Inclusion, to call upon the minister to stop the financialization of housing. This included 15 individuals from first nations organizations and others, all asking for change from the Liberal government.

Is the member in agreement that we need to move forward to ensure that housing is not being used as a commodity? Will he be working alongside us to begin making the changes necessary so that Canadians can have access to their human right of housing?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Madam Speaker, although I was speaking about dental care particularly, I want to say that housing is a big priority of this government. We are the first and only government that has created a national housing strategy, starting with those who are the most vulnerable: those who are homeless right to those who need senior care.

We have invested well over \$30 billion in that program. Particularly in Surrey, British Columbia, I can see we have had four rapid housing initiative projects. We have had tons of new units being built for affordable rental housing. This is an ongoing struggle. It is a challenge that Canada has. We have to ensure that having a home, having a place to stay, is a right, and that every person receives the dignity to have a home that is affordable and is a good place to stay in.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, a promise is a promise in my house, and it should be the same in this House.

The Liberal government made a promise of \$4.5 billion to contribute to mental health. Why it is not fulfilling that promise and is now making another promise that was not in the Liberal platform?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Madam Speaker, I am actually proud to say that, in the very first budget of 2015, we were able to put \$700 billion, I know for British Columbia, into the health accord, particularly for mental health services. This was on top of the health transfer.

Government Orders

When it comes time to negotiate with the provinces, which I understand is happening, we will be there. This government has been there every time when it comes to the health care, the dental care and the mental health care of Canadians. We will be there.

• (1125)

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise and speak in the House on behalf of the constituents of Saskatoon West. I thought it would be fair to let members know, right up front, that I am planning to vote against this legislation. I know they are always curious about why we vote the way we do, so I would like them know why I am going to be voting that way.

First, I want to set the stage regarding the rental benefit that is in this legislation. We are in an era of the highest inflation that we have had in 40 years. We have food prices that are at double-digit inflation right now. Our housing costs are among the highest in the world. It is very difficult for people to afford to live right now.

Our energy costs are high. They are higher than they need to be because of all the taxes, including the carbon tax that was put on by the current Liberal government. Home heating is more expensive than ever. In fact, this winter many people in Canada will be paying double or more on their home heating bills than they have paid before. It is partly due to the tripling of the carbon tax that is happening.

These are difficult and challenging times for people with low incomes, seniors and also for those who have fixed incomes. It is very difficult for them to find a way to stretch that money to make it work with the increased expenses that we have.

There is an old proverb that says this: Give a man a fish and feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime. I suggest that this plan is in the first category and this is why.

What we need are long-term solutions. We need a way to fix things. This is a short-term band-aid. It is a one-time payment.

The average rent in Canada right now is about \$2,000 a month. Take that payment of \$500 on a monthly basis and it is a quarter of a month or one week. Realistically, thinking of it over a year, it is \$42 a month for a year. The truth is that there probably is not going to be an additional payment of this type during the tenure of the government. If the tenure of the government happens to be four years, which I certainly hope it is not, that would be \$10 a month over four years. Ten dollars a month on a \$2,000 rent bill makes no difference at all.

Nobody is going to refuse that \$500, and I am certain that people need that money. The problem is that it is going to alleviate the problem for today. What about tomorrow, when the next bill comes due? How are they going to do that? This is not a long-term solution.

What is a long-term solution? We could be encouraging more housing and not simply throwing money after housing. I was a home builder for 12 years, so I am well aware of the challenges faced by home builders and housing providers in this country. One of the things that always frustrated me was how our municipalities would slow down the process and gum up the works. When people

wanted to get a building permit, for example, it would take months to get one when it should not happen that way. Builders who are experienced and accredited should be able to get building permits quickly.

Members may have heard the term “gatekeepers” used around this place. That is a great example of a gatekeeper. They are some of the municipal systems that are in place to restrict and prevent things from happening in a quick way. That is something that we need to encourage them to fix.

Another thing is reducing red tape in bureaucracy in general. I am thinking of the building codes. We keep having more complicated building codes piled on top of building codes. Every time a new requirement is added to the building code it adds costs to the product they are building, which in this case is a house, and to the time to build it. Building codes are another thing that really reduce and end up restricting the amount of housing supply.

Ultimately, we need lower interest rates because everybody has to pay and it affects the cost to everybody. How can we lower our interest rates? What we need to do to lower our interest rates is build up our economy. Some people may not realize it, but over the last three years, most of the jobs that have been created in this country have been government jobs. They have not been private sector jobs. They have been government jobs that are ultimately paid for, through our taxes, by all of us who are working.

What we really need to do is focus on the natural resources that we have in our country. When we develop, sell and export our natural resources, that produces not only wealth for our country, but also tax revenues for the various levels of government, including the federal government. We have oil and natural gas. They are the third-largest reserves in the world. Canada has the best standards, when it comes to environment and labour, and we pay very well in this country. Compared to almost every other country, we are far ahead in being a better producer and a more environmentally friendly producer of oil and gas. We need to do that.

We need pipelines so that we can get our products to the east and to the west. Right now, we cannot help Europe very much with natural gas, which is a huge need because of the war in Ukraine. It is a shame that we cannot help Europe when we have exactly what it needs.

• (1130)

We have rare earth elements, and in my riding we have potash. We have potash all over the place in Saskatchewan and have a company called Nutrien. It has thousands of employees in Saskatoon, and we lead the world in potash production. The government is trying to push through a reduction in potash use in our agriculture sector, which is simply going to reduce the amount of output and the amount of food that is grown, ultimately raising the price of food.

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We cannot do that. We need to encourage non-government jobs and private sector jobs that create wealth for our country and raise tax revenue. Ultimately, this will stop inflation, and if we stop inflation we can stop our deficits and our borrowing and can start to enjoy the benefits of a strong economy. To do that, we especially need a “pay as you go” law so that when new spending is introduced, we find a way to save it somewhere else. The result of that would be low inflation and lower taxes. That would be teaching a man to fish.

I want to talk a bit about the dental benefit. There is a dental health crisis in Canada. Actually, no, there is not. Now that I think about it, it is a mental health crisis. That is what is happening in Canada. I have not heard of a dental health crisis in this country.

What about the mental health crisis? One in five Canadians experiences mental illness. Every day in Canada, an average of 10 people die by suicide. Mental health challenges affect every Canadian in different ways. Some of us struggle with diagnosed conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety. Others struggle in silence with shame, eating disorders, addictions or alcoholism.

Causes are hard to pinpoint. It can be trauma or tragedy of the worst kind in childhood or adulthood. It can be a physiological chemical imbalance. The DNA and genes we inherit from our parents play a role. Learned behaviour growing up at home, in school and in the workplace can also contribute. Add in race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, income bracket and other factors, and treatment, unfortunately, is haphazard. Some mental health disorders are diagnosed by the police and treated by the courts with prison sentences. Other people are fortunate enough to find themselves a physician, psychiatrist or other professional who can help them.

What we do not have in this country is an actual strategy to tackle mental health, particularly the causes, symptoms and treatments, on a national scale. Over two years ago, my Conservative colleague from Cariboo—Prince George proposed a national suicide hotline. Surely we would think this is a no-brainer the Liberal government could support for Canadians. However, if I dialed 988 right now, it would tell me to hang up and call a different number in English only.

[*Translation*]

What should we do when a francophone experiences a mental health crisis?

[*English*]

We therefore continue to wait. In the last election, the Liberals promised \$4.5 billion for mental health, and we continue to wait. Instead, we have \$700 million for the dental health crisis.

Why are we looking at this legislation today? We have a problem to be solved. All legislation is like this: There is a problem to be solved and legislation is supposedly going to fix that problem. What are the problems we have today? We have the cost of living. The rental benefit would not fix that; it is a short-term band-aid. We have a mental health crisis, and this dental benefit certainly would not fix that. Why do we have this legislation? Was there research, focus groups or surveys? I doubt there are many people who want a

short-term band-aid on our economy. I also doubt there are many people who want to spend more money and put us into more debt.

I suggest this bill is simply the equivalent of a sideshow, a carny trick or a shiny object in the window meant to distract Canadians. It is meant to have Canadians believe that action is being taken to address poverty and affordability issues while nothing is really being done. Bill C-31 is like those fixed games at the carnival. It is flashy and exciting looking, but as we keep playing the NDP-Liberal game and keep losing our hard-earned money with little return, we realize it is a sucker's game. They are taking money away from us in the way of higher taxes. They continue to have Canadians pay more hoping to get that oversized stuffed animal. Then they give us a free play and another free play, except in this one they say we do not have to pay for it. However, it is our grandchildren who are going to be paying for it in the future when our national debt comes due. In the meantime, they give us some scraps. The government is running that kind of game.

There is a better way to run our country. For years, the Conservatives have warned that there are consequences from the Liberal-NDP's actions. The Conservatives call on the government to scour government spending, find savings for proposals like the \$35-billion Canada Infrastructure Bank and stop useless spending like the \$54-million ArriveCAN app. Finally, the Conservatives call on the Liberals to cancel all planned tax increases, including the payroll tax hikes on January 1 and the tripling of the carbon tax on gas—

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member opposite, and I will put something to him that is fairly straightforward.

The official opposition is consistently concerned with fiscal prudence, and that is a fair concern. However, would the member agree with me that if dental care descends to the point of dental disease or if tooth decay results in things like gum disease for young people, it results in concomitant knock-on costs for our publicly funded health care system? Would it not be better to pre-emptively support care for young people to have their teeth needs addressed so they do not end up imposing a cost on the health care system that we all subsidize already?

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Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, I understand that governing is hard and making decisions can be difficult, and many times we have to face trade-offs. However, I would suggest that the mental health crisis we have in our country is the biggest problem we face right now.

Yes, dental health and care for teeth are important, and I do not deny that at all, but I think if we have to pick one first and the other second, I would pick mental health first. We have clear an expense in our country for that, and we are seeing it right now in our health care system every single day. It is not only affecting us in dollars but affecting us in the number of lives that are affected, hurt and lost every day.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my Conservative colleague for his speech.

Earlier, another of my colleagues on the Conservative benches mentioned all of the red tape and the hard time the government has carrying out its regular duties. He wondered whether the government should be taking on new duties, especially in an area that falls outside its jurisdiction, when it has difficulty meeting the public's expectations in matters related to passports, immigration and so on.

I would therefore like to ask my Conservative colleague a question. When the government decides, with good intentions, to implement programs that already exist in some of the provinces, should it not systematically include the possibility of opting out for the provinces that wish to do so? Of course, I am talking about opting out of programs that are implemented by the government with full financial compensation. Would it not be a good way to make things fair and equitable, and to make things easier for the government?

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, the member uncovers a serious problem that I am sure the Liberals will have with this legislation, which is that health care is fundamentally a provincial jurisdiction issue. While the federal government does transfer funds and does dictate certain requirements to the provinces, ultimately the provinces are the ones that carry out these things.

In having money transferred to the provinces to cover things off, certainly the federal government has the ability to suggest that certain things get done, and that is what might happen in this case. However, I really believe that it is the provinces that have to carry out health care. The provinces need more money; that is the bottom line, and I think with the way the government has spent on things other than health care, a lot could have been diverted, and could still be diverted, to the provinces without actually increasing our spending.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, it seems that the Conservatives want us to choose between mental health and people ending up in the hospital because of serious dental care issues.

Instead of pitting people together, I want to ask my hon. colleague this. Does he agree with me that instead of placing the onus on people, we need to divest from fossil fuel companies, make corporations pay what they owe and use that money to invest in people instead of big oil and big corporations?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, I believe that corporations need to pay their fair share of taxes, absolutely. Also, if the member had listened to my speech, she would have heard me say that we need to fully utilize the gifts we have been given in our country, which are our natural resources, whether they be oil and gas, forestry, minerals, agriculture or potash. There are all kinds of them.

Our country's wealth was built on natural resources and it will continue to be built on natural resources. We can mine them, take them out of the earth and use them in very environmentally friendly and effective ways. We lead the world in that category. That is something we are good at, and we should continue to push ourselves on the world stage because that is where we make our mark. We can actually make the world a better place with the energy and resources in Canada.

• (1140)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to recognize that I am speaking from the House of Commons in Ottawa, which is on unceded Algonquin territory. We are speaking today about a bill that is extremely important for those of us in the House, but also for Canadians listening to the debate and Canadians feeling the pressures of affordability right now.

Bill C-31 would address two key facets of affordability in this country, housing and dental care, and the first thing I want to broach is why we are targeting these two particular areas. It does not matter which ridings members represent in this chamber or which part of the country they come from, Canadians are feeling the same sentiment about the cost of living: Prices are escalating and life has simply become too expensive. This is partly a function of the pandemic, partly a function of global conflicts, such as Russia's unjust invasion of Ukraine, and partly a function of supply chains and the need to make them more resilient. What we are doing as a government is listening to those concerns and responding directly to them.

Last week, we provided a doubling of the GST rebate, something I believe all parties in this chamber supported, for which I am thankful and I believe Canadians are thankful. Today we are again talking about targeted relief on two indicia: housing and extending health care to include dental health.

This bill would do two pivotal things. In terms of the housing benefit, it proposes to provide a top-up payment to something called the Canada housing benefit. It is a \$1.2-billion investment that would result in a \$500 benefit being made available to approximately 1.8 million people in this country who rent, including students and people struggling with the cost of rental housing. The second key facet of the bill, as we have heard in the debate thus far today, is that it proposes to provide dental care for uninsured families with incomes of less than \$90,000 annually, targeting dental relief to children under the age of 12.

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It is important to recap for Canadians where we are in this fight to build a more affordable Canada and ease issues related to the cost of living.

What have we been doing on the housing front since I was elected to this place in 2015? About two years into our first mandate as a government, we launched a national housing strategy. At the time it was launched, it was approximately \$40 billion deep. That housing strategy has expanded to the tune of \$72 billion now, which included a \$14-billion investment in housing in budget 2022.

Key for the purposes of this debate is what we are doing now with the national housing strategy. It involves the Canada housing benefit, a \$4-billion program within our broader strategy that provides an average of \$2,500 in direct assistance to help those who have low incomes with the high cost of rent they are facing.

There are also other aspects of what we have been doing with respect to affordability. We could talk about the Canada workers benefit or something that I am very proud of, the Canada child benefit, which is a means-tested, non-taxable benefit that is targeted directly to families that need the assistance the most. With respect to child care, we can talk about what we have done in just the past 12 months to alleviate the costs of child care for people raising young families around the country, reducing those costs by 50% by the end of this year and to \$10 a day by the end of four years.

We have taken significant steps, and what I have found troubling in my time in this chamber as a parliamentarian is the consistent opposition we have faced, particularly from His Majesty's loyal opposition, on many of the programs I just outlined. I was very pleased to see support for the doubling of the GST rebate as recently as last week, but I am still troubled by the fact that an initiative such as the one we are talking about today, which is, again, targeted relief to assist those who need it the most with some of their most basic necessities such as housing and extended health care, are being opposed by some of the members opposite. I would urge them, through the course of their deliberations on this bill, to change their position and vote for it.

I want to dwell a bit on housing and dental care as specific topics. We know that housing has become more expensive in this country in recent times. At the end of September 2022, the average rent for property types across the country saw a monthly increase of 4.3%, an annual increase of 15% and a 21% increase since the market low that was experienced in April 2021.

● (1145)

The city of Toronto consistently ranks as one of the most expensive rental markets in the country, somewhat neck in neck with Vancouver. We know this has become a challenge for the constituents I represent and for the people in Toronto, Vancouver and right across the country, something I am reminded of by my constituents and the stakeholders in my community.

I want to highlight a couple of key stakeholders that have been doing consistent work in the area of affordable housing for many years.

One is the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust, which has taken it upon itself to index the amount of rooming houses that are avail-

able as deeply affordable housing in the community of Parkdale. As well, through its land trust initiative, it has collaborated with city and provincial partners to purchase land and keep rooming houses viable in the city of Toronto, in my community, and to keep people who need supportive and affordable housing properly housed. It is a tremendous initiative. It does that in conjunction with the Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre, which manages the property it was able to purchase in 2019.

Another program I want to highlight with respect to housing is what we have been able to do very successfully, as part of the national housing strategy, with the rapid housing initiative. This is an initiative that started out with about \$500 million for urban cities, \$200 million of which was dedicated to Toronto, and was subsequently doubled in budget 2021 because of the popularity of the program. It provides acute, targeted assistance to those who need it the most and does it quickly, as the name denotes. Within 12 months people are housed very quickly.

What the new totals mean for the rapid housing initiative, as part of this broader suite of housing assistance that we are providing, is that the city of Toronto will be receiving \$440 million to create more than 1,000 new homes and do it very quickly. How does this impact Canadians? It impacts my constituents. We have \$14 million of that money coming directly to Parkdale to assist with the creation of about 50 modular units on Dunn Avenue. That type of housing policy takes root, takes hold and starts to work quickly.

This bill would help in the same vein. Bill C-31 would provide an additional benefit for those who already receive the Canada housing benefit. When I say targeted, I mean tested. The facts are important to articulate in this chamber. We are talking about a one-time benefit that will go to applicants with incomes of less than \$35,000 if they are a family or less than \$20,000 as individuals. Certainly, every member in the House can agree with the idea that the people in those low-income brackets deserve our help the most and deserve targeted support on behalf of the Parliament of Canada.

Last, I want to turn to the idea of dental care. We know it is part and parcel of health care as we conceive it in our country. Members heard my intervention with respect to the previous speaker. We have heard from entities the Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry talk about people who do not receive the dental care they need because of the costs associated with it. In fact, 55% of dental care right now is delivered by those who have private insurance, 40% of Canadians pay out of pocket for their dental care, and some just do not access it because they simply cannot afford to. That creates a knock-on impact to our health care system. People who do not receive the primary health care they need pre-emptively to prevent problems from mushrooming end up in our emergency rooms in our hospitals, which are publicly funded, and that has a knock-on cost for our health care system. Let us avoid that cost by providing something as simple as basic dental care for people who need it the most.

I would dare to say that it is hard to argue with the needs of children with respect to their growth and development. Addressing their extended health care needs by providing free of charge something as basic as visits to the dentist is an important thing to do, and we try to do that through this legislation.

Targeting housing and extended health care benefits through the lens of dental care is critical to dealing with the affordability challenges being faced by Canadians right now. That is why I support the bill and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

• (1150)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I find it really interesting that the member and other members of the government have acknowledged the challenges related to affordability, yet I think back to the spring sitting of this place. Time and time again, the Conservatives brought these things forward and the Liberals voted against them.

I have a specific question for the member. There is a very clear delineation between different levels of government in our country. I am concerned, and I have heard these concerns from stakeholders across the country, that this program is being brought forward without appropriate consultation with the provincial bodies that are responsible for providing dental care.

I am curious why the government is pushing this forward without working with the level the government that is responsible for ensuring that Canadians have health care.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I will very politely but firmly point out that health care and health care delivery is a matter of shared jurisdiction, not exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

I will point to several examples: the Canada Health Act, the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act, and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. We already provide the Canada health and social transfer. If we are going to be criticized for actually attaching conditions to the financial resources that we are putting on the table for provinces to deliver, I will readily wear that criticism. Those conditions are necessary, because the prioritization needs to be, in this context, the delivery of dental care services so that it does not pose a knock-on impact on the overall costs of our health care system.

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I would further add that his colleague's comments with respect to the need for prioritizing mental health are well put. Similarly when we provide funding for mental health, it needs to be dedicated to mental health, thus necessitating the attachment of another condition.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for his speech. Clearly, dental care is a concern of his. That is all to his credit.

Perhaps he is not aware, but since health care is under provincial jurisdiction, Quebec has already implemented its own dental care system in which children under the age of 10 are covered.

The cheque system that the Liberals are implementing—because it is not really a dental care program, it is more like cheques sent to people who may need dental care—is such that Quebecers will receive 13% of the money although they represent 23% of the population.

Does my colleague think it is okay for us to be so poorly served by a new federal incentive?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, what I can point out to my colleague is that we are already in contact with all the provinces on how to provide health care here in Canada. We already have agreements with Quebec, as with all the other provinces.

When we provide funds to care for the citizens of Canada, whether in Quebec or outside Quebec, it is always based on criteria and conditions. This is already the case with the Canada health transfer and the Canada social transfer.

We will keep the same approach when a very specific objective is being pursued. In this case, it is dental care.

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, one critical issue the member has raised is affordability in housing, with which I wholeheartedly agree.

Part of the problem is with respect to the financialization of housing, where housing is being treated as a commodity instead of what it is, which is a basic human right. Would the member agree that we need to take action to address the financialization of housing and begin putting a moratorium on it?

• (1155)

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her advocacy on this issue.

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I would agree that the commodification of housing in recent times has become a problem in Canada. It is resulting in housing shortages and also housing becoming increasingly less affordable. One of the important aspects we can tackle initially is real estate investment trusts, which formed part of campaign platform. That is one thing that I prioritize.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we are discussing Bill C-31, known colloquially as the rental and dental bill. Before discussing the substance of the legislation, it is important to give some context as to the position we are in.

The bill is largely in response to the economic conditions that were created by the Liberal government. After seven years in power, we have seen a dramatic rise in the cost of living and the pain for Canadians has risen exponentially over those past seven years.

Let us take a bit of walk in history. When the government was elected in 2015, the then candidate, now Prime Minister, said that there would be a tiny deficit, so small that one could not even see it. It appears that maybe he was a little off in that math calculation. We know that the NDP are not well renowned for their math abilities. It is perhaps not surprising where we are with the NDP-Liberal coalition. Under the previous finance minister, there was a \$100 billion deficit spending before COVID even touched our land. That is \$100 billion of reduced fiscal firepower that the government could have used to help Canadians. Instead, it piled on to the deficit.

Then let us go to COVID, and let us put the record straight. The Conservatives supported COVID benefit supports. People were in difficult situations so we supported many of the programs to help them through it. What the Conservatives did not support was the wasteful spending. Over \$200 billion, according to the government's Parliamentary Budget Officer, were not used for COVID. Therefore, we have \$100 billion and \$200 billion of non-COVID-related deficit spending.

Let us look at the government's track record. It has racked up more debt than all the previous governments combined, from Sir John A. Macdonald to Brian Mulroney to Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

History, it has been said, repeats itself. In this case, we are certainly seeing that. In Pierre Elliott Trudeau's time we saw record spending, record deficits and record debt. What followed that? Inflation.

I was watching the finance committee when the Leader of the Opposition, then just the member for Carleton, talk about the fact that if we printed money, we would get inflation. The response from the Governor of the Bank of Canada was, no, that we would not have inflation. The response from the deputy prime minister and current finance minister was that inflation was not an issue; it would be deflation.

If doctor is completely off with his or her diagnosis that has consequences. If an economist is completely off in his or her predictions that has consequences. Unfortunately, for the government, it is going to very much fulfill the definition of insanity and keep doing the same things over and over again.

Let us talk a bit about the pain that inflation is causing Canadians. Food inflation is now at over 11.4%. For the members in the House, it is not fun to go to the grocery store, but for the most vulnerable in our society, it is downright devastating. When they go to the grocery store, when they look at their bank accounts on their apps or count the cash in their wallets, they realize they simply do not have enough to feed the whole family. There are literally moms out there who are watering down milk. In 2022, over 20% of Canadians went to food banks. This reached a record high in Canada in March of 2022, with 1.46 million Canadians going to the food banks. Fully one-third of the clients of food banks are children. This is a desperate situation.

● (1200)

Seven years in, I love how the government seems to think inflation is something that just came in, and that this affordability crisis is something that was out of its control. It has had seven years to control the economy and take the steps necessary to make life more affordable for Canadians. Instead, it has done the exact opposite. It continues to tax and spend, and tax and spend.

Conservatives definitely believe that all Canadians should pay their fair share, yet there has been no nation on this earth ever in the history of humanity that has taxed itself into prosperity. Once again, the Liberal government seems to be finding this out the hard way.

When we look at the costs of living, one of the primary drivers of our everyday costs is the cost of energy. The government has done nothing but drive up the cost of energy. Some will even say that is perhaps on purpose, as it continues to reduce our ability to extract and explore great clean and sustainable Canadian energy. At the same time, it is piling on its carbon tax. The carbon tax is set to triple, which will increase the cost of home heating, groceries and everything.

When we look across G7 countries, every single one has attempted to reduce the cost of fuel. The Liberal government has not. It is going to go ahead and triple the carbon tax. It just does not see the suffering of the people of Northumberland—Peterborough South and the rest of Canada, as they go to work every day trying to put gas in their cars and feed their families while inflation continues to increase year after year after year.

What is the government's next step? If we look at the workers of this country, we are dealing with a labour shortage, and what is the government's response? On the affordability crisis, we have seen its response is to make things more expensive. It does not make much sense to me, but I do not know. Its response to a labour shortage is to disincentivize work. The average employee earning \$65,000 a year will pay \$750 more in payroll tax because of the government's efforts to increase taxes over and over again on our workers.

We have the best workers in the world. We should be incentivizing and celebrating their work going forward, not continuing to add additional layers of taxes and regulation that do nothing but suffocate workers and business owners. We need to have an environment where we encourage, celebrate and incentivize work.

Once again, the government's response to an affordability crisis is to increase expenses. It is to raise the inflation tax and raise the carbon tax. Its response to a labour shortage is to disincentivize work through incredibly high amounts of taxation. There are people who are earning \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year who are being taxed at a cumulative rate of taxation of 30%, 40% or even 50% after we add clawbacks, and provincial and municipal taxation. It is simply not leaving enough in their pockets.

The government's response to this affordability crisis, in addition to increasing taxes and making life less affordable for Canadians, is to virtue signal to make it look like it is doing something. There is a rental bill that would offer a \$500 one-time payment. In my riding, in communities such as Port Hope, Cobourg, Orono, Cramahe, Campbellford and Brighton, the average rent is more than \$2,000, if one can find a place. That \$500 would be a mere drop in the bucket in helping our residents.

What the government needs to do is give itself a look in the mirror and reverse the policies that have caused the conditions Canadians are currently in. A simple \$500 one-time cheque, more of the same tax and spend, will not solve the issues that plague this country. We need to celebrate workers. We need to empower businesses, and we need to make life more affordable by getting this inflation machine under control.

• (1205)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech. He had a lot of stuff in there. I was listening to find one positive thing the member would say that our government did in the last seven years. I did not hear one, so I think it was somewhat biased.

That being said, the big difference between the opposition and our government is that we look at investing in Canadians rather than what the Conservatives call "spending money". What areas does he think we should withdraw from? We have invested in the child care benefit, which continues to help families. In my riding alone, it is \$5.2 million per month. That is \$60 million a year going to my riding. It is also going to his riding and every riding across this country. That is one big one.

Would he cut that? Would he cut the child care down to 50% in his riding? Can he tell that to the people in his constituency? I would like to hear if there are a couple of good programs we have invested in that Canadians are benefiting from in his constituency.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I, too, have not been able to identify one thing in seven years that the government has done right. We share that and have something in common.

I would cut \$50 million from the arrive scam app. I would cut \$50 million going to Mastercard. I would cut \$12 billion going to Loblaws. I would have looked at the \$200 billion in non-COVID-related spending or the \$100 billion of pre-COVID deficit

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spending that has led to the inflation crisis and will cause children to go hungry tonight because the government cannot get its spending under control.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us be serious and talk about housing.

When they talk about housing, my Conservative friends are quick to criticize the Liberals, but they are not so quick to come up with solutions. They keep saying that the government should not be spending money. They think that we should let the market decide.

The housing crisis—

The Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member because there is a problem with the interpretation.

I am told it is working now.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert may start over.

Mr. Denis Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that, essentially, my Conservative friends are quick to criticize the government, and rightly so, because there is a huge housing crisis right now. Bill C-31 does absolutely nothing to address the issue, and I just wanted to point that out today in the House. However, we do not hear a lot of solutions coming from my Conservative friends. They keep saying that we should let the market decide and that the government does not need to get involved.

I spoke with an economist from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation two or three weeks ago. He said that in Quebec alone, if we allow market forces to run their course for the next 10 years, 500,000 housing units will be built, including houses and condominiums and so on. However, given the current problems with availability and affordability, 1.1 million housing units would need to be built to meet demand. That is a shortfall of 600,000.

How can we get these 600,000 housing units built? That is my question for my colleague.

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I think it is a bit of a mischaracterization that the Conservatives want to leave this up to the free market. We want to leave it up to Canadians because we believe in Canadians. We do not believe that the best decisions are made here in Ottawa. We believe they are made in Port Hope, in Quebec and everywhere else in this country.

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Secondly, we would get the gatekeepers out of the way. It is governments that are the problem. They are stopping houses. We will sell off a percentage of federally held properties, as the government is the largest landlord in all of Canada, and we will get those properties to people. We need the government out of the way so we can get people into homes.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about global inflation and the reality is that Canada is the worst in the world. If we look at our ports, the Port of Vancouver is the worst in the world. Toronto Pearson International Airport is the worst airport in the world. People are waiting in line for passports for days. These are the failure of the Liberal-NDP government.

I want my colleague to comment on health care. In my riding, when I go out to doors, my residents are pleading with me. They say, “Scot, I would love to have a doctor.”

We are spending a billion dollars on this dental care program, and people are saying they do not have a doctor. People are waiting months and months for a specialist. Could my colleague comment on that?

• (1210)

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, it appears as though over the last seven years, more things in Canada are not working. More things are broken in our country. Whether it be getting a passport in a reasonable amount of time, getting a ship built in a reasonable amount of time, or delivering the most basic of government essentials, it seems like there is delay, and failure after failure. It is time for a change. The Leader of the Opposition will finally put people first.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South is concerned with policies such as a carbon tax, which only raised gas prices by just over 2¢ a litre this past year while being an efficient tool to address the climate crisis and returning revenue to Canadians.

He is also aware that we are in a climate emergency. Oil and gas company profits were up 18¢ per litre this year alone. Can he talk more about the need to address affordability by addressing the gouging by the oil and gas industry?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, the organization or the institution that has been taking excess revenues is the Government of Canada, so perhaps he has gotten that, in fact, wrong. If we look at the oil and gas sector, it contributes, per worker, per hour, \$645. For an average Canadian, that figure is \$50.

The oil and gas industry is literally fuelling our economy as we go forward. We need to support Canadian energy. The carbon tax is raising costs. I am not sure if he has talked to the residents, but it is making gas unaffordable.

How many emissions targets has the government hit since it has had the carbon tax? Absolutely none. That is an abject failure.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank all my colleagues for coming here today to listen to my speech, my colleagues on this side of the House in particular. It is an honour to stand in front of the House and talk about a bill that is

going to affect Canadians for a long time going forward, another trinket.

Let me start, because it is a big bill, by focusing my comments on the dental care benefit that is part of this bill, Bill C-31. I see the Liberals over there are shrugging their shoulders about the support they gave the NDP when it brought this legislation forward. They know the support from the NDP, to continue on with its support of the government, came cheap. Dental care is a cheap trinket for them to push forward here.

The House will note that the government has aligned with the NDP, continuing to drip a dental care plan into delivery with its continued deficit. Why would it not? No sooner would the Liberals deliver on their full promise for dental care than the NDP would up its demands for continued support of this spendy government. Who is playing whom in this support agreement? It allows the Liberals to continue to plunge the country into an economic hole, and it will take decades of responsible government to recover our previous fiscal stability.

That is why dental care is in front of the House. It is not for any health reasons and not because it is going to give something to Canadians that has been taken away with the inflation that is making a dent in their take-home pay. It is a political support agreement, so that the NDP can show people that it might be relevant, even though it is backing a government whose spending is out of control. A great amount of taxpayers' money is going to Liberal lackeys.

Dental care support is a nice gift. Like my colleague said earlier, it is a nice shiny trinket in the window. Dental care promotes good health. There is no doubt about it. Oral health leads to better health overall. We have known this for years.

I spoke to a friend at home. She brought it forth to me, asking why the federal government would establish a new federal bureaucracy in charge of Canadians' dental care, and why there is an “Ottawa knows best” approach to superimpose a new federal program on top of the existing provincial dental programs across Canada, because each provincial jurisdiction has a provincial dental care program. She asked how costly the program would be and how much taxpayer funds would be spent, or lost, in bureaucratic overlap. Federal bureaucrats would be interacting needlessly with provincial bureaucrats in a program that is already being delivered in every province across Canada. It would not be a health transfer to fix an underfunded health care system in Canada, but a new program overlap.

Let us ask the NDP about the Halloween candy it has bargained for with the government. It is provincial responsibility. Did any premiers, including the NDP premier in British Columbia, ask for dental care funding in their provinces? The answer is a very clear “no”. What did the premiers ask for? They asked for an extra \$26 billion from the federal government to help the strain on our health care system, a strain that has been exacerbated by a pandemic that lasted two years, and to help with costs thrust upon the shoulders of the provincial governments.

Notably, all of this is provincial responsibility. The Canada Health Act imposed standards of health care delivery on the provinces, so it was a shared jurisdiction. For a while, health care was funded fifty-fifty, until the Liberal budget cuts of the mid-1990s, when suddenly it was changed and became not the fifty-fifty that the Health Care Act was premised on. Now, 22% of health care funding in Canada is funded by the federal government, and for every province health care spending has become the largest budget item.

The government has been running huge budget deficits the entire seven years since it was elected, so with this new program it is going to continue to buy Canadians with their own money and continue to put it onto the backs of taxpayers who are not paying taxes today and may not even be born today. This intergenerational transfer of taxation, versus the benefits that are being felt by Canadians today, is unjust.

● (1215)

The country's finances right now are more strained than they have been since the Liberals cut health care funding in the 1990s. Perhaps the NDP needs to take a lesson from history about how this ends.

My friend in Calgary and I did a little more research on dental coverage for people in my province of Alberta. Alberta child care benefits provide full dental coverage for low-income families. There are notable differences between the Alberta plan and the proposed coverage in this bill. The Alberta plan covers low-income households for full coverage up to the age of 18 in low-income families. This new plan would be for low-income families to cover children up to \$650 per child up to the age of 12. In Alberta, it is up to the age of 18, no matter the number of children.

Additionally, the definition of low income ends in Alberta at \$46,932, again, to cover 100% of the dental expenses of children under the age of 18. This new program would give a sliding amount per family up to a family income of \$90,000 down to \$260 per child. Will there be overlaps with these different definitions? Yes, of course, and obviously there will be. Private insurance pays out first; provincial insurance on top of that is a close second; and then there is the federal plan. Is this just another public service jobs debacle on the horizon? They are all different formulae and all different eligibilities. This spells huge bureaucratic overlap in the delivery of this new service.

Obviously, we would have to hire more federal government employees on top of the 15% increase we have had over the last two years. We are on a job-hiring spree, and we are getting less and less from federal government services. Surely, a realistic, accountable federal government could deliver a program like this a little more

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effectively. Unfortunately, a realistic approach to better dental care would not allow the government to buy the support of the NDP. This is another Liberal-NDP boondoggle. Canadians deserve better. They deserve not just optics, but the actual delivery of programs that help them and do not overlap with all their other provincial benefits.

Let us talk about inflation and how this is actually impacted. Every Canadian is having more expenses, including dental expenses, expenses for food, and expenses for housing, which is pronounced and is addressed by a minuscule amount in this bill. These are all mounting expenses for Canadians, and the government has thrust this upon Canadians with its full-on federal spending of over a half a trillion dollars in deficits over the past handful of years. It is a ridiculous financial strategy that has led us to where we are today, with mounting inflation, with mounting government debts and with no insight as to how or where this ends, except on the backs of future generations of Canada.

The cost of living is going up; inflation is going up; deficits are going up, and the government does not have a handle on how it deals with those real problems that are affecting the lives of Canadians. Its approach is to give trinkets. There are trinkets in this bill that would not be able to deliver but would place a huge cost upon the Canadian population writ large.

● (1220)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talks about trinkets. I can assure the member that not every province is alike. For a 10-year-old child or an 11-year-old or a four-year-old child, depending on the province, there are different types of dental programs that are available. However, what we do know for a fact is that there are tens of thousands of children in every region of the country who will benefit by this dental benefits program.

We know that for a fact, yet the Conservatives seem to want to deny those tens of thousands of children having a dental benefit. We also know for a fact that many of those children will end up in hospital situations as a direct result of not having the types of benefits that are being proposed within this legislation. Will the member at least acknowledge that fact?

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I watched my colleague listen to my speech intently, but he seems to have missed much of what I said.

There is definitely dental coverage in every province. However, there is a better way of delivering increased dental coverage if the federal government wants to contribute to the provinces that are actually delivering health care services across this country.

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These are different modes. If we think about the way Canada is governed, we are governed in a federal system, and we have provinces deliver real services to their constituents. We, as the federal government, also have our realm. This is very clearly the provincial realm. If the federal government wants to be involved in dental health care, it should say so, put some constraints and direction on the provinces, and transfer some funds. Do not just give it as a gift to the NDP in order to stay in power. It is a really obvious power buy at this point in time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the speech given by my colleague from Calgary Centre. I really appreciated it, especially when he alluded to health transfers. He also spoke a bit about the various federal and provincial jurisdictions in his response to our friend on the other side of the House.

One thing that disappoints me a little is that I have been asking the Conservatives the same question for three years now, and I have never had an answer. I feel I may have a chance with my friend from Calgary Centre, because he is an honest, reliable person, and I think he will answer my question.

The Premier of Quebec and the provincial premiers all agree. They made a formal request based on a strong consensus. They want health transfers to increase to 35%. I have never heard a Conservative say in the past three years that the Conservatives would agree to increase health transfers to 35%.

As the party that prides itself on having the strongest economic record, would they be willing to put a figure on the increase in health transfers, once and for all? I am asking my friend whether he agrees with Quebec and the provinces that health transfers need to be increased to 35%.

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I am not aware of the 35% that he mentioned in his question.

I do know premiers across the country have been asking the federal government to give the provinces \$26 billion a year for Canada's health care system. I am not sure if that \$26 billion is equivalent to 35%. I am sorry I am not aware of these figures, but I support the provinces' request for more federal money.

• (1225)

[*English*]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I had an adverse reaction to hearing national access to dental care being referred to as a trinket. It is very problematic to me when I hear day in and day out from constituents and Canadians across the country that they want access to dental care. We know that having access to dental care saves us money. There is no economic reason for us not to be proactive in preventing costs to our health care system.

I am wondering if the member could share what he has to say to constituents in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith and Canadians across the country who are asking for dental care, instead of doing

what in my opinion is belittling the need for dental care by referring to it as a trinket.

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I called it a trinket in my speech, because it is a little thing for the Liberals to put in the window to show NDP members that they are relevant and should continue to be supported by those members over the short term, until it is actually done.

Giving dental care to Canadians is easy. As I said in my speech, and I hope the member was listening, there is a far more effective way to improve dental care across this country, and that is to transfer health dollars to the provinces, as we have said and as my friend in the Bloc Québécois also answered.

To call it a trinket means they are saying, "Here is something we have given that has to be identified." It would create a massive overbuild, and more public servants would be required to deliver it. That is the overstep here. It is a provincial responsibility. If the federal government wants to deliver this to the provinces, and if the member actually has her constituents putting it in the top 10 needs of Canadians, then this is the way it should be more effectively done.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to enter the debate in this place, but I hope you will indulge me for a moment.

I learned just a couple of hours ago that in a small community, one of the many I represent, there was a World War II veteran, the last in that particular community of Coronation, who passed away a number of days ago. As we are approaching Veterans Week and, of course, Remembrance Day, I would like to pay tribute to Wilf Sieger in this place. He died at the ripe age of 99 years old. My thoughts and prayers are with his family. I know he was an active member of the community and passionate about many things, including agriculture and service. I am very thankful to be able to acknowledge him in this place today.

We are debating Bill C-31. I find it very interesting that over the course of the last number of weeks, certainly since Parliament returned in the fall and of course with a new Leader of the Opposition, there has been a dramatic shift in the attitude of the government. I would suspect, based on what I hear from constituents, and I occasionally get feedback from across the country whether it is through travel, friends or people who reach out to my office looking for that common-sense Conservative perspective from areas that are not currently represented by Conservatives, there has been a fairly dramatic shift.

All of a sudden, the economy became a priority. All of a sudden, the cost of living became a priority. All of a sudden, I think, the NDP realized that maybe its not holding true to the democratic part of the party name was coming home to roost in terms of fleeing support. We have seen the consequences of that in the legislative agenda.

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I find it continually ironic that the Liberals especially, but we are hearing it equally from their coalition partners in the NDP, are quick to say that our doing our jobs in this place is somehow not what Canadians want us to do. When it comes to many issues, virtually everything that we are debating here today but also over the last number of weeks, these are all the priorities and the things that Conservatives have been talking about for months.

I find it very interesting when it comes to the inflation. That was not a big deal up until the new Leader of the Opposition was pushing it as an issue on the national stage. Now, of course, we are seeing the devastating consequences of that.

When it comes to the issues surrounding health care, that is where there is going to be a very close connection that I will get to here in a moment. When it comes to making sure that the federal government is seen as a partner, not an overlord but a partner, with the provinces. We just have not seen that and not only over the past number of years. In the last seven years, we have seen a true erosion of what I believe and what constitutional experts suggest our federation should be.

When it comes to the issue of housing, Conservatives have been talking about this for a long time. I was sent a meme recently of a reference to our country. It was a picture in front of a dumpster fire. If we look at passport offices, Canadian unity or any host of metrics, service delivery to Canadians or whatever the case is, in so many ways we see that Canada is broken. It is unfortunate. I believe, and I say it often, that we are blessed to be Canadian. It is the greatest country in the world, but over the last seven years, and especially as we have seen an unprecedented crisis over the last number of years, certainly since I have been elected, we have seen so many things erode.

When it comes to Bill C-31, we see something that is very troubling, and it is a continuation of an attitude. I even asked a question on this of the parliamentary secretary earlier today. It is a continuation of the idea that Ottawa knows best. It is the Liberal government suggesting that its will should be imposed on every other level of government in this place.

• (1230)

I would like to unpack that a little with respect to why it is so problematic.

The true essence of our federation is that we have a national government based here in Ottawa, but there has to be strong regional governments. The approach is not one of overlordship. We have seen numerous case precedents in the Supreme Court. We have seen the very clear constitutionality of having, in our case, provinces. Different federal systems around the world call them different things, but in our case, the provinces need to be respected. However, we do not see that. When I asked a question of the parliamentary secretary earlier today, he said that he was willing to be criticized for telling the provinces what they should or should not do.

Here is why that is problematic. The Liberals, from the position of being the national government in Ottawa and a minority government, one which, I would remind them as they seem to have forgotten, received fewer votes than the Conservatives, but legitimately

won the most number of seats of any other political party, are unwilling to acknowledge there has to be an ability to work together whether they agree with their provincial counterparts or not. That is key because we see how in our country the Liberals only want to dance with those they agree with. That is not how our federation is supposed to work, and we see the consequences of that, whether through this bill or so many other aspects of the way the current Liberals approach governing here in Ottawa. The result is poor outcomes for Canadians. The result is a dental program that is being proposed but that is not going to have the intended effect.

In fact, the Parliamentary Budget Officer unpacked some of these things, and the PBO's numbers are different from those of the Liberal government. There is this weird political dynamic within the coalition partners to try to get something across the finish line so they can point to it and say they won, when the reality is that had they taken the work of governing seriously we would be in a very different situation. Therefore, I think the overall attitude we are seeing that has led to Bill C-31 before us is very problematic.

I will reference another bill that the Conservatives actually supported, Bill C-30. We supported sending a few dollars back to Canadians who are facing immense challenges from the inflationary pressures they face. However, what the Liberals failed to acknowledge, let alone give credit to, is that the Conservatives proposed measures that were not all that different with respect to cuts and removing some of the taxes on products and commodities that were facing significant increases in price. We have been proposing those things for many months, but now all of a sudden because, I hope, the Liberals listened to their constituents, although sometimes it seems that may not be the case with some of the Liberal constituents who have reached out to me and some of my colleagues, they finally decided to act many months after the Conservatives made the suggestion.

I will close with this. I think we have a troubling precedent within the governance of our country that has resulted in poor outcomes for Canadians. Canadians are struggling to get ahead. They are feeling left behind. A patchwork of federal programs implemented without appropriate consultation and without a true acknowledgment of the pressures and challenges Canadians are facing may make good headlines today, but the question I urge every member of this place to ask is whether it will solve the problems of tomorrow.

There is one further comment I would like to make. It is more of an open question. Yesterday in question period, the Minister of Health referenced a 10% increase coming to the Canada health transfer. I believe that is something that needs to be stated again in this place to try to get some clarification as to whether it is an Ottawa imposition or whatever the plan is, and what that actually means for our nation's future and, specifically, our publicly funded health care.

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• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the member made reference to Bill C-30. It kind of goes hand in hand with Bill C-31. Both of them deal with the issue of inflation. The member said the Conservative Party voted in favour of it. Yes, the Conservative Party voted in favour of it. The member then went on to say that they were encouraging it and tried to take credit for it.

I need to remind the member that the Conservative Party of Canada, which he is a member of, initially did not support Bill C-30. It was not until days later, after being shamed into it, that it changed its position and supported Bill C-30. Recognizing that Bill C-30 is the one that he just said was a good bill, Bill C-31 is also a good bill.

Does he believe that the Conservative Party could be shamed into supporting Bill C-31, as was done with Bill C-30?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I find the revisionist history that often comes about really interesting, and I will get into another example of that in a minute. The member knows full well that Conservatives were not shamed into supporting that bill. Rather, it was the Liberals who refused to support Conservative initiatives months ago that would have given the needed relief to Canadians.

In fact, that member is dishonest at best, and there is an unparliamentary word I would use to describe what he is doing.

Here is the reality. We see, time and time again, the Liberals pivot away from their record and are quick to blame, whether it is Conservatives or anybody else. In fact, when there were lineups at airports, who did they blame? They blamed Canadians for not remembering how to go through security.

Time and time again, we see the Liberals equivocate, pivot and endeavour to deflect the blame. As the Leader of the Opposition stated yesterday, the arsonists are trying to claim that they will fight the fire, when they were the ones who started it in the first place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on delivering a passionate speech, as always. I asked his other colleague a question earlier, and I am going to ask him the same one now. I may be naive, but I hope to get a good answer eventually.

The member for Battle River—Crowfoot may agree with me. A number of the Liberal government's new programs encroach on the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, especially in health and dental care, as in Bill C-31. The subject of mental health came up earlier. Once again, the Conservatives seem particularly concerned about mental health.

Would it not be easier to do what the provinces and Quebec have been calling for unanimously for years, which is to significantly increase health transfers to 35% so the provinces and Quebec can provide mental health and dental care, which are provincial responsibilities?

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

• (1240)

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, mental health is a clear example of where the Liberals have dropped the ball. In fact, it was only partway through the last election campaign that, all of a sudden, they added that as part of their priorities.

I suggest that it was because Conservatives had been championing that issue, even though it was an unnecessary election and all of these things. Conservatives were championing that issue because it is something that Canadians should be able to find common ground on, but instead of acting, they dither, delay and simply fail to deliver.

As for respecting provinces, absolutely, we need to get back to the point where our federation respects regional differences and provincial jurisdiction.

I encourage the member from the Bloc to ask the same question that I did at the conclusion of my speech. What is the deal with the health minister, all of a sudden, in question period, saying that a 10% increase is coming to the Canada health transfer?

Certainly, there are a lot of unanswered questions in association with that statement, which may have slipped out of the minister's mouth in question period yesterday.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, I commend the member on highlighting the work and perseverance of the NDP, which has forced Liberals to finally do what is right and move forward with a national dental care plan. I feel that the member, perhaps, is a little upset that the Conservative-Liberal coalition that existed just a year ago, which voted down dental care, has clearly broken up and here we are today. I do agree that there is currently a patchwork approach in place that is leaving so many Canadians behind in accessing dental care.

Can the member share why he is opposed to a national approach, with the leadership that we need, so that all Canadians have head-to-toe health care, including dental care?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating how the fourth party in this place is quick to suggest that somehow it is forcing the government to do anything when this is the reality. We see weak leadership, certainly from the Liberals and the NDP, and an unwillingness to do the hard work that Canadians expect of them.

My suggestion for the member and the NDP is that if they really want to do the hard work that Canadians require, to work in the context that our country was meant to function in, they would work with provinces and ensure we have programs that actually deliver services to Canadians.

I know I am out of time, but there are so many things that require hard work and the laziness demonstrated by the coalition is inhibiting that from taking place.

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The Deputy Speaker: I will make my normal daily public service announcement that the shorter the questions and answers, more people get to participate in these great debates.

Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to talk about budgetary measures and legislation that will really have an impact on the lives of Canadians in all regions of our country.

We talk a lot about inflation, and there are a couple things I would like to convey right at the beginning.

First, we have to be honest with Canadians and tell them exactly what the situation is. When we compare Canada to the rest of in the world, much like the pandemic, we are not immune to inflation. We had a worldwide pandemic and have worldwide inflation. How does Canada compare to other countries, like the United States, our greatest trading partner, Europe or England? Canada compares relatively well. Our inflation rate has been consistently lower than those countries. It does not mean we do not have an inflation issue.

We hear it every week within our caucus and every day in our constituencies. As the Prime Minister has indicated not only to Liberals but to all members, our responsibility within our constituencies is to take those ideas and concerns and bring them to Ottawa. Liberal members of Parliament do that on a regular basis. As a result, what we see is a government that is trying to deal with the issue of inflation.

That brings me to my second point on inflation. It is not good enough for us to say that because Canada is doing relatively well compared to other countries in the world that we do not need to do more. We are committed to providing relief where we can.

I made reference to this in a question to the previous speaker. Bill C-31 complements other pieces of legislation, in particular Bill C-30. Bill C-30 provided a doubling of the GST tax credit. That has impacted over 11 million Canadians. Our population is about 38 million and 11 million Canadians have benefited from it. That is money in their pockets as a direct result of the House of Commons ultimately passing the bill.

Contrary to what some of my Conservative friends will try to tell everyone, they initially opposed that legislation. To their credit, they did come onsite and support it because they recognized that Canadians would benefit from it.

The challenge we have before us now is saying to the Conservatives that Bill C-31, like Bill C-30, is good, substantial legislation that will help the constituents we serve.

When we think of inflation, we talk about going to the grocery store and the cost of food. It is going to places where we have to purchase commodities and widgets. Those are real dollars that need to be spent. Canadians are concerned about that and we should be as well.

When we talk about children in our communities who do not have the financial means to get critical dental care, this legislation

deals with that in good part. We have a national government that wants to provide direct support for children under the age of 12 so they can get dental care, children who might otherwise not receive it. As a direct result of not receiving that dental care, they could end up in our hospitals.

We can check with the children's hospitals and community hospitals. We will find that children are going to these health care facilities virtually everyday because they have been unable to have their dental issues addressed.

• (1245)

I applaud the New Democrat members in recognizing and prioritizing this issue. It complements our health care system.

However, I am not surprised by the Bloc member, because they want Canada to break apart. They are separatists, and they do not believe in national programs. On the other hand, members of the Conservative Party, a national party, not supporting what our constituents want is so out of touch with Canadians if they believe the federal government has no role to play in health care. Every one of them is out of touch with reality with respect to what their constituents want. Their constituents not only want but demand that the national government play a role in health care. We see that in our Health Care Act.

Talking about long-term care, have the Conservatives not learned anything from the pandemic when it comes to health care? Do they not realize that Canadians expect issues like long-term care to have national standards? Do they not recognize that Canadians want a national government to invest in mental health? Some members of the Conservative Party have said maybe not for dental care but more for mental health. Therefore, some of those members seem to acknowledge that the federal government should play a role in mental health, but they are definitely not consistent. We, on the other hand, recognize that Canadians want leadership on the health care file, and that is what they will get from this government.

We get misinformation from across the way when those members say that the federal government provides 22% funding. I used to be a provincial health care critic during the 1990s, and that is just wrong. In fact, the history of health care funding goes back to when there was a tax point transfer given to provinces as a compromise, which saw the percentages go down, and, yes, there was somewhat of a cut in the 1990s. However, there was also a guarantee of ongoing national involvement in cash transfers or equalization payments as we call them today. However, this government has not only invested historical amounts of money into health care transfers, but we have also invested in long-term care, mental health, and today we are making a commitment to dental health.

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Today we are talking about children. Tomorrow we are going to be talking about seniors and people with disabilities, recognizing that there is a need. At the same time, it would help with the issue of inflation. Bill C-31 might get a lot of attention with respect to the dental program, but where the Conservatives are losing it, once again, is on the rental support of millions of dollars. Close to two million people will benefit from this. A substantial amount of money will go to low-income families and individuals in rental support. One would think this is something the Conservatives would want to support.

When the Conservatives talk about fighting inflation and helping Canadians through inflation, not only does the doubling of the GST credit assist but so will Bill C-31. For my Conservative friends, because I anticipate there will be a recorded vote on this, I suggest that they reflect on whether they have constituents and children under the age of 12 in their ridings who would benefit by the passing of this bill. Do they have tenants in their ridings who would benefit by the passage of this bill? The short answer is, they do. Hopefully they will flip-flop and support the bill.

• (1250)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will keep this very simple for the member.

I just heard that the committee spent two hours on this. I am wondering if the hon. member could share with me if the federal government actually worked with the Canadian Dental Association and worked with the provinces and territories. The feedback I am getting is that they do not like where this is coming from. The Canadian Dental Association has asked for an extension of the programs that already exist in our communities. I am wondering what the government did to consult with these organizations that are providing dental health.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that is the nice thing about this. Here we have a plan that is being put into place, and we have indicated to the provinces that we want to see it expanded.

Ultimately, the provinces could come onside and start the discussions, or work with the federal government on how to have an optimal dental program for all of Canadians so there is a standard. For a child under 12, it should not matter what province they happen to live in when we determine what kind of benefits they will have. This ensures that all children under the age of 12 will have at least some dental benefit so they can get critical dental work done.

If every province has not been contacted, the nice thing about the telephone is that it works two ways. I suspect that everyone is very much aware that the NDP and the Liberals have been pushing on this issue for a while now.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I see that some colleagues are laughing. It is true that it can be rather funny to listen to the parliamentary secretary. He is presenting this as a dental care plan when it is not a dental care plan or program in the least. It is a cheque that will be sent to people without any real proof as to whether the children went to the dentist.

The only thing I want to know is whether there will be two logos on the cheque, the maple leaf and the NDP logo, because it is not a dental care program. It is a subsidy that is being distributed unequally among the provinces.

By the way, we are not against national programs. We are in favour of national programs that have to do with Canada but that the government is not taking care of. That is the reality.

The Bloc Québécois is against discrimination, against interference in Quebec's jurisdiction, against people not having access to the dental care program, but getting cheques anyway in a discriminatory way.

This is my question for the parliamentary secretary: Was it a kick in the teeth to have to make a presentation like that?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc party does not support this program because it is a separatist party. If it was up to the Bloc party, Ottawa would be nothing more than an ATM machine.

At the end of the day, I believe there are children, no matter where they live in Canada and even in the member's constituency, who could benefit from this program. There are parties that support the idea of having a national program for children under the age of 12, which will be expanded. That is good for all Canadians, no matter where they live in the country and no matter where they decide to move to or from.

I see that as a positive thing, but I am a nationalist; I am not a separatist. As for the NDP, at least the NDP seems to have outmanoeuvred the Bloc by becoming more relevant in terms of national policy.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Liberals are finally listening to the NDP and ensuring that no child will go without getting their teeth fixed and that everybody who needs help will eventually have dental care and get the lift they need. I also appreciate the top-up for housing. However, it is not enough.

We know that over 20% of housing in Canada is owned by corporations. Does my colleague agree that we need to put a stop to the corporatization of home ownership in our country? Housing is a human right, and it should be for people to live in and for people to own themselves, not for corporations.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I believe the only way we are going to deal with the housing crisis is to get all three levels of government to work together, with the national government playing a lead role. We cannot underestimate the importance of local councils, whether in big cities or small rural municipalities. They have to be engaged. There are a lot of ideas out there, and we have a Minister of Housing who is committed to working with all the different stakeholders to try to ensure that Canadians have the ability to own a home.

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• (1300)

The Deputy Speaker: We did not do as well as I thought we would in the last round to make sure that everybody gets to participate in the debate. The questions and the answers were long, and I see that a number of people who really wanted to participate had their hand up. Let us try our best to make sure that everybody gets to participate in this debate.

[*Translation*]

Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Terrebonne.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, is it not ironic that it should take a separatist to remind the House how the Canadian Constitution works?

The government reminds us at every opportunity that we must not touch the Constitution and that all related matters are not important to Quebec, Quebecers and Canadians. The measures included in Bill C-31, which we are studying together today, have a noble objective: to take care of people affected by the difficult economic conditions in which we find ourselves.

The problem is that these measures are ill-suited to the different realities of Quebec and Canada's provinces. Even with all the good faith in the world, health and housing are not federal jurisdictions. The House has no say in these jurisdictions. I plan on demonstrating why these measures are ill-suited to Quebec and also other areas.

Why is it that the federal government cannot mind its own business, especially given that it cannot even take care of its own jurisdictions?

Just ask anyone from Terrebonne who is still waiting for their passport whether they trust the federal government to solve the housing crisis. Just ask any single mother who is still waiting for her employment insurance cheque whether she trusts the federal government to look after her child's teeth.

The Bloc Québécois supports the principle of Bill C-31. Its objectives to improve dental care and access to housing are noble. However, as is too often the case, Quebec was not consulted and this bill was drafted without taking into account what is already being done in the provinces, especially Quebec.

I would like to remind the House that we voted in favour of this bill at second reading in the hopes of being able to improve it to make it a better fit for Quebec. Unfortunately our numerous attempts to improve this bill were shut down, even though the Bloc Québécois represents a lot of people in Quebec who would have benefited from a better bill or even from the opportunity to correct the fiscal imbalance.

This bill is another example of one of the many flaws in the Canadian federation, namely the fiscal imbalance, as I mentioned. By fiscal imbalance, I am referring to the fact that the provinces do not have sufficient financial resources for their own jurisdictions, while the federal government has surpluses to carry out the responsibilities under its jurisdiction. Simply put, as Bernard Landry used

to say, the needs are in the provinces but the means are in Ottawa. It defies logic.

The reality is clear. The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed our fears. Under this bill as currently drafted, Quebec will only receive 13% of the \$703 million allocated to the program. This program is unfair to Quebec. In order for it to receive its fair share, 23% of the program funding should go to Quebec, as Quebec represents 23% of the population of Canada. Quebec is systematically underfunded. Is a Quebecker worth less than a Canadian? Unfortunately, history has shown that the federal government thinks so sometimes.

Although the federal government tries to deny its existence, the fiscal imbalance is a major problem that has been recognized since the 1990s. Thanks to population aging, the cost of Quebec's social programs is rising rapidly. It is up to the Government of Quebec, and the Government of Quebec only, to determine where social program funding should go.

The federal government's repeated intrusions in areas of provincial jurisdiction add up over time and ultimately erode Quebec's spending power. Quebec is the one facing an aging population and the massive cost that comes with it. The federal government is in a good position. It is not responsible for health care, yet it gets to send out cheques and reap the political rewards.

Once again, the reality is clear. A careful reading of Canada's public accounts reveals the extent of the fiscal imbalance. In 2020, consolidated per capita spending on health care and social services rose rapidly in Quebec, by about 20%. Since health spending increased, it would be logical to assume that the generous Government of Canada must have contributed. However, the opposite is true. Canada health transfer payments per capita in Quebec rose by only 2.5%, and even worse, by just 1.8% for social programs.

The Government of Quebec is shouting itself hoarse asking for increases to health transfers. The federal government's response is to intrude once again on its jurisdiction by creating a program that is already covered by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, thank you very much.

• (1305)

Given that health is strictly under provincial jurisdiction, the fact that there is even a federal health department is absurd. This department spent over \$5 billion last year. That is an example of serious inefficiency that only the federal government can provide.

The Bloc Québécois is acting in good faith. We first voted to have this bill studied in committee. We made constructive proposals in a sincere desire to improve the bill and make it viable for Quebec.

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For example, in the housing section of the bill, the rule that restricts rent cheques to tenants who put more than 30% of their income towards housing leaves Quebec at a significant disadvantage, since three-quarters of the citizens eligible for the program are in Quebec. In committee, we proposed that this rule be removed, but the amendment was ruled out of order. I am asking my colleagues to remove this 30% threshold so that people who really need this assistance can receive it.

The reason the proposed dental cheques policy is so bad is that the government still stubbornly refuses to consult Quebec and the provinces when developing its programs. Let us not forget that Quebec already has the most progressive dental insurance program of all the provinces. With its progressive labour code, Quebec has the highest rate of unionization and group insurance in North America. That makes workers ineligible for the program. As always, Quebec is again on the losing end with the federal government because it has a decent social safety net of its own.

Ultimately, this bill is nothing more than a conditional transfer that increases federal spending authority and accentuates the fiscal imbalance. This is just another example of the archaic federal framework that is slowing down Quebec's progress.

The heart of these debates is the role of the federal government. If our colleagues want a unitarian state where all the decisions are made in Ottawa, let them say so. Some countries operate that way and it is a vision that can be defended. However, the Constitution would need to be reopened, which terrifies them. I am convinced that Quebecers would never accept losing their autonomy.

My colleagues in the other parties call themselves federalists. Let them be federalists, then. Let them accept that they do not have all the power and must trust Quebec and the provinces to take care of their own areas of jurisdiction.

Once the problem of the fiscal imbalance and the need to act to protect our most vulnerable are recognized, the House will have to ask itself the real questions. When the federal system was put in place, the real needs were under federal jurisdiction. The British Empire had to wage war to take over the diamond mines from the Boers, battleships had to be built to support London in its colonial competition with Germany, and the indigenous nations had to be destroyed through famine, reserves and residential schools. Those are great causes.

In 2022, the real needs are in Quebec and the provinces. The solution to the real problems is also in the hands of the provincial governments. If the House really wants to help people with housing and their children's dental care, it should reflect not on implementing projects that are clearly ill-suited from coast to coast but on bringing the federal government to stop wanting to control everything. Let us reverse the fiscal imbalance and give Quebec and the provinces the means to care for their own.

They might try being sincere, because sincerity is lacking in the House, reopening the Constitution and proposing a unitary Canada run by a single government, unless of course my colleagues are afraid Quebecers would break up with them for real this time.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I guess this is where we definitely have to agree to disagree. For a 10-year-old child, it does not matter whether they live in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Quebec or Nova Scotia. They should be entitled to get a benefit to deal with their dental care. It is important to recognize that Manitoba has benefited immensely because of equalization payments, as I know the Province of Quebec has been able to do.

Through those equalization payments, we are able to better provide social services to our communities. I realize the member represents Quebec alone, but does she not believe that, no matter where they live in Canada, every child should be able to have some sort of a dental benefit?

• (1310)

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Mr. Speaker, I will just reiterate the main point I made in my speech. I personally truly believe that, yes, any child in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or New Brunswick can access dental care, but that is the provinces' job, not the federal government's.

[English]

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to talk about the failures of the government on ports, airports, health care or the numerous other things I could go on and on about.

We now have a federal government that seems to be going around the provinces with this bill, and I wonder if the member could comment further on that.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Mr. Speaker, I do think this bill is probably well-intentioned, which is why we voted in favour at second reading. However, it is not well-thought-out and it has many flaws, which we constructively criticized during the committee's study. It is funny because, in a democracy, people should be able to make constructive suggestions, but none of ours were retained.

Unfortunately, the Bloc Québécois cannot support a bill that is ultimately not in Quebec's best interest.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her speech.

I am sure my colleague knows that many Quebecers do not have dental insurance. This bill is just the first step in our plan to ensure that all Canadians, including Quebecers, have access to dental insurance.

Can my colleague tell us whether she agrees that there should be a dental plan that covers all Canadians?

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, and I especially appreciate her effort to ask the question in French. Unfortunately, not enough members make the same effort in the House.

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To answer her question, basically, Quebec children already have access to dental care, either through the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec or through group insurance, which is very advanced because we are a progressive country, or rather a progressive province. When I say “country”, that is just my wishful thinking.

Essentially, I think that what is done elsewhere in Canada is the purview of provincial governments, not the federal government. That is where we have to agree to disagree. Jurisdiction must be respected as long as we are in a federation. That is how it is set out in the Constitution.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Terrebonne for her excellent speech and her concise and accurate answers. That is a real asset in the House.

I take umbrage when I hear the member for Winnipeg North, for example, saying that the Bloc Québécois is opposed to this and does not want Canadian children to be covered by a dental care program. We all want that.

Would the right solution not be to simply systematically include in bills the possibility for each province and Quebec to opt out of programs with full financial compensation, out of respect for provincial jurisdictions and the programs that are already in place in various provinces and in Quebec? Obviously, we want the Liberals to stop interfering in the jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec, but would this not be a fair and equitable way of managing the country in the interest of all Quebecers and Canadians?

• (1315)

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his excellent question.

It would be ideal to be able to opt out of all Canadian bills. Let us simply opt out of this country.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to Bill C-31, which we are debating today.

The principle of the bill is very important, but the execution is very poor. I will explain why this bill is bad for Quebec and also discriminates against Quebecers.

The bill has several components. I will address the first one, the dental benefit, but I will first put forward the Bloc Québécois's position.

My colleagues and I supported the bill at second reading because we agree with the underlying principle. During a cost of living crisis such as the one we are experiencing, it is both commendable and necessary to lighten the financial burden of low-income households, which are the most affected by the rising cost of gas, groceries, housing and just about everything in daily life. By funding dental care for low-income families with young children and also supporting renters, the bill could help Quebecers and Canadians get through these tough times.

However, good intentions are not enough to make a good government or good laws. As drafted, the bill does not give Quebecers their fair share because it discriminates against them and is un-

fair to them. That is why we will not support it at third reading as long as Quebecers' interests are not more fully taken into account.

I will begin with an overview of the dental care part of the bill. First, to be eligible for a benefit, whoever submits a claim must meet the following conditions: They must have a dependent child under the age of 12; they must have a family income under \$90,000; the dependent child must not be fully insured under a government or private plan; they must have incurred or plan to incur dental care expenses during the period in question; they must receive the Canada child benefit for the year prior to the claim.

Whoever meets all the requirements I have just listed can then qualify for the following benefits: \$650 if household income is under \$60,000; \$390 if household income is between \$70,000 and \$80,000; and \$260 if household income is between \$80,000 and \$90,000.

The bill provides for the possibility of receiving a payment for two separate periods, one from October 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 and the other from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. It is already clear that this is far from a permanent and sustainable program. This is the program being lauded by the government and the NDP, who want a universal dental care program. Those are nice promises in theory, but the reality is quite different.

I will clarify the injustice against Quebec in this bill. At first glance, it seems fine; the bill could even be said to be a very good thing. However, when we look at the amounts that are meant to promote the oral health of young children in Quebec and Canada, we can see that that is clearly not the case.

Shaping public policy requires careful consideration of the consequences of the measures being proposed. In reading the independent and in-depth report prepared by the Parliamentary Budget Officer—the Bloc Québécois did not dream this up, or rather have a nightmare about all the details of this bill—we see that, as the bill stands, Quebec would only receive 13% of the total amounts allocated to the dental component, or \$92 million out of \$703 million.

• (1320)

If the NDP-Liberal government had introduced a truly equitable bill allowing Quebec to receive its fair share of the funding based on population, which is nearly 23% of the total population of Canada, Quebecers could have received \$162 million.

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A \$70-million injustice is literally being inflicted on Quebeckers, thanks to the NDP-Liberal government. As an aside, \$70 million is a little more than what the monarchy costs Canada. The government could help people by abolishing the monarchy.

I will come back to dental care, but when we look at all of this we see that there is a \$70-million injustice. I am already prepared to answer questions and I have not even finished my speech. People think that we do not want to help Quebeckers, those who need financial support for dental care. Who would sneeze at \$70 million? It is unbelievable.

It is obvious that this \$70 million will not go into the pockets of families with young children, who currently need this money more than ever. To illustrate the blatant injustice Quebeckers will face, let me just say that they will receive an average of \$83 per child under the age of 12, while families outside Quebec will receive an average of \$168 per child. In reality, these are one-time payments. On the ground, this reality will mean that half of the families who would be entitled to a cheque if they lived outside Quebec will not be entitled to anything at all.

Let me explain why Quebec families will receive less money. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, there are two reasons why this bill puts Quebec families at great disadvantage. The first reason is that the Quebec government has implemented a government program under which many parents do not pay any fees when they visit the dentist. The second reason is that the unionization rates in Quebec are higher than elsewhere in Canada and, therefore, Quebeckers are more likely to have group insurance that covers dental expenses.

It is clear that Quebec is being denied its fair share because its government set up a dental care program for children in 1974 and because its workers have better benefits. Quebec is being penalized because visionary, progressive decision-makers decided long ago that it is right, just and equitable in an advanced society like ours for kids to get dental care regardless of their parents' income.

There is another consequence to this bill, possibly an unintended one. I refuse to believe that the Liberal-NDP government deliberately set out to inflict this injustice on Quebec with this bill. I believe that all my House of Commons colleagues are well-intentioned. I am sure they want only the best for all the Quebeckers and Canadians they represent. I believe this is a mistake caused by the federal government's desire to implement a complex system quickly despite having no expertise in this area.

Obviously, this is a hastily conceived piece of legislation that was cobbled together following an agreement between the Liberal government and the NDP. This bill is designed to keep a shaky coalition alive. The idea of bringing in a dental plan is nothing new. It was in the NDP platform in 2019 and 2021. The only reason it is now being included in Bill C-31, which is flawed and will be passed under a gag order, is to keep their shaky, half-baked deal alive.

As a final point, I just want to mention that some civil society actors like the Canadian Dental Association have told us that the best way to proceed with this bill would be to transfer the money to Quebec and the provinces.

• (1325)

I hope the Bloc Québécois amendments will ensure that some real progress can be made, so we can move forward, so Quebec can have its fair share of the measures and, of course, so the government can fix its mistakes.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a fairly straightforward question in regard to the idea of having a benefit program that is fairly easily administered in the manner in which it has been brought together. It will provide dental care, and there is no doubt about that, to a great number of children. That, in turn, will ultimately assist in preventing some children from having to go into hospitals.

I am wondering if the member could be very clear in terms of supporting the principle of that and then provide his comments on how he will actually be voting.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, we will repeat it as many times as it takes to get through to my colleague from Winnipeg North: We agree with the principle of the bill. It is just poorly put together.

Is my colleague from Winnipeg North okay with telling Quebeckers that they will be getting \$70 million less? Is that a fair and equitable public program? Why is Quebec going to get less than the other provinces just because it already has dental care programs in place, whether it be group insurance or public programs that are already supported by the Government of Quebec?

Today, we are not opposed to the principle. We are against the fact that Quebec is not getting its fair share in areas under its exclusive jurisdiction. It is fine for the government to want to look good by sending out cheques, but when it is drafting legislation, it needs to take the time to study it and ensure that it supports all of the people it targets, without discrimination.

[*English*]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know children in Quebec have dental care, and this is great. The NDP is pushing for a plan so that all people across Canada can have dental care. I know many people in Quebec who do not have dental care plans would benefit from it and support this plan. Does the member not agree with me that he needs to support Quebec adults who do not have dental care?

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[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, what we should be supporting is the idea that the federal government should mind its own business, as the Canadian Dental Association has asked. It needs to stop creating programs that rush cheques out just to shore up shaky agreements. That is not what Quebeckers want. They want real programs.

During my speech, I said that this is a temporary program. It is not a universal program, as the NDP would like.

Nobody can be against virtue, but when the Liberals create a program, first of all, they need to respect the areas of jurisdiction they know nothing about, such as dental care. Second, they need to create long-term programs that truly reflect the needs of the people, without any discrimination. That is not what this bill currently does.

How can they justify the fact that 10% of children in Quebec will receive less support than the rest of the children in Canada? This is unacceptable.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, in this bill, there is a one-time \$500 rental housing benefit, which I see as a positive step, but it is just a drop in the bucket given the state of the housing crisis.

Can the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques share his views on the importance of dealing with private investors who treat our homes as commodities? We could, for example, scrap the tax exemption for real estate investment trusts in favour of investing more money in building affordable housing.

• (1330)

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, back home in Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, the housing situation is serious. Rimouski is one of the towns in Quebec that has been hit especially hard by the housing crisis. The vacancy rate is 0.2%. People are being pushed into homelessness. They no longer have a roof over their head. It is extremely serious and I am very worried about it.

I would say to my colleague that, back in the 1990s, the federal government disengaged from social or affordable housing, whatever he wants to call it. We know that the government even invents new words sometimes. It reinvents them or gets rid of them, but that is another story.

The Bloc Québécois is calling for an investment of 1% of the total budget, which corresponds to \$3 billion of the federal budget, to massively reinvest in social housing. What we are asking for above all is for the federal government to transfer the money to Quebec City to stop wasting time. This is going to take housing starts and new housing.

Stop putting national standards—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I must interrupt the member.

Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Huron—Bruce.

[English]

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today.

We are here talking about Bill C-31 and I thought, because it has to do with the inflation issues in Canada, I would quote the famous economist Milton Friedman. He was not a Canadian economist. Nonetheless, he was a Nobel Prize-winning economist.

This is what he had to say about inflation. He has been dead for years, but obviously this rings true today. He said, “There is one and only one basic cause of inflation: too high a rate of growth in the quantity of money—too much money chasing the available supply of goods and services.” That quote is from approximately 50 years ago, and it was as true then as it is today.

Another thing he said was that people learn and governments never learn. I think that is also true today.

If we look at what is happening in Canada with the M2 money supply and how it has continued to increase, based on the numbers I have, it has increased a lot in the last two and a half years. However, if we look at where it peaked, which my numbers say was in July, that is also roughly the time when inflation peaked in Canada, which was in June, at 8.1%. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the comments economist Friedman made many years ago ring as true today. They are evidence-based here in this country. There is only one place where inflation starts, which is with the government and the money tree, the printing of money.

Former finance minister Bill Morneau and the current finance minister, in my opinion, have very little credibility on where the cause of inflation started and even less credibility on how it should and shall be fixed. Let me go through some excuses that have been proposed in the last year alone.

In September and October of 2021, it was, “Don’t worry, folks. Inflation is transitory.” Do members remember that?

I can hear a child crying in the gallery because she just found out how much she will be paying for her fair share of the debt.

In November, it was because of greedy corporations. Do members remember that? It was then said, in December, that it was because of supply chain bottlenecks. In February, the blame was laid on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the spiking of gas and oil prices. At the end of the day, the root cause of the inflation in this country can be laid at the feet of the finance ministers and the Governor of the Bank of Canada.

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Another point of reference and data on inflation is from October 2015. There was a Conservative balanced budget and the inflation rate in Canada was 1%, further proving our point that fiscal policy directly impacts the inflation rate. In October of 2015, with the Conservative balanced budget, which was the last time we saw a balanced budget, the inflation rate was 1%, but today spending is out of control and inflation is over 7% or 8%.

If we went up and down the country roads and main streets to ask people where their biggest point of pain is right now with respect to inflation, almost 100% would say that it is the costs of heating their homes, paying their electricity bills, keeping their vehicles on the road, and putting groceries in their cupboards and fridges to feed their kids or family.

I am not saying these other things are not important, because they are, but if we were to ask people today what the most important things are, it does not matter what political party we are from, the people we represent are probably going to tell us that. We heard it today, and I am glad it was brought up because it has to do with consultation.

● (1335)

The idea of this bill goes back a long way. Jack Harris had a motion similar to this in the previous Parliament, Motion No. 62. That was my old buddy Jack.

With this particular bill on dental, it is obvious there have been no consultations. When the minister made the announcement, it was not with provincial health ministers. It was not with premiers to say look what we have done together. This was a direct cash payment support to keep the government of the day in government.

It would have been great to have a consultation with the provinces, health care professionals and dentists to ask what the benchmark is. I know our Deputy Speaker is from Nova Scotia, and there is a good possibility that Nova Scotia has one of the best dental care programs in the country.

In Ontario, the province I represent, it is the healthy smiles program. On average, the Nova Scotia plan is enhanced from what Ontario has. It would have been great for everybody to get together to say that Nova Scotia has a great plan. Maybe we would need to put it in over a number of years, but let us have it all hammered out and have a five-year plan or a 10-year plan to make it happen.

What we are looking at today, we can call it dental care, but it is not dental care. This is not a form of dental care. The provincial programs, I would argue, are a form of dental care. We can argue if they are good, bad or need enhancing, but they truly are forms of dental care. What we are seeing today is a direct payment to people to help pay for a dental bill.

If we went around the countryside and asked people what their number one priority is for health care, I do not believe dentistry would be in the top two or three answers, depending on who we asked. If we ask families what the number priority is, they would say not having a family doctor. That is probably the number one problem. If people are sick, they have no place to go other than the emergency room, and they have no doctor who has a reference of their medical history.

I just mentioned the emergency room. In the hospitals in the area I represent, their emergency rooms are closing at night or are completely closing. For many members of Parliament, it is just like it is in Huron—Bruce. If we asked the people in my communities, such as Clinton, Walkerton or Seaforth, what is more important, and they would say it is all important, but this is probably the most important thing for them: They do not want to wait 12 hours for a kid to be seen by a doctor to find out what is wrong with them. People who are parents have probably had that experience before. There are a lot of issues.

We can think about how the times have changed just in the last seven years. I heard an anecdote today on the television. It was someone saying that they used to worry about if they could get a parking space downtown. Now they are worried that, if they go downtown and park, they are going to get stabbed in the back by somebody and get robbed. This is all in just seven years. I do not completely blame the Liberals, obviously, on that one, but that is what people are thinking.

What I would say on the rental issue is that I am in a rural area. I know, Mr. Speaker, you are from a rural area. We have huge affordable housing needs in our ridings, along with many others. The dollars that are offered in this rental program will help, but if we are really looking at what can make a difference in the country and make a difference in rural communities, we should give that money to the provinces and let the provinces work with the counties and municipalities to build long-term affordable housing. That would have been a far better use for it. Mayors in Saugeen Shores, Kincardine, Goderich, Exeter and Clinton, in my area, would have been well-served by commitments for affordable housing.

● (1340)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member's speech and he created some very loose associations, starting with the fake Harper surplus of October 2015.

I will read what Bill Curry of the *Globe and Mail*, a reputable newspaper in Canada, said at the time. It states, "The Conservative government's long-promised return to surplus relies on a series of accounting moves that includes slashing the contingency reserve, assuming oil prices will climb and collecting billions more in Employment Insurance premiums than necessary."

Putting that aside, the fake surplus was preceded by nine years of deficit, yet as the member himself just said, inflation was only 1% after those nine years of deficit. How does he square that?

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Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, it is great the member recognized it was 1%. The biggest difference is that we did not have the money printer on full speed. The Liberals have the money printer on full speed. We do not and we did not have it on full speed. The budget was balanced in 2015. If we are debating a balanced budget in 2015 with the Liberals' Bill C-31, we know they are taking on a lot of water with their bill here today.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about how hard it is for people. I represent Winnipeg Centre, which competes to be the second- or third-poorest urban riding in the country at any given moment.

Here is the thing: Why should it be on the backs of people and families to have to pick and choose what should be available for them between proper mental health care, dental care and affordable housing with rent geared to income? I wonder if my colleague agrees with me that the Conservatives need to focus on making corporations pay what they owe, stop funding fossil fuel industries, stop fraternizing with their corporate friends and take that money with of a windfall tax to actually invest in people and divest from all their corporate support.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, I would argue that from the NDP's point of view, this is a windfall. The government has received a windfall in the form of its increased tax collection because of inflation and oil and gas record profits, to be able to put into the government taxes. Let us think about what it would be if it were not. We would have a deficit that is double, triple or quadruple what it is today. Therefore, the coalition members should be happy about where they sit today, but the taxpayers in this country should not be happy.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, I heard the member for Huron—Bruce had various critiques of the dental support that would be provided through this bill. Sure, there may be some criticisms to be had of it, but I am also of the mind that something is better than nothing. In Huron—Bruce, as is the case in Kitchener Centre, kids under the age of 12 do not have access to any dental support for their parents right now. Would the member not agree that this bill has dental supports in it that would ultimately support folks in his riding, just as they would those in mine?

• (1345)

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, it would support kids, but the point is that the Liberals and the New Democrats are calling this “dental care”, but it is a dental subsidy. If they truly wanted to do dental care, they had plenty of time. The Liberals have been in government for seven years, and the NDP has been propping them up for many of those years. They have had years to put this together and years for consultation, and they have not.

Members can look through the press releases to find out where a federal-provincial health ministers' meeting took place with substantive discussion on dental care, the funding of dental care and best practices in dental care. They will not find it.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, toward the end of his speech, the member talked about his region, and his riding being a rural riding. Sometimes I worry about the government's programs being cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all programs. I just wonder if the member would like to elaborate on the fact that government programs need to be not just a one-size-

fits-all program for the entire country. Every region has a different need. I liked what the member had to say about getting money to the hands of provinces and letting each province decide what they should do.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, let us not create more bureaucracy. Let us not create red tape. Let us not create more chaos on people figuring out how this all works. We already have a delivery mechanism. It is through the provinces. In the province of Nova Scotia, for those who are 14 and under, regardless of income, they get their dental. It is an X-ray, a cleaning, a checkup for kids and their cavities filled. That would have been a great place to start from coast to coast to coast, and from sea to shining sea. That would have been fair. That would have been equitable.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to speak this afternoon to such an important piece of legislation that our government brought forward and that I hope to see in place to help millions of Canadians very quickly.

We know we live in very challenging times. We live in times that require flexibility from the government, and swift responses. We live in a time when Canadians from coast to coast to coast are facing increases in the costs of everything from lettuce to gas to rent to everyday essentials, and we understand that. Canadians elected all 338 members of Parliament to ensure their interests are put forward and that we put in place programs that assist them and their families to have a better future, not only today but going into the future.

Today we are debating Bill C-31, an act respecting benefits in relation to dental care. I have said before, with regard to dental care, that the Canada dental benefit is an interim first step. No child under the age of 12 and no family that cannot afford to bring their children to the dentist should have to go without it. This is a measure not only for today, to address increased costs that Canadian families are seeing from coast to coast to coast, but also a longer-term measure in line with other measures our government has put in place, including the Canada child benefit, the increase to old age security, two tax cuts for middle-class Canadians and asking the wealthiest 1% of Canadians to pay more, to build a strong economy, strengthen our social fabric, reduce inequality and ensure that inclusive growth happens for all Canadians. That is what we are doing.

Government Orders

The interim Canada dental benefit will provide eligible parents or guardians with direct, upfront tax repayments to cover dental expenses for their children under 12 years of age. This is a first step. In accordance with the proposed legislation, direct payments will be made to eligible applicants, totalling up to \$650 per year per child for dental care services for applicants with a family income under \$70,000, \$390 for those with a family income of \$70,000 to \$79,000, and \$260 for those with a family income of \$80,000 to nearly \$90,000.

Starting in 2022, the interim Canada dental benefit will deliver over \$900 million to support oral health for children under the age of 12 without dental insurance. This is tangible progress to help Canadian families and their children. This is tangible progress to ensure that we help Canadians, especially our most vulnerable, who are faced with the increased costs of everyday expenses that we all know and speak about. That is what Canadians sent us here for. This is the first stage of the government's plan to deliver dental care for families with incomes under \$90,000 who do not have access to dental insurance.

Our government introduced this bill because we know the costs of dental care can be difficult for some families to bear. This means many parents have to postpone or forgo important oral health care for their children at a time when their teeth are developing. That is unacceptable. Dental care is essential to maintaining good oral health. Unfortunately, we know that poor oral health can lead to a range of health issues, with consequences that can be lifelong. Furthermore, poor oral health can lead to a reduction in quality of life and associated factors, including mental health issues, employment challenges, social shame, nutritional issues and isolation.

In 2018 alone, it was reported that approximately 6.8 million Canadians avoided visiting a dental professional due solely to cost. In the same year, 10 million Canadians did not have dental care coverage. We are addressing that, first starting with children under 12. Then we will also ensure that seniors are covered, so that my constituency office in the city of Vaughan does not get phone calls from seniors asking how they can get emergency dental care service when a \$500 or \$1,000 bill comes and they cannot afford it at the end of the month. That is a decision seniors make today in Canada, between putting food on the table and getting dental work done, which we know is very important.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, early childhood tooth decay is a severe form of tooth decay that can affect baby teeth, especially the upper front teeth. It is the most common, yet preventable, chronic childhood disease in Canada and around the world.

- (1350)

Furthermore, treatment of dental problems is the leading cause of day surgery under general anaesthesia in Canada among children under the age of five. It is estimated that negative impacts of poor oral health account for over two million missed school days annually. That is unacceptable. Applications will be processed quickly, automatically in many cases, with payments received within a week for individuals requesting direct deposit.

Bill C-31, if passed, will give the Minister of Health authority to implement an application-based interim benefit payment to eligible

Canadians. Starting later this year, applicants will be able to apply for and receive the interim benefit up front before accessing dental care, before they incur the cost, because we know that going to the dentist can be, yes, expensive and absolutely necessary. Eligible Canadians will apply via the CRA's secure My Account portal or by calling the Canada Revenue Agency's client contact centre.

Our government recognizes that dental care needs vary from one person to the next. In this regard, the interim dental benefit can be used for any dental care provided by a licensed member of a regulated oral health profession in good standing with the pertinent regulatory body. The exact care the interim benefit is used to purchase will be decided between families and, yes, their oral health care providers.

Families will have choice. To access the interim benefit, parents or guardians of eligible children will need to apply through the Canada Revenue Agency. In addition, they will need to attest that first, their child does not have access to private dental coverage; second, they will have out-of-pocket dental care expenses for which they will not be fully reimbursed from elsewhere; and third, they understand they will need to provide documentation to verify out-of-pocket expenses occurring, i.e. to show receipts if required.

The interim Canada dental benefit is an important step in the right direction that assists Canadian families by ensuring that they have access to dental coverage for their children first. Then, later on, we will do it for seniors, to ensure that all Canadians have access to dental coverage. I am sure my fellow members would agree that this strategic investment in dental care, which fits in perfectly with our fiscal framework, will most certainly have a ripple effect that will improve the lives of children from coast to coast to coast for years to come.

I am pleased to note that the work is under way to set the stage for the development of a comprehensive, longer-term national dental care program. Specifically, the Government of Canada is working with key stakeholders, industry partners, academics and dentistry associations and organizations to help inform decisions on implementing a new national dental program.

The interim Canada dental benefit is intended to help make life more affordable and bridge the gap for families who struggle to pay for dental care for their children. Our goal is to ensure that eligible children under the age of 12 are able to access the interim Canada dental benefit before the end of this year, before the end of calendar year 2022.

For that to happen, the legislation we are proposing must receive royal assent as soon as possible. I ask all parties to support this common-sense measure that is going to assist Canadian families with children under 12 who do not have dental care coverage or insurance like all of us here enjoy as members of Parliament. For myself, with three kids under the age of 12, I know full well the cost of bringing my child to the dentist, and I know full well the benefit, as an MP, of having dental coverage. We must provide the same benefits to Canadians.

The government is of the view that measures in this bill build on the strong action we have been taking since 2015 to make life more affordable and build an economy that works for all Canadians. From cutting taxes for the middle class in 2015 to increasing the basic personal exemption amount to \$15,000, to asking the wealthiest 1% to pay their share, to reducing the age of eligibility for old age security and GIS from 67 to 65, we are on the right path. We are increasing the Canada workers benefit this year, with up to \$2,400 more for lower- to middle-income working Canadians to receive when they file their taxes.

The Canada child benefit, again, is tax-free, monthly and helping nine out of 10 Canadian families raise their children and receive more funds. We are not sending cheques to millionaires like the party on the opposite side did when it was in government. We are doing what is right for Canada to grow our economy, make it more inclusive and lift literally hundreds of thousands of children and families out of poverty, which we continue to do.

We know we are in waters that are rough due to global conditions, but we are guiding Canada on this ship in the right direction, to continued prosperity, low unemployment and ensuring that Canadians have a great future ahead of them.

• (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of His Majesty's loyal opposition, I would like to request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 2.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Mr. Speaker, once again we would like to request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Normally at this time the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at report stage of the bill. However,

Statements by Members

pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the recorded division stands deferred until later this day at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, we would be prepared to advance to two o'clock so we can begin members' statements.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF LGBT PURGE

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, on the 30th anniversary of the end of the LGBT purge in Canada, we acknowledge the painful impact it has had on the 2SLGBTQI+ movement and its fight for realization of human rights. Since then, Canada has made strong progress on LGBTQ rights, but there are still gaps in access to safe, equitable and inclusive federal workplaces for this group.

To mark this day, let us commit to act, formally consult with LGBTQ communities, federal employees, networks and human rights experts and understand the lived experiences and systemic barriers they still face. Let us build strong equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization strategies in the Canadian public service.

* * *

• (1400)

BREAST CANCER

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to the Canadian Cancer Society, the number of new breast cancer cases diagnosed is expected to increase by 40% by 2030. In Canada, 89% of women diagnosed with breast cancer will survive for at least five years after their diagnosis. That is why it is important that we talk about our breasts and talk about early detection.

We need to know how to personally detect abnormal growths, when to see a doctor and when to go for a mammogram. Breast cancer does not usually present any signs or symptoms in its early stages. The most reliable way to detect breast cancer early in women is through a mammogram, a low-dose breast X-ray that identifies tissue with cancer. I had mine just three weeks ago. Be sure to talk to a doctor about the risk and to determine if having a mammogram is right the thing to do.

Statements by Members

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. By raising awareness and funds to support breast cancer research, we stand up for our mothers, sisters, daughters and women from coast to coast in our fight against this terrible disease.

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank a dear friend, His Worship the Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua, for his 34 years of service to the exceptional citizens of the city of Vaughan.

Maurizio's leadership and vision led the way to the transformation of our city, making it the best place to live, work, invest and raise a family. Some of the accomplishments spearheaded by Mayor Bevilacqua include a new hospital, a university, a subway, a 900-acre park and a vibrant downtown core.

It has been a pleasure working by his side. I wish *mio caro amico* the absolute best in the next chapter of his life.

To Vaughan's new mayor-elect, Steven Del Duca, congratulations. I look forward to working with him to continue strengthening our residents' quality of life.

To all nine re-elected and new members of council, *auguri*, and to the two councillors who serve the constituents of my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, Rosanna DeFrancesca and Adriano Volpentesta, *auguri* again.

They are all stewards of our thriving community.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LOCAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, weaving, crochet and needlepoint are true art forms. They are precious, unique and rare arts that may have disappeared were it not for the Cercles de Fermières du Québec.

In my riding, these arts are thriving thanks to the knowledgeable and passionate women of the Cercle des Fermières de L'Isle-aux-Coudres, which is celebrating its 65th anniversary.

Founded in 1957, the association is fortunate to still have two of its original members, Fernande Desgagnés and Marie-Ange Harvey. I would just like to take a moment to fondly remember my late grandmother, Mathildée Tremblay, who was also a founding member.

My regards to the current president, Ginette Claude, vice-president Gisèle Dufour, and the 64 members who reside on our wee island. Together, our farm women are seeing to it that our precious cultural and artisanal heritage is passed on to the next generation.

These women are carrying on a priceless tradition with pride, and they deserve my heartiest congratulations and deepest gratitude as a fellow "Marsouine". A fair wind to you, Cercle des Fermières de L'Isle-aux-Coudres, and to all Quebeckers.

MAGALY BRODEUR

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the life and outstanding work of an inspired and inspiring woman from Sherbrooke.

Magaly Brodeur was named one of Canada's 100 Black women to watch in 2022 by Canada International Black Women Excellence. That is on top of the many awards she has already won, and it is obvious why that is so. She has bachelor's degrees in economics and business administration, a master's degree in history, and Ph.D.s in public administration, applied human sciences and medicine.

Dr. Brodeur's quest for knowledge is fascinating. As a behavioural addictions specialist, she and her team are producing a guide to help Canadian doctors support patients with gambling and money problems.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, I thank her for the contribution she has made to medicine to continue to break taboos related to mental health and addictions.

The recognition of the achievements of Magaly Brodeur, a woman from my riding who cares a lot about the Université de Sherbrooke, will be a source of inspiration for future generations in Sherbrooke and across the country.

* * *

[*English*]

MEN'S SUICIDE

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last weekend I attended a candlelight vigil for Bhupinder Singh Chahal, a well-known, well-liked and celebrated athlete in India and successful realtor in Canada. Bhupinder died by suicide, leaving behind a grieving wife, Ranni, and a grown son, Gary, who are struggling to understand. Gary has started an initiative he terms "it ain't weak to speak". Suicide is the number two cause of death among men under 40 in Canada, and the number three and four causes among men over the age of 40.

Men die by suicide at three times the rate of women, but support exists. HeadsUpGuys has an online self-check to start down a road of reducing risk and living a healthier life. Depression is as real an illness as any other, and delayed treatment makes things worse. There is no higher priority than health. Trust me, Canadian women would rather share tears than be left alone and behind.

Heads-up, guys: "It ain't weak to speak". Stay here with loved ones.

• (1405)

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN SCARBOROUGH— AGINCOURT

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize some heroes in Scarborough—Agincourt who have served our community well during the pandemic and now.

I thank Lee Soda of Agincourt Community Services Association for the services given to newcomers, seniors, the homeless and tax clinics and for supporting women entrepreneurs.

Alfred Lam, of the Centre for Immigrant & Community Services, has a community garden and greenhouse that is environmentally sustainable, providing healthy produce for the centre's food bank.

Farooq Khan, from the North American Muslim Foundation, provides programs for youth and families and has a food program recognizing the surrounding diverse community.

Bonnie Wong, of Hong Fook Mental Health Association, provides crucial, culturally specific mental health services to youth and our community.

In Scarborough—Agincourt we are so fortunate to have strong leadership and caring organizations. These community members make me especially proud to represent Scarborough—Agincourt.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of measures the government is taking to deal with issues like inflation, such as Bill C-30, which deals with the doubling of the GST rebate, and Bill C-31, dealing with dental and rental benefits.

One of the programs that I am a big advocate of, which we often forget about, came out in budget 2022. It is a new multi-generational home renovation tax credit. This is a fantastic program that enables people to look at the value of adding a secondary unit to their homes. It is a great way to support our seniors and support people with disabilities.

We all know that seniors thrive so much more when they are in a family environment, as it encourages families to continue to grow together. To me that is what this program is all about.

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[Translation]

RISING COST OF LIVING

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, whether in Thetford Mines, Le Granit or L'Érable, the rising cost of living is making life more difficult for everyone. Groceries are expensive, and the lines are getting longer on the day the flyers come out.

Things are even harder for some people and certainly more miserable for some workers; for example, employees of the Maxi store in Lac-Mégantic have been on strike for over three months. All

Statements by Members

they want is fair treatment from Loblaws relative to other grocery stores across the country. Enough is enough. Loblaws must resolve the dispute as soon as possible, so that people have access to affordable groceries and workers can get paid this winter.

We are all concerned. The Liberal Prime Minister said that interest rates would remain low for decades. He has borrowed more than all previous prime ministers combined. Canadians denied the Prime Minister a majority mandate to avoid giving him unlimited access to the Liberal credit card. However, he found an accomplice, someone who is only too happy to add his name to the Liberal credit card, namely the leader of the NDP.

This is how Canada ended up with two grasshoppers singing in the sunshine without a care in the world, although winter is just around the corner and the carbon tax is going to eat into the savings of Canadians who want to put food on the table, heat their homes and—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Hochelaga.

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QUEBEC WASTE REDUCTION WEEK

Ms. Soraya Martínez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec Waste Reduction Week gives us an opportunity to reflect on our consumer habits and our everyday actions. Reducing, reusing and recycling are part of a responsible economy.

Today, I am wearing a dress I purchased at Renaissance, a non-profit organization that has been a leader in Quebec's social economy since 1994. It is concrete proof that we can do things differently.

When we donate to Renaissance, we are helping the environment by reducing the millions of pounds of clothing and household items that would otherwise end up in landfills.

When we buy from Renaissance, we are not only giving clothing a second life, but also changing the lives of thousands of people. Every year, 100% of the revenue generated is reinvested in a work integration program. Renaissance has 1,130 permanent employees and, in 2022, it has facilitated 520 job placements.

We have to rethink our lifestyle choices so as to consume fewer resources and protect our environment.

* * *

• (1410)

[English]

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, six years, 10 months and 12 days ago, the Prime Minister received the final report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The report listed 94 calls to action that have the potential to advance reconciliation, but in almost seven years, no significant positive shifts have happened. Most of the reserves still do not have potable water, indigenous language schools are underfunded and crucial development projects are being delayed.

Statements by Members

For someone who once said there is no relationship more important to Canada than the one with first nations, Métis and Inuit, this is an abysmal result that will be part of his legacy. He dresses up, apologizes and cajoles, but he fails to deliver on his own priorities.

Our indigenous neighbours and friends, including the residents of the Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, deserve better. They do not need a government that speaks in platitudes. They need us to build authentic relationships and work to benefit all of us living in this beautiful country.

* * *

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford the cost of living, and this week they have been hit with another devastating interest rate hike. That is the result of a Prime Minister who does not think about monetary policy and has added more to the national debt than all other prime ministers combined. While Canadians make sacrifices, the Liberals are blowing taxpayers' dollars on themselves and their elitist friends.

Most recently, we learned about the Prime Minister's luxurious trip to London. He saw it as an opportunity to spend \$400,000, which included a \$6,000 hotel suite for one night.

It is not surprising. Year after year, the Liberals have not missed a chance to waste Canadians' money. The WE scandal gave half a billion to a company that lined the pockets of the Prime Minister's family. It cost \$54 million to create the intrusive and glitchy arrive scam app, when it could have been made for \$250,000. Former Liberal MP Frank Baylis's company was part of a \$237-million contract for ventilators that were not even used.

The Liberals have a record full of wasteful spending. It is unacceptable and it needs to stop.

* * *

INVESTMENTS IN SAINT JOHN—ROTHESAY

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I came to this great place in 2015 laser-focused on one goal: to deliver much-needed strategic federal investment for my beautiful riding of Saint John—Rothesay, investment that was sadly lacking under the previous Conservative government. It was because of that lack of investment that Saint John's waterfront was undeveloped. That is, until now. We have announced \$15 million to rebuild the seawall. We have invested millions of dollars in the boardwalk, Fundy Quay and area 506 container village. We also just announced a new outdoor arena for our waterfront and a new digital light display for Jardine's Alley.

Our government believes in strategic investments that will turn ridings like mine around. I am proud of what my government has done. I am proud that we have invested in spades in Saint John—Rothesay.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the last session I put forward a unanimous consent motion recognizing that what happened in residential schools was an act of genocide. I was shocked when members of the House chose not to support my motion, confirming that residential school denial is still a reality.

We need to do better. We need to find a way forward that honours the truth about what happened in this country, especially in light of Pope Francis's acknowledgement that what took place in residential schools was in fact genocide.

I will rise again today to seek unanimous consent for the following motion: That in the opinion of the House, this government must recognize what happened in Canada's Indian residential schools as genocide, as acknowledged by Pope Francis and in accordance with article II of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

This time, I hope members of this House will not cut me off as a way to hide the truth, and will instead stop residential school denialism so that the experience of survivors is finally honoured. Only then will we achieve justice and demonstrate that we are truly committed to reconciliation.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

SAGUENAY—LAC-ST-JEAN FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today my riding is celebrating the 80th anniversary of the Association forestière du Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean. Founded in 1942, the association devotes its day-to-day activities to informing and educating the region's citizens about the importance of our forests, our natural wealth.

The association is more than just an educational organization; it also champions the idea of cultivating an appreciation of forests, which was presented for the first time to the Coulombe Commission on the management of Quebec's public forests in 2004. That was a big win for the association, and this notion of appreciation is now included in the preamble to the Quebec law on sustainable forestry management. Bravo.

Today, it is an organization rooted in the community and led by the tireless biologist Diane Bouchard, who offers educational activities to a wide variety of learners, from preschoolers right up to university students.

I offer my sincere thanks to the association for its dedication to our forests and wish it a happy 80th anniversary.

Oral Questions

[English]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the ArriveCAN app caused chaos from the moment it was launched. It did nothing to improve efficiency at the border or to protect Canadians from COVID. Over 10,000 healthy vaccinated Canadians were arbitrarily ordered to quarantine and subjected to threatening emails, phone calls and home visits, all because the government clung to this useless piece of technology it knew was prone to failure.

The government spent \$54 million to create it, but IT experts have proven that a garage band hacker could build it over a weekend for under a million dollars, and now Canadians know there were false invoices and millions of dollars missing.

From WE Charity to SNC-Lavalin to the sponsorship scandal, waste and corruption are built in to the Liberal Party's very DNA.

Canadians need to know two things: who got rich and where the money actually went.

* * *

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month, and I would like to recognize an amazing woman, Indrani Nagenthiram, who is making a difference in the lives of seniors in my riding of Scarborough Centre.

A strong and dedicated woman of Sri Lankan roots, Indrani pioneered the creation in Toronto of a culturally appropriate assisted living environment for Tamil seniors. For 20 years, the Villa Karuna Home for Seniors has provided comfortable and healthy care for many seniors in the Greater Toronto Area. Villa Karuna also provides employment and job training opportunities for personal support workers.

Through the worst of the COVID pandemic, often alone, Indrani worked tirelessly to ensure that the seniors under her care were looked after. Even in her 70s, she has not slowed down. Her kindness and hard work are an inspiration. I thank Indrani for her service.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this country has a \$500-billion inflationary deficit and farmers are being forced to pay higher taxes, so the price of food has gone up faster than it ever has in the past 40 years. We recently learned that Canadians visited food banks 1.5 million times in a single month.

When will the government acknowledge that Canadians can no longer afford it? When will it reverse its inflationary policies?

[English]

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians are facing difficult times, but this question speaks to two very different visions for our country. One is where the Conservatives say to Canadians that they are on their own, that the government should not have invested in them and that it should not have an affordability plan. On the other hand, it is our government that was there for Canadians when they needed us during the pandemic and got the economy back on track. Now we have an affordability plan that will double the GST, provide dental care to 500,000 kids and also give housing supplements to Canadians who need it the most.

We will never abandon Canadians like the Conservatives propose we do.

● (1420)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member would have Canadians believe that they have never had it so good. If that were true, then we would not have 1.5 million visits to the food banks in a single month in Canada. That is a 35% increase since 2019. This is after a half trillion dollars of inflationary spending bid up the cost of goods, and new taxes on farmers has made food more expensive. Now the Liberals' plan is to triple the carbon tax. Will they reverse that plan so Canadians can afford to eat?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a very clear difference on this side of the House with respect to what we are doing to support Canadians. Since we were elected in 2015, 1.3 million Canadians have been lifted out of poverty, and that includes over 450,000 children.

We will not take any lessons from the Conservatives, who are looking to cut benefits, who are voting against supporting Canadians and who today actually have an opportunity to do the right thing, if they care about Canadian families, and vote to support dental and rental supports.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister spent \$6,000 for one hotel room per night in London and then spent that evening singing up a storm and partying in that fancy hotel lobby, it was really an analogy for his whole government: a half trillion dollar party with other people's money and Canadians got the hangover; a million and a half visits in one month to the food banks; the fastest-rising interest rates in 30 years; the fastest inflation in four decades.

When will the government realize that Canadians are out of money and the party is over?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition seems to have amnesia, because over the past two and a half years it has been this government that has supported Canadians in their darkest hour.

We supported nine million Canadians with the Canada emergency response benefit. We supported millions of Canadians with the Canada emergency wage supports. We supported thousands of businesses and organizations with the CEBA.

I only can imagine that the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that we would not have done that and we would have seen a tank in our economy. We did not do that. We will not take any lessons from the Conservatives and we will continue to support Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals had a big party with other people's money. The only problem is most people were not invited to the party. The WE Charity was invited; it got half a billion dollars. The arrive scam contractors were invited; they got millions of dollars in contracts, in many cases to do no work, and many of the dollars are still unaccounted for. Of course, other Liberal insiders got the money. Even prisoners got CERB cheques. That is how they racked up a half trillion dollars in inflationary deficits that have bid up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay.

Will the Liberals realize that the money is out and the party is over?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear about what the Conservatives are saying. They are saying they would not have created CERB to keep millions of Canadians at home. They would not have created the wage subsidy that kept 60,000 workers employed in Alberta's oil industry alone. They would not have offered rent subsidies that kept tens of thousands of businesses afloat. Their cryptocurrency plan is not a plan. It is the worst plan this House has ever heard of. They have no plan.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as part of its money printing scheme, the government flooded the financial and mortgage markets with \$400 billion of cash that bid up house prices faster than at any time in history. Home prices doubled under the Prime Minister, creating the second-biggest housing bubble on planet earth.

The government said that rates would never rise and families believed it. Quoting CityNews, now that they have risen, "Rob and his wife have an adjustable-rate mortgage and say their payments have gone up by \$2,000 a month." They have three kids. They cannot pay it. What the hell do they do now?

The Speaker: I want to remind hon. members to use parliamentary language. That is kind of pushing it.

The hon. minister for Housing has the floor.

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we understand the importance of keeping access to the Canadian dream of home ownership alive. The leader of the official opposition's voting record really shows that he does not actually care about making housing more affordable for working people across the country. All he has to offer is empty rhetoric and buzzwords. Now he wants to gatekeep rent supports for people who need it the most. He wants to gatekeep dental supports for kids. This is not a plan, and Canadians expect 7better.

* * *

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the government and the NDP wanted to help Quebec families with dental care, they could have come to an agreement with the Quebec government. That way, 100% of the cost for Quebec children would have been covered based on the actual amount paid. Instead, they came up with a cheque that half of Quebec families will not be entitled to, and what is more, the spending will not be monitored. A person can go to the dentist and pay \$20, but charge the government up to \$650. It is absurd.

Why did the government not just come to an agreement with Quebec? Would that have been too easy?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is going to help the families who need it most.

Dental support is more than just dental support. Imagine a child who cannot afford to go to the dentist and who feels too embarrassed and shy to approach their friends or another little boy or girl in the schoolyard. Imagine a senior who had to get their teeth removed but did not have enough money to get dentures, so they isolate themselves. When a person does not have enough money to go to the dentist, that has real consequences, but the Bloc Québécois could not care less.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the answer is that the government did not even try to have talks with Quebec because it is not shopping for dental insurance, but majority insurance.

The sole purpose of this cheque is to shore up its majority. In order for the NDP to support it, the government could not just give money to Quebec, it had to cut a cheque with a great big maple leaf on it. Therefore, it invented a flawed benefit that discriminates against Quebecers and that will be paid out practically without any oversight, just like the CERB was.

Why should Quebec pay more than its fair share so people in other provinces can go to the dentist, pass go and claim even more money than they actually paid?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

The Canada dental benefit will be available to all eligible Canadian and Quebec families, including those covered by the public insurance plan. Our program will directly help families in need. There is no mechanism for opting out because it is not negotiated with the Quebec government.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people are going hungry in our country right now. That is shameful in a country as rich as ours.

Today's annual report from Food Banks Canada shows that food bank use is at an all-time high. In a single month, there were 1.5 million visits. People are going without, but the Liberals refuse to stand up to the CEOs of the major grocery chains and make them pay what they owe us.

When will the Liberals do something about the corporate greed that is keeping families from feeding their children?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

It is clear that we take this issue very seriously. That is why, when we were elected in 2015, we were there for families and for children and why 1.3 million Canadians have been lifted out of poverty since 2015, including 450,000 children. We will continue to be there for Canadians. Today, all members of the House have the opportunity to support Canadian children. I hope Conservative members will do the same.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, families are making difficult choices about what food they can afford and costs are only getting higher. Today, a report from Food Banks Canada proved that people just cannot keep up. At record rates, families are turning to food banks to get the help they need. The Liberals have a responsibility to support Canadians. Instead, they have sided with rich grocery CEOs who are hiding behind inflation to line their pockets.

When will the Liberals hold big grocers accountable for the price gouging Canadian families are experiencing?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House is concerned about inflation and about the prices Canadians across the country are facing when they go grocery shopping. That is exactly why I called upon the leaders of these supermarkets and grocery chains across the nation to do their part to help Canadians. I called a number of them to say that we want to see action. In addition to that, I demanded that the Competition Bureau start an inquiry and a study to look at making sure there is no unlawful practice. We will do everything we can to support Canadian families at this time.

• (1430)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-made inflationary fire is hitting Canadians' pocketbooks and Liberals will throw more fuel on that fire by

Oral Questions

tripling the carbon tax. Food Banks Canada says that a 40-year-high inflation in the cost of groceries is forcing 20% of Canadians to use food banks and one-third are children. The Liberals caused the inflation with their out-of-control spending, and now they are raising taxes when Canadians cannot afford it.

When will the Liberals stop their inflationary spending and stop raising taxes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear about what the Conservatives are saying. They are saying that they would not have put in place the CERB, which helped keep millions of Canadians in their homes. They would not have put in place the wage subsidy, which kept 60,000 people in the oil and gas sector employed, in Alberta alone. They would not have done the rent subsidy, which kept thousands of businesses open. They want Canadians to be left on their own. We have Canadians' backs.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not serious about helping Canadians. He spent \$24,000 on his hotel stay in London. That is the average annual rental cost in Canada and he blew it in four days. Families and students are going to food banks and homeless shelters because the Prime Minister's inflationary policies are driving up costs while he sings in luxury hotels abroad, finally putting his drama degree to use. He caused the inflation and interest rate hikes with out-of-control spending.

How does he justify this to struggling Canadians?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the official opposition talks about taking on gatekeepers. However, we have found that he is the biggest gatekeeper, keeping Canadians away from rental supports now. He is the biggest gatekeeper who voted against the Canada housing benefit. He is the biggest gatekeeper who has voted against the housing accelerator fund. He is full of buzzwords and nonsense. He does not help Canadian families. On this side of the House, we are here to help Canadian families. He can change his ways today and vote to deliver much needed rental supports today.

The Speaker: I just want to remind the hon. members to pay attention to their whips.

The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people of Vancouver Island cannot afford this costly coalition. Residents of Port Alberni pay nearly two dollars per litre for gas. In Comox, groceries are up 11% since last year. With interest rates on the rise, many islanders are in danger of losing their homes. Their NDP MPs do not care. They are pushing the Liberals to drive up the cost of living with more greedy taxes and unlimited spending.

Will the coalition members show some compassion, stop their inflationary spending and scrap their tax hikes?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more than 600 lives were lost in British Columbia due to the heat waves and forest fires, which is something we have never seen in the history of this country. It was the costliest natural catastrophe in the history of our country.

Who do the official opposition members think is paying for the tens of billions of dollars that climate change is costing British Columbians and Canadians all across the country? They have no answer whatsoever on the climate crisis.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister should tell that to the Liberal MP from Malpeque, who says he is considering leaving Canada because the cost of living is too high.

Yesterday's interest rate hike is another punch in the gut for people in the Lower Mainland. The impact on renters and homeowners is cruel to families trying to make a living and meet their costs. This costly coalition is to blame for this mess. Their unrestrained inflationary spending drove up costs and interest rates. The NDP-Liberals need to stop hurting B.C. with irresponsible spending and high taxes.

Will they axe the triple tax?

• (1435)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just last week, the Insurance Bureau of Canada unveiled that storm Fiona caused more than \$600 million of insured losses. These are not total damages. That makes it the most expensive storm in Atlantic Canada.

On this side of the House, we are fighting climate change and supporting Canadians. Just two weeks ago, we sent \$186 to families in Ontario, \$208 to families in Manitoba, \$275 to families in Saskatchewan and \$269 to families in Alberta.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all remember the Liberal slogan about working for the middle class and those working hard to join it. In fact, the current President of the Treasury Board used to be the minister of middle class prosperity. That position no longer exists, by the way.

What is the end result of all that? Martin Munger, the executive director of Food Banks of Quebec, says that food bank use is currently up 33%. That is unprecedented.

Will the Prime Minister promise not to raise taxes so that people in the middle class can stay there?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that the cost of living is really high for Canadians right now. That is exactly why there is an opportunity today for all members of the House to support Canadians and Canadian families with the dental benefit and rental support. It is important that all members do that. Why? It is because the cost of living is high right now.

I hope that we can count on the Conservatives to stand with us in supporting families and Canadians across the country.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's decision to shutter the department of middle-class prosperity was an admission that he did not understand the economy. He even said, as members will recall, that he did not think about monetary policy and that budgets balance themselves.

However, the Royal Bank of Canada has confirmed that middle-class Canadians may well see their purchasing power decline by \$3,000 in the first quarter of 2023. In Quebec, thousands of food bank users are children.

Can the Prime Minister be serious for once in his life and promise not to increase taxes?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us review what happened. In 2015, when we introduced the Canada child benefit, what did the Conservatives do? They voted against it. When we introduced support for child care, what did the Conservatives do? They voted against it.

We have lifted 450,000 children out of poverty since 2015. If the Conservatives really want to support families now, they have an opportunity to do so with the dental benefit.

Can we count on the Conservatives? Are they going to be there for families for the first time ever? I do not know.

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FINANCE

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the year ahead is going to be rough. A further rise in the key interest rate yesterday will increase household debt. The cost of living remains astronomically high, and there are fears of a recession. The government will have to make some tough choices in the economic update it is supposed to deliver a few weeks from now.

Spending money left and right would add fuel to the fire. For the government to turn its back on its fundamental responsibilities would be a mistake. It has to choose between discipline and austerity. Controlling spending is discipline. Turning its back on our most vulnerable is austerity.

Will the government side with our most vulnerable?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his question. He knows very well that the Bank of Canada is an independent institution in this country, an institution that has helped Canadians through tough times. Our responsibility is to manage the country's fiscal plan properly. We have gotten through the pandemic. We have a concrete plan to lower the cost of living, and it includes supporting the most vulnerable people.

We hope that the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Conservatives will vote in favour of Canadians and vote for Bill C-31.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that was not clear.

Some of the most vulnerable that the government cannot abandon are seniors.

According to Food Banks Canada, the number of visits this year has shattered records. The number of Quebecers who needed to use food banks was up 33% compared to 2019.

The first people the organization sees in line are seniors who can no longer cope with inflation. Seniors cannot take any more.

Will the government stop discriminating based on age and increase old age security for everyone 65 and over?

[English]

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the challenges seniors are facing with paying their bills and with grocery costs. That is precisely why we have been there for them from the very beginning. That is exactly why we are doubling the GST tax credit, putting more money in their pockets. That is precisely why we are helping nearly two million low-income renters who will receive financial relief. That is precisely why we increased the old age security for seniors.

We are going to continue to be there for seniors and Canadians.

● (1440)

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, they are forgetting half of them. Abandoning seniors is not an act of discipline, it is austerity.

We are talking about people who worked for decades and then end up going to a food bank for the first time in their lives.

It is not true that the rising cost of living affects 74-year-olds and 75-year-olds differently. There are not two classes of seniors in real life. The only place there are two classes of seniors is in the federal government's support programs.

Oral Questions

When will the government realize that the cost of living does not discriminate on the basis of age?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a matter that is extremely important and worth debating.

Indeed, the Bloc Qu b cois had an opposition day to debate a subject that was truly important. I am very surprised and also disappointed that the Bloc Qu b cois chose a subject other than seniors or the fight against poverty.

Now it can make up for it. Will it support the government with respect to dental care and housing assistance?

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[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, throughout this RCMP political interference scandal, the minister has been using very specific legal words concerning ministerial directives to the RCMP, but whether or not he directed the RCMP commissioner does not preclude political interference or inappropriate pressure. It does not rule it out.

Did he or his staff have any conversations with the commissioner concerning the release of weapons information or the pending Liberal gun control legislation after the massacre and before the April 28 press conference, yes or no?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's assertions are completely incorrect. The independence of police operations is a key principle in our democracy. It is one that our government deeply respects, one that I have always respected and one that I have always vigorously defended—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the member for a moment. It is pretty bad when I see people on one side who are trying to listen and are holding onto their earpieces because they cannot hear. I want everyone to be able to hear the answer.

The hon. minister will begin from the top, please, so that everyone can understand and hear what he is saying.

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the member's assertion on this matter is completely incorrect. It is not surprising that the members opposite do not actually want to hear the facts, but here they are.

At no time did I or any member of our government attempt to interfere in police operations. To be very explicit and clear with words I hope the member might understand, I did not direct, I did not ask and I did not suggest to the RCMP commissioner to release information. When she testified under oath before the Mass Casualty Commission, she said, "I did not receive direction and I was not influenced by government—

Oral Questions

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

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have on the audio recording the commissioner saying the minister's office requested that she do this. That is irrefutable. I am going to ask him again.

Did his office or he have any conversations with the commissioner concerning the Liberal gun control policy after that tragic massacre that killed 22 Canadians? Did his office politicize their deaths, yes or no?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, former Liberal insider and RCMP director of issues management Dan Brien recorded the April 28 meeting with Commissioner Lucki. When investigators came for the recording, he claimed that his phone had been stolen and that he had deleted the recording. We now find out that the phone was not stolen and that the recording had not been deleted from his personal phone: an honest mistake, I guess.

Did the minister's office communicate with Dan Brien about this recording, and when and how did the minister become aware of its existence?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, neither I nor my office communicated with Mr. Brien about any aspect of this matter. I have absolutely no knowledge about that except what I have read in the papers.

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• (1445)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a 15-year-old in Red Sucker Lake First Nation took his life in his own schoolyard following another suicide and 17 attempts. Red Sucker Lake's Chief Knott is clear: This is a crisis. Young people need hope.

It is time to fix their half-finished arena, deliver the new school they have been promised, build the regional treatment centre they need and ensure people in poverty can afford basic necessities in the face of sky-high prices. It is time to end the third world living conditions. There can be no true reconciliation without action for communities like Red Sucker Lake.

When will the Liberals step up?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we completely agree with the member opposite that it is unacceptable to have such levels of disparity across this country for first nations people. It is why we have committed to closing the socio-economic gaps by 2030. It is why we have redoubled our efforts on investing in infrastructure and mental health and wellness and in supports for communities like Red Sucker Lake. Across this

country, we will continue to do more with first nations partners, because every child deserves a fair chance to succeed.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in June the minister said it would take three years for people living with a disability to get the Canada disability benefit; last week she told media it would take 12 months, and yesterday her public servant said they cannot set a timeline. This lack of commitment from the Liberals is hurting people who are suffering and cannot wait any longer.

When will the Liberals deliver meaningful help to lift one million Canadians living with a disability out of poverty?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so proud that this House unanimously supported the bill that would bring forward the Canada disability benefit. There is so much work to do, but what is important is noting that every member of this House believes sincerely that we need to ensure we are supporting Canadians living with disabilities. We are going to continue doing that work, and we are going to ensure that we are enabling Canadians with disabilities to live with dignity.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I quote:

Carbon pricing is a remarkably elegant market solution to reducing emissions. Pricing would enable the reduction of a wide array of regulations and government interferences in the market. Pricing would give consumers and companies clear signals about the cost of the negative externality, and allow them to figure out for themselves the best way to respond.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell us if he agrees with this, and also who said this?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was none other than the Conservative Party of Canada's director of communications, Ben Woodfinden. He also said, "Instead of scoring cheap political points...Conservatives need to get serious and offer their own alternative." Where is this alternative? Why does the Leader of the Opposition not listen to his own director of communications, get serious and step up for climate action and a resilient, low-carbon economy?

FINANCE

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Canadians were distracted during the pandemic, the government engaged in hundreds of millions of dollars of wasteful spending, including \$54 million on a dysfunctional ArriveCAN app that discriminated against seniors and sent thousands of vaccinated Canadians into quarantine. Wasteful spending is the cause of this current inflationary crisis. Canadians cannot afford this costly coalition anymore.

Will the Liberals stop their inflationary spending?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand in this House and extol the important virtues of vaccination over the last couple of years. Indeed, only very few Canadians have decided not to get vaccinated, and that means we have done quite well, in terms of the fatality rate in Canada. It is so important that Canadians consider now, this fall, getting a bivalent vaccine for themselves and their families.

I would encourage every Canadian to speak to their health care provider or their doctor and consider flu shots and bivalent vaccines this fall.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again that was a non-answer. I was speaking about wasteful spending during COVID.

The government also wasted \$54 million on a failed ArriveCAN app. One developer replicated this app in one weekend and said it should not have cost more than \$250,000. In addition, several contractors said they never worked on the app and never received the millions of dollars the government said it paid to those developers.

Where did the money go, and who got rich?

• (1450)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the costs related to ArriveCAN. We are investigating those costs. ArriveCAN was important for digitizing the border, for making sure we kept Canadians safe and for making sure we could reopen the borders. The other side was hooting and hollering at us to make sure we opened the borders. We had a tool in place to make sure we did that.

We invested \$72 billion in Canadians' health to get us through the pandemic. The Conservatives wanted us to invest less. We invested the right amount; the economy is healthy, and now they are upset because we did the right thing.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, did the Department of Canadian Heritage ask well-known, well-documented, self-declared anti-Semite Laith Marouf to apply for funding, yes or no?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated before and will say again, anti-Semitism, hate and racism have no place in our society.

Oral Questions

The funding to this organization has been cut, and we have demanded repayment of the funding. We are implementing new measures to improve the Department of Canadian Heritage's vetting processes to ensure that this never happens again.

On this side of the House, we will ensure that we always stand against anti-Semitism and hate in all its forms.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is the problem. Known racist Laith Marouf got \$133,000 of Canadian tax money from the department and claims he was begged to apply for it. The diversity minister found out about his department's funding this vile anti-Semite more than a month before he acknowledged it publicly. The Minister of Canadian Heritage now claims he did not know about his department's funding this racist until he read about it in a newspaper a month later, which, of course, no one believes.

Who is lying: Laith Marouf, the diversity minister, the heritage minister or all three?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be absolutely clear. This organization was not approached by the Department of Canadian Heritage and was not specifically asked to run a program.

We on this side of the House have repeatedly condemned anti-Semitic, vile and reprehensible comments against various groups made by this individual. We have cut the funding to this organization; we have demanded the money back, and we are improving the vetting processes to make sure this never happens again.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Secretary of State will be meeting with the Prime Minister at the end of the day today. I know that they will be talking about very important, critical issues, such as the situation in Haiti, Ukraine and Iran. They will also be talking about the matter of refugees in North America. Right now, thousands of asylum seekers are crossing the border irregularly, without protection, at their own peril. That is not how we should be welcoming people who need help.

Will the Prime Minister discuss the suspension of the safe third country agreement with the Secretary of State?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, on behalf of all members of the House, I would like to welcome U.S. Secretary of State Blinken, who is meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs here in Canada.

Second, as we have said many times, we are committed to modernizing the agreement between our two countries. We are heading in that direction, and I am proud to welcome the Secretary of State to Canada.

Oral Questions

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the way things are going, it is expected that there will be more than 30,000 irregular entries at Roxham Road in 2022. These are desperate people, exploited by criminal smugglers who often offer them false hope. They are intercepted by the police before they can apply for asylum. This is a situation that, purely from a humanitarian point of view, cannot continue. However, the government wants to allow it to continue.

Will the Prime Minister take advantage of the U.S. Secretary of State's visit to push for the suspension of the safe third country agreement?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our system for asylum seekers must be robust and humane. There is no magic solution.

Asking to close Roxham Road or suspend the agreement is not the answer. What the government needs to do, and what we are doing, is to modernize the agreement.

* * *

• (1455)

TAXATION

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Loretteville has a community fridge. Neufchâtel has the Amélie et Frédéric food bank. Val-Bélair has the Val Bon Cœur community fridge. All three provide food aid. Unfortunately, in these communities, just like in the rest of Canada, needs have increased significantly over the past few weeks and months.

Today, we learned that 1.5 million Canadians turned to food banks last month alone. Putting food on the table is not a luxury, especially not here in Canada, but it takes money.

Could the government give Canadians at least a little good news and promise not to raise taxes in the coming months and years?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is hard to believe that the Conservatives are really concerned about the state of poverty here in Canada. Their record shows that, every time we introduce a measure to help people in need, they vote against it. Today, they have the opportunity to support measures that help people cover the cost of dental care and rent.

Will the Conservatives join us in supporting those measures? We hope to be able to count on them today.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians hope they can count on this government to not raise taxes. That is what people are asking of the Liberals, because so many are now having to go to food banks in order to have enough to eat. It is outrageous that this is happening in Canada.

The price of vegetables has gone up by 12%. The price of fruit has gone up by 13%. For baked goods, it is 15%, cereal products, 18%, and pasta, 36%. There is something wrong when spaghetti is expensive.

Can the government commit, on behalf of all Canadians, to not raise taxes? It is simple. Someone please say yes.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. This is an issue that affects all Canadians, and I understand the situation.

I have the utmost respect for my colleague, and he knows that that is why I have asked the presidents of several large corporations and businesses across the country to do their part. In a situation like this, we must all do our part to lower prices for consumers.

I have also asked the Competition Bureau to investigate to make sure that there are no unfair practices happening in this country.

[English]

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, understanding and doing something about it are two entirely different things.

Behind this record inflation and rising interest rates are real people facing a real and harsh reality. They are exhausted, worried and broke, and the Liberal government is intent on piling on even more financial burdens.

I asked this question last week and I will ask it again. Will the government listen to Canadians and cancel its plan to triple taxes on gas, groceries and home heating?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we waited 416 days for the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's climate pamphlet when he was leader.

The member for Carleton has now been leader of the Conservative Party for 47 days, and Conservatives still do not have a climate plan. Maybe his new director of communications can help his climate-denying boss to get with the program.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the cost of living has gone up in the past few months in Canada. Canadians have to tighten their belts to make ends meet.

Can the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance tell the House what the government is doing to help Canadians with the rising cost of living?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for the question and for her hard work.

Inflation in Canada has shown signs of slowing down. That said, we understand that the cost of living remains a concern for Canadians. The current inflationary period is the result of the war in Ukraine, problems with the supply chain and the zero COVID policy in China.

That is why we took action by bringing in bills C-30 and C-31. We have passed Bill C-30 in the House and we are close to passing Bill C-31.

We hope the Conservatives will support Canadians and vote in favour of Bill C-31.

[*English*]

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the bill is coming due for the Prime Minister's inflationary spending, and Canadians got clobbered by another massive rate hike. This is the most expensive government in Canadian history. The Prime Minister has added more to the national debt than every Prime Minister combined. Even his own Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that 40% of this deficit is not even related to COVID.

Will the Prime Minister end his inflationary spending today?

• (1500)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians are facing a rising cost of living, but let us state the facts. Every time we have lowered taxes for Canadians, the Conservatives have voted against. How did they vote on the federal minimum wage? Against. How did they vote on cutting taxes for working Canadians? Against. How did they vote on affordable child care for Canadians? Against. How did they vote when we lowered taxes on small businesses? Against. Are they going to vote for or against today? We will see.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals did not have the backs of Canadians, they went behind their backs: \$54 million on arrive scam, \$237 million for a former Liberal MP for unused ventilators, \$150 million for SNC-Lavalin for unused field hospitals and \$12 million for Loblaw's for new fridges and freezers despite record profits.

Will the Liberals finally end the friends and family program and give Canadians a break by ending this wasteful spending?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the past two and a half years, the world has been going through an unprecedented global pandemic. What did this government do throughout that period of time? We supported Canadians. We supported Canadians who lost their jobs, nine million in fact, with the Canada emergency response benefit. We supported businesses that had to close their doors because of public health measures, through the CEBA. What else did we spend on and support Canadians with? It was with vaccines that made sure we saved lives in Canada. We are not going to apologize for—

The Speaker: The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets has the floor.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact they seem to miss is that they spent \$600 million

Oral Questions

supporting high school kids during COVID living at home, while Giles in my riding, who heats with oil, had his tank filled up yesterday for \$1,600, which is more than the \$900 last year—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I am having a hard time hearing the question.

If I could hear the question from the top, please, so we can all hear it, then hopefully we will be able to hear the answer as well.

The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, they would like to hear it again: They spent \$600 million supporting high school kids with CERB, while Giles from my riding heats with oil and had to fill up yesterday and it cost \$1,600 to fill the tank. It was \$900 last year. This is just incredible. That is a 68% increase in his heating as a result of the government's policies, and they still want to impose another \$360 in new carbon taxes on his oil tank. Many people in my community have to choose between heat and eating.

When will these Liberals stop their triple—

The Speaker: The hon. minister for families has the floor.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the lack of compassion being demonstrated on the other side for supporting Canadians who lost their jobs, for Canadians who lost their income—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. We took the time and listened to the question. Now let us do the same thing with the answer given.

The hon. Minister of Families will begin from the top, please.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, the lack of compassion being heard from the other side about pandemic supports that supported families, that made sure parents could put food on the table, that parents could pay their rent or their mortgage and that families could ensure they knew they would be able to get through to the end of the month because of the Canada emergency response benefit is unbelievable from the Conservatives. If they truly had compassion, if they truly cared about supporting Canadian families, they would vote with us today on Bill C-31 and provide—

• (1505)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

*Oral Questions***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the brutal murder of Mahsa Amini, 40 days ago yesterday, has sparked a feminist movement in Iran and across the globe. The women-led freedom movement began with Iranian girls and women marching in the streets in defiance of the IRGC and in defence of freedom and democracy. Women across Canada and all corners of the world recognize these women and stand with them.

In light of the courage and the tenacity of Iranian women, can the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth share what our government is doing to fight for women's rights around the world?

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her extraordinary leadership. At the G7, I called on our allies to sign a joint statement to condemn the Iranian regime. I said then and I said—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: We were doing well before. I am going to ask hon. members to please calm down.

We will let the hon. minister start from the top.

Hon. Marci Ien: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her extraordinary leadership. At the G7, I called on our allies to sign a joint statement to condemn the Iranian regime. I said at that point, and I am saying now, that this is not about head scarves. This is about human rights. I stand by that. Our government stands by that

I have to say, it takes immense courage to speak one's truth, and I was so moved last night when women did just that. They shared their stories at a vigil for Mahsa Amini. I want women here and around the world to know that we stand with them.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on top of sky-high prices for food and rent, Canadians struggle to pay massively high cellphone bills each month. The announcement this week on the Rogers-Shaw merger proved there is a place to regulate gouging. Despite the minister's new position, the Competition Bureau still wants the merger stopped. Instead of blocking the merger in its entirety, the minister told the companies to go back to their drawing boards and their CEO tables. The government needs to stand up to the corporate greed from big telecom companies that also get public money.

When will the government act to stop the Rogers-Shaw merger so Canadians can get some relief on their monthly bills? When will he finally side with consumers?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that answer is very simple. Every single day, that is exactly what I did. He is a member for whom I have enormous respect, but I would bring him back to this statement. We actually blocked the merger of Shaw and Rogers. I denied the licence. Maybe he missed that part of the statement.

In addition to that, we said we supported the work of the Competition Bureau and, should it allow the merger to happen, we would impose additional conditions. We said it would have to keep the licence for at least 10 years and the lower prices in Quebec, about 20% lower, would have to be applied in Ontario and western Canada. We will stand on the side of Canadians every single day.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, Ataklti is a permanent resident in my community who applied for a travel document last February to join his wife in Sweden for the birth of their daughter. Eight months later Ataklti's request still has not been processed, even though it was marked urgent. We are working with dozens of refugees and permanent residents who are waiting months or even a year for the travel documents they need to travel and return to our country.

Can the immigration minister commit to a timeline for Ataklti to meet his daughter?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for Kitchener Centre for his advocacy. We are taking measures to reduce wait times and we will be doing more to tackle the backlog in the short term, while making our system more sustainable in the long term.

We are doing that by hiring up to 1,250 new employees to increase our processing capacity by the end of fall. We are aiming to process 80% of all new applications within service standards. Modernizing our immigration system is about putting people at the heart of everything we do, and that is exactly what we are doing.

* * *

● (1510)

[*Translation*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table in both official languages, the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report, indicating that 40% of the Liberal government's COVID spending was unrelated to COVID. I would ask for unanimous consent that I be allowed to table it now.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

* * *

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations with the other parties and, if you seek it, I believe that you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government must recognize what happened in Canada's Indian residential schools as genocide, as acknowledged by Pope Francis and in accordance with article II of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

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

It is agreed. The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to mislead the House, but I wanted to ensure that the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock did not mislead my constituents. I want my constituents to know that I love to represent them. I love our country, I love our party, and I am not going anywhere.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at report stage of the bill.

The question is on Motion No. 1.

[*English*]

Call in the members.

• (1525)

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was agreed to on the following division:)

Government Orders

(*Division No. 202*)

YEAS

Members

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Aldag | Alghabra |
| Ali | Anand |
| Anandasangaree | Angus |
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Ashton | Atwin |
| Bachrach | Badawey |
| Bains | Baker |
| Barron | Barsalou-Duval |
| Battiste | Beaulieu |
| Beech | Bendayan |
| Bennett | Bergeron |
| Bérubé | Bibeau |
| Bittle | Blair |
| Blanchet | Blanchette-Joncas |
| Blaney | Boissonnault |
| Boulerice | Bradford |
| Brière | Brunelle-Duceppe |
| Cannings | Carr |
| Casey | Chabot |
| Chagger | Chahal |
| Champagne | Champoux |
| Chatel | Chen |
| Chiang | Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek) |
| Collins (Victoria) | Cormier |
| Coteau | Dabrusin |
| Damoff | Davies |
| DeBellefeuille | Desbiens |
| Desilets | Desjarlais |
| Dhaliwal | Dhillon |
| Diab | Drouin |
| Dubourg | Duclos |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) |
| Dzerowicz | El-Khoury |
| Erskine-Smith | Fergus |
| Fillmore | Fisher |
| Fonseca | Fortier |
| Fortin | Fragiskatos |
| Fraser | Freeland |
| Fry | Gaheer |
| Garneau | Garon |
| Garrison | Gaudreau |
| Gazan | Gerretsen |
| Gill | Gould |
| Green | Guilbeault |
| Hajdu | Hanley |
| Hardie | Hepfner |
| Holland | Housefather |
| Hughes | Hussen |
| Hutchings | Iacono |
| Idlout | Ien |
| Jaczek | Johns |
| Jowhari | Julian |
| Kayabaga | Kelloway |
| Khalid | Khera |
| Koutrakis | Kusmierczyk |
| Kwan | Lalonde |
| Lambropoulos | Lametti |
| Lamoureux | Lapointe |
| Larouche | Lattanzio |
| Lauzon | LeBlanc |
| Lebouthillier | Lemire |
| Lightbound | Long |
| Longfield | Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacDonald (Malpeque) |
| MacGregor | MacKinnon (Gatineau) |
| Martinez Ferrada | Masse |
| Mathysen | May (Cambridge) |
| May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) | McDonald (Avalon) |

Government Orders

McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi— 207

McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Rays
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Sgro
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Yip
Zarrillo

McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Perkins
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Scheer
Seeback
Shiple
Soroka
Stewart
Stubbs
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

McLean
Moore
Morrison
Muys
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 114

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 carried.

The next question is on Motion No. 2.

● (1540)

[Translation]

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 203)

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Dancho
Deltell
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lantsman
Lehoux
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergen
Bezan
Bragdon
Brock
Caputo
Chambers
Dalton
Davidson
d'Entremont
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Kelly
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Mazier

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Bittle
Blanchet
Blaney
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergeron
Bibeau
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Drouin

Government Orders

Dubourg	Duclos		
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)		
Dzerowicz	El-Khoury		
Erskine-Smith	Fergus	Aboultarif	Aitchison
Fillmore	Fisher	Albas	Allison
Fonseca	Fortier	Arnold	Baldinelli
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Barlow	Barrett
Fraser	Freeland	Benzen	Bergen
Fry	Gaheer	Berthold	Bezan
Garneau	Garon	Block	Bragdon
Garrison	Gazan	Brassard	Brock
Gerretsen	Gill	Calkins	Caputo
Gould	Green	Carrie	Chambers
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Chong	Dalton
Hanley	Hardie	Dancho	Davidson
Hepfner	Holland	Deltell	d'Entremont
Housefather	Hughes	Doherty	Dowdall
Hussen	Hutchings	Dreeshen	Ellis
Iacono	Idlout	Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Ien	Jaczek	Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Johns	Joly	Ferrier	Findlay
Jowhari	Julian	Gallant	Généreux
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Genuis	Gladu
Khalid	Khera	Godin	Goodridge
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk	Gourde	Gray
Kwan	Lalonde	Hallan	Hoback
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Kelly	Kitchen
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Kmiec	Kram
Larouche	Lattanzio	Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Kusie	Lantsman
Lebouthillier	Lemire	Lawrence	Lehoux
Lightbound	Long	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Liepert	Lloyd
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Lobb	MacKenzie
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire	Martel
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	McLean	Melillo
May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)	Moore	Morantz
McGuinty	McKay	Morrison	Motz
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod	Muys	Nater
McPherson	Mendès	O'Toole	Patzer
Mendicino	Miao	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Michaud	Miller	Poilievre	Redekopp
Morrice	Morrissey	Reid	Rempel Garner
Murray	Naqvi	Richards	Roberts
Ng	Noormohamed	Ruff	Scheer
Normandin	O'Connell	Schmale	Seeback
Oliphant	O'Regan	Shields	Shiple
Pauzé	Petitpas Taylor	Small	Soroka
Plamondon	Powlowski	Steinley	Stewart
Qualtrough	Rayes	Strahl	Stubbs
Robillard	Rodriguez	Thomas	Tolmie
Rogers	Romanado	Uppal	Van Popta
Sahota	Sajjan	Vecchio	Vidal
Saks	Samson	Vien	Viersen
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay	Vis	Vuong
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke	Wagantall	Warkentin
Serré	Sgro	Waugh	Webber
Shanahan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Williams	Williamson
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Zimmer — 113	
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh		
Sorbara	Ste-Marie		
St-Onge	Sudds		
Tassi	Thériault		
Therrien	Thompson		
Trudeau	Trudel		
Turnbull	Valdez		
Van Bynen	van Koevorden		
Vandal	Vandenbeld		
Vignola	Villemure		
Virani	Weiler		
Yip	Zahid		
Zarrillo	Zuberi — 206		

NAYS

Members

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 2 carried.*[English]*

Hon. Filomena Tassi (for the Minister of Health) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in at report stage with further amendments.

Government Orders

The Speaker: If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. opposition whip.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, we would request a recorded division.

• (1550)

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

(Division No. 204)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blaney	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Drouin
Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long

Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sorbara
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Thompson
Trudeau	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koevorden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Virani
Weiler	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi— 175	

NAYS

Members

Aboutaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmieciak
Kram	Kramp-Neuman

Kurek
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Plamondon
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 145

Kusie
Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Scheer
Seeback
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

• (1555)

POINTS OF ORDER

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I would like to return to the point of order raised on October 25, 2022, by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons regarding the oath of allegiance of the member for Beloeil—Chambly.

[*Translation*]

We are all required to take and subscribe an oath or make a solemn affirmation before taking our seats in the House and voting. By swearing an oath or making a solemn affirmation of allegiance to the Crown, members are swearing an oath to the constitutional principles of our country. A member's role includes important duties and responsibilities, and the oath reminds us of them.

Speaker's Ruling

When the question was raised, I quoted the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, and I referred to a similar situation that arose in 1990. The Chair would like to reiterate the conclusions of the decision Speaker Fraser made on this subject on November 1, 1990. I will now quote from page 14970 of the Debates:

Your Speaker is not empowered to make a judgment on the circumstances or the sincerity with which a duly elected member takes the oath of allegiance. The significance of the oath to each member is a matter of conscience and so it must remain.

[*English*]

All members of this House are honourable members and the Chair expects that they act accordingly, in words and in deed.

In the same ruling cited from November 1, 1990, Speaker Fraser reminded the House, at the same page of Debates, that “only the House can examine the conduct of its Members and only the House can take action if it decides action is required”.

[*Translation*]

It is therefore the House itself that has authority over its members. It is for the House, not the Chair, to pass judgment on their conduct. That said, some matters should be approached with a great deal of caution. We may have here a convincing example of such an issue, on both sides.

I thank members for their attention.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED MISLEADING OF HOUSE BY MINISTER OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on October 21, 2022, by the House leader of the official opposition concerning allegedly misleading statements made by the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister for Emergency Preparedness.

In his intervention, the member referenced the minister's answers to questions in the House earlier this year in which he stated that the government did not interfere with operational decisions of the RCMP. These remarks were made in parallel to the investigation of the April 2020 Nova Scotia mass shooting. He contended that a recording of a conference call between the commissioner of the RCMP and other high ranking officials, submitted as evidence at the Mass Casualty Commission, demonstrated the minister knowingly misled the House.

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader countered that it was the tradition of the House to take members at their word and that the minister had consistently stated that there was no interference. He claimed that the allegations against the minister were conjecture and that the recordings did not contradict statements he had made.

Business of the House

[Translation]

In submitting his question of privilege to the House, the House leader of the official opposition correctly referenced the three criteria that need to be met when assessing a case of this nature. First, whether the statement was in fact misleading. Second, whether the minister knew the statements to be incorrect when they were made. Third, whether there was an intent to mislead the House.

● (1600)

[English]

At issue is a recorded conference call in which the commissioner of the RCMP appears to reference a promise made to the minister that a line regarding the types of firearms used in the April 2020 Nova Scotia tragedy would be included in prepared remarks to the media. The House leader of the official opposition maintained that the statement made by the minister in response to questions denying any interference in the investigation were, in fact, misleading.

[Translation]

The parliamentary secretary, for his part, argued that the minister confirmed that neither he nor his staff interfered in the investigation and that the commissioner has testified to this.

The House leader of the official opposition points to comments made by the commissioner on the recording in which she mentions the minister wanting to speak with her and that she knew about what. The parliamentary secretary's assertion was that the topic of discussion was never explicitly stated and is therefore, conjecture. It is his contention that no facts contradict the statements of the minister or the commissioner.

[English]

The Chair has carefully reviewed the arguments presented and the relevant precedents. The House leader of the official opposition referred to the ruling by Speaker Jerome from December 6, 1978. In that ruling, the Chair found that a prima facie contempt of the House existed because an official explicitly stated that the minister was deliberately misled. In that instance, the admission was unequivocal, leaving no room for doubt. He stated at page 1857 of the Debates:

I can interpret that testimony in no other way than meaning that a deliberate attempt was made to obstruct the member in the performance of his duties and, consequently, to obstruct the House itself.

[Translation]

In the present case, the matter is not as clear. To the House leader of the official opposition, the minister's statements were knowingly incorrect and made with the intent to mislead the House. The minister, for his part, has repeatedly maintained that there was no interference and that his replies were based on statements made by the commissioner herself.

[English]

As members know, it is a tradition of the House that members be taken at their word. It would appear to the Chair that there is a dispute as to the facts. Indeed, as noted by a previous Speaker in a ruling on a similar matter made October 30, 2013, at page 596 of the Debates, "many of my predecessors in the chair have reminded the

House that in most instances, claims related to disputed facts are not grounds for prima facie findings of privilege."

[Translation]

In that same ruling, we can find at page 597 of the Debates:

...that the Chair is bound by very narrow parameters in situations such as this one.

[English]

Previous precedents make it clear that the threshold, when considering these situations, is high. In the view of the Chair, this threshold has not been met and, accordingly, I do not find there to be a prima facie question of privilege.

I thank the members for their attention.

* * *

● (1605)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the time of the week we have all been waiting for. I would like to ask the government House leader if he can inform the House of what we might expect.

Given some of the conversations around this place over the last few days responding to the deficit-induced inflation crisis that is hurting Canadians so much, I would like to signal to him that he could introduce legislation to cancel the government's plan to triple the carbon tax, or could introduce legislation to adopt a "pay as you go" system so that any new dollar of government spending is accompanied by a dollar of savings. If he were to bring forward either of those two ideas in the form of legislation, I can assure him that the official opposition would fast-track that legislation so it could be enacted as quickly as possible.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to stand on a Thursday and answer the Thursday question.

To my hon. colleague across, perhaps he is not aware or perhaps he has not had the opportunity to peruse headlines from around the world, but inflation is in fact a global phenomenon. I might also note that inflation is actually much higher in the U.S., the U.K. and the eurozone. What we need to do is vote for measures. I was disappointed that the Conservatives did not support the legislation we had today, Bill C-31. They had an opportunity to support families with dental care and to support housing.

I do not think it will come as a surprise to the member opposite that we will under no circumstances abandon the cause of climate change. We will under no circumstances stop the work we are doing to put a price on pollution and give eight out of 10 families more money back than they pay for that price on pollution.

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In terms of the matters that are immediately before the House, although I do encourage the member opposite to continue forwarding his ideas and look forward to those conversations, this afternoon we will complete third reading debate of Bill C-31 with respect to dental care—

Hon. Andrew Scheer: So you're saying there's a chance.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, there is always a chance. I hear the member opposite saying there is a chance. Although we have many and great differences, there is always hope for us, and I look forward to that hope.

I am very pleased to say that this afternoon, we are going to complete third reading debate of Bill C-31 with respect to dental care and rental housing. Tomorrow, we will finish second reading debate of Bill C-9 concerning the Judges Act. On Monday, we will continue to the fifth day of the second reading debate for Bill S-5, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Tuesday, as members will be happy to note, is an allotted day. On Wednesday, we will commence debate on Bill S-4, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Identification of Criminals Act (COVID-19 response and other measures). On Thursday, we will call Bill C-20, the public complaints and review commission act. For next Friday, our plan is to start second reading debate of Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act, 2022.

I would also like to inform the House that next Wednesday during Routine Proceedings, under ministerial statements, the Minister of Veterans Affairs will be pleased to deliver a statement for Remembrance Day.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 39 minutes.

* * *

[*English*]

COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 2.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, October 18, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Bill C-31 at the third reading stage.

Hon. Patty Hajdu (for the Minister of Health) moved that Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, here we are on the third and final reading of Bill C-31. We just went through a voting process, and I suspect that most Canadians would likely be somewhat disappointed in the Conservatives and the Bloc for voting against Bill C-31 at report stage concurrence motion. It is concerning given the very context in which we are having this debate.

The members opposite talk about the issue of inflation and how we can help Canadians. This is legislation that will put money in the pockets of Canadians in all regions of our country in a very real and tangible way.

I have had the opportunity to listen to the debate for a number of hours, whether during second reading or earlier today at report stage. I can tell members that I believe that the arguments being presented by the Bloc and Conservative parties would disappoint a majority of Canadians. I think that both the opposition parties are not reflecting what the majority of Canadians want to see, especially if we factor in the issue of inflation.

For the last number of days, the Conservatives have talked about inflation, saying it is so bad in Canada that we need to do something. When it comes to actually taking action, they do not support the government in doing that. I hope to address two or three points in my speech.

The first is with respect to a realization of what is happening around the world. I made reference to this earlier. Inflation is taking place around the world. Canada, as the government House leader just mentioned, is really not doing that bad with respect to our inflation rate compared to countries such as the United States, England and many in the European Union. That does not mean we should not be taking action to support Canadians.

Bill C-31 is one of those pieces of legislation with budgetary actions that are there to support Canadians in every region of our country. However, we find that, as much as the Conservatives like to talk about dealing with inflation, when it comes to standing up for Canadians by voting in favour of measures that would assist them, they vote against them. Although, in fairness, that is not completely true.

After all, we did have the doubling of the GST tax credit, which I referenced earlier today, that is putting money in the pockets of 11 million Canadians. Imagine that. There are 11 million Canadians who are getting a doubling of the GST rebate. The initial response from the Conservatives in particular was to vote against that legislation. In time, they saw the light. They saw that it was putting money in the pockets of Canadians and they reversed their position. Good for them. However, we are not seeing that with respect to Bill C-31.

Bill C-31 establishes two measures. One will put more money in the pockets of people and the other will provide a child dental care program that will prevent children from having to go to the hospital.

• (1610)

Let me expand on both of those points. If we take a look at the issue of child dental work, in virtually every province, we will find children going to hospitals because they were not able to get necessary dental work. We know that for a fact, that our hospitals are used as a last resort because of the lack of dental work being done on children.

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When we stop to think about it, we have legislation that would be telling moms, dads, grandparents, guardians and others that, if there is a child under the age of 12, no matter where that child lives in Canada, and I will concede that some provinces do have better dental services than others, but we are not discriminating, based on income level their guardian, they will be provided with financial assistance in getting that dental work done.

It is ultimately a positive step forward toward a true national dental care program. I believe that, if we were to canvass, most of our constituents would see that as a positive thing. Why is there opposition to it? Not only does it provide a high-quality program of benefits, but it also enables those individuals to get that money to do that dental work, especially at a time when people are concerned about buying their groceries, so they do not have to necessarily make the decision of whether one's seven-year-old child will have extra groceries or if they should be getting that dental work done.

There are many households that are having to experience making that decision. The Conservatives, and the Bloc, apparently, based on the last vote, say that it is not their problem. It is not the problem of the opposition party. They say that we do not need to provide this type of service.

I would argue that the legislation before us goes a long way in ensuring that good decisions are, in fact, being made on behalf of the children in Canada, that every child, no matter what region they live in and no matter what province or territory that they live in, if they meet the criteria, will be, in fact, able to be assisted in getting that dental work.

The Bloc even goes further. If it were up to the Bloc, there would be no assistance whatsoever, because often the Bloc looks at Ottawa as nothing more than an ATM. It does not realize that, whether we are looking to Quebec, Manitoba or either one of our three coasts, we will find that the people of Canada understand and value the national government playing a role in health care. In fact, we have legislation called the Canada Health Act to ensure that we continue to play that critical role.

During the pandemic, when we had serious issues with long-term care, or when we have had issues dealing with mental health, no one should be surprised when the Government of Canada steps up and provides support, both directly and indirectly.

The bottom line is that, from the separatist point of view, the separatists do not want to have these national programs. I totally disagree with that. I respect where they are coming from, even though I absolutely, totally disagree.

● (1615)

The Conservatives, on the other hand, seem to not want to recognize what Canadians have recognized for years, which is that the national government does have a role to play in health care. When we look at the issue of dental health care, that also matters. It is not crossing provincial jurisdiction.

The best way we are going to be able to move forward with a true national program is when we can get all the different stakeholders onside. In the interim, we are establishing a national benefits program. This year it will deal with children, and next year it

will deal with seniors and people with disabilities. I would think that the Conservative Party would understand that.

We have been there recognizing the importance of health care because we know how important health care is to Canadians. That is why we have the health care accords with all the provinces. That is why we have historical amounts of money going to the provinces in the form of health transfers, not to mention the hundreds of millions of dollars put toward mental health.

Whether it is on a motion from the member for Avalon on long-term health care or other needs, Liberal members of Parliament reflect the interests of their constituents when they come to Ottawa. That is what we see. We do not see that coming from the Conservatives, and that is quite unfortunate. That is one of the things the Conservative Party and the Bloc are voting against.

The other thing they are voting against is the issue of rental support. We will have 1.8 million people who would be able to take advantage of having money in their pockets through this particular aspect of the legislation. Individuals who are having a difficult time will be able to make rental payments.

I would argue that we are talking about hundreds into thousands of constituents, depending on the riding. Let there be no doubt that, every riding in this country will access that particular program. That is in the neighbourhood of up to \$500. When the Conservative Party talks about inflation and asks what we are doing regarding inflation and how are we helping Canadians, this is helping Canadians in a very real and direct way.

Here is the difference: The Conservatives like to talk about inflation, put a Conservative spin on inflation to try to give the impression that Canada stands alone, or that maybe we are the ones who dictate to the world there will be inflation. They have all sorts of misinformation.

The Conservatives say the government should do things, but when we are doing these things, when we recognize where the inflation is around the world and that Canada is doing well, as I indicated at the beginning, it is not good enough.

If we talk to Liberal members of Parliament, at the very least, and other members, we find that our constituents are having a difficult time when they go to the grocery store. They want to buy some groceries, and they see the price increases taking place. We understand that when someone is celebrating a birthday, people want to go to a store to buy them a birthday gift, but the costs are going up.

● (1620)

People need to understand and appreciate the fact that holiday seasons are coming up. Many of the measures we are taking are happening in the short term to help Canadians where we can to provide more money in their pockets.

In Question Period today the Conservatives were mocking the CERB program. The program cost billions of dollars, but it was there to support Canadians at a time when the government needed to be there. When economies were shutting down in certain areas and people were not able to go to work, the Government of Canada had their backs. We provided biweekly cheques. It was a significant investment because we wanted to be there for Canadians and we were in a very tangible way.

Today the Conservatives criticize the billions that we spent in regard to getting Canadians through the pandemic. At the time when Canadians were looking for support, we were there and we continue to be there. The Conservatives were balking and now they are criticizing us for having borrowed money back then. They are saying that we have inflation because we borrowed that money. The Conservatives need to wake up to the reality. It is either they are supporting the people of Canada or they are not.

It seems to me that the Conservatives supported the many measures at the time of the pandemic when we were borrowing the money. However, today, they are criticizing us for borrowing the money. They are also saying that the inflation rate we have today is because we borrowed the money to support Canadians. I would point out that our inflation rate is lower than the inflation rates in the United States, England and many of the countries in the European Union.

The Conservatives are not consistent with their policy advice. We all remember that the current leader of the Conservative Party, less than a year ago, told people that the way to fight inflation, in part, was to invest in cryptocurrency. He advised Canadians to use their hard-earned money to invest in cryptocurrency. Those who followed that advice would have lost substantially, 30%-plus.

The Conservatives talk about triple, triple, triple. I think they got the idea from Tim Hortons' double double. Triple, triple, triple; how misleading is that? Eighty per cent of the constituents in Winnipeg North receive more money from the price on pollution than they actually pay into it. That is according to the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer. That is not the Liberal Party saying that. It is actually increasing. They try to give the false impression on that issue, and it is not the first time.

The Conservatives are trying to develop those bumper stickers that they believe they can sell to Canadians, whether it is factual or not. More often than not, it is not factual.

• (1625)

I am disappointed that the Conservatives voted against Bill C-31. They have one last chance, which will happen sometime in the next six or seven hours. I hope that they will reconsider the manner in which they are voting on this bill, support their constituents and vote in favour of this legislation.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, a very famous songwriter said, "It may be the devil or it may be the Lord, but you're gonna have to serve somebody."

The member for Winnipeg North has stood twice today to defend this bill. I do not know if his colleagues are willing to defend it or not. I heard him mention what Canadians want. I seem to recall a

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promise of 7,500 health care professionals for rural Canadians. That was a priority just over a year ago, but now the Liberal government seems to have lost its way. It is more concerned with propping up the costly coalition.

Where are the 7,500 health care professionals for rural Canada? Are they still a priority, or has the priority shifted to propping up the coalition?

• (1630)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, unlike the Conservative Party, members of the Liberal caucus understand how important health care is to Canadians. We realize that Canada's national government has a role to play. Talking about health care professionals, we are genuinely concerned and care about the need to have more doctors in our communities and to recognize some of the credentials that are not necessarily being recognized but could be. We are encouraging that.

Whether it is a budgetary measure from the Minister of Finance or it is an issue of credentials by the Minister of Immigration, both of those are active, ongoing files. We are trying to encourage and support provinces and other stakeholders to recognize the skill sets that are there today and to provide financial support to ensure that we can get more doctors and nurses.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I absolutely must comment on something I heard from my colleague. Apparently, the Bloc Québécois considers Ottawa to be an ATM.

I have a simple question. Who puts the cash in this ATM? We do. It is our money. If my colleague really thinks that Quebec is just asking for money and not contributing any, why is it that this bill gives us only 13% of the money, when we send over 18% of our money to Ottawa? Some 18% of the cash in the ATM is ours, and that does not include the Quebec abatement, nor does it include the money that we ourselves pay in Quebec for social services that are provided by the provincial government.

Why are we getting only 13% of the money, when we send 18% to Ottawa?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, this is where I differ with the member from the Bloc. I believe whether someone, let us say a 10-year-old child, lives in Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton, Halifax or Toronto, it would be nice to feel comfortable in knowing they are getting a compatible service. This is where a national government can play an important role.

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In regard to the breakdown of budgets, the federal government receives huge amounts of revenue from a wide spectrum of resources. At the end of the day, that revenue is distributed throughout Canada. I do believe that whether it is Manitoba, Quebec or other provinces, we are all getting a fair share of the entire pie. I am not going to be selective on it, but I do believe—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, when I go door to door, people ask why they should vote. There is a lot of cynicism out there and people watch what they sometimes think is a gong show in Parliament. When we ask them what they need, we hear time and time again that people cannot afford to get their teeth fixed. There are seniors with serious teeth problems and young families that are not able to look after their children's teeth.

We made a promise that if we went back to this Parliament, we would get this done. Tonight, we are on the verge of the biggest new investment in federal health care since Tommy Douglas. This is extraordinary. This is actually about putting people first and putting the political antics to the back row, which is probably where the Conservatives belong because they are continuing with these antics.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague how significant he thinks it is that we can show people we can actually deliver something that will make a difference in their lives and the lives of their children.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, this is an excellent example where I could amplify what the member has so rightfully put on the record.

In the last federal election, it was a minority government. That means that for the Liberal Party to be able to get things through, such as Bill C-31, we need to have a partner. We need to have another opposition party to support us. As opposed to being strictly nothing but opposition and oppose everything, the NDP has identified goals on which it can work with the government and ultimately see things get through. Let there be no doubt that if it were not for the government, the Liberal Party, and the NDP, we would not be able to get Bill C-31 through.

That is delivering for Canadians. It is respecting what Canadians wanted in the last federal election, which is for parties to start working together to do things for Canadians. That is exactly what this bill would do.

• (1635)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's discussion here today. I always learn something.

I am concerned. In Quebec, it is a bit different. We already have a dental care program. My constituents would be concerned about whether anything would be taken away from that dental care program. Would anything be taken away from the Canada child benefit? It is a tremendous investment in families in my riding. In being delivered to my constituents, is this program something that would have improvements in the future?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is an excellent question. For the member, in absolutely no way would this take away anything from the constituents whom she represents. The legislation would complement what is taking place in the province of Quebec. That is important to recognize. The second component of the legislation is the rental subsidy. I am sure the member is going to share with her constituents how this legislation overall would make a positive difference.

I appreciate the hard advocacy of the member for her constituents.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of concerns with this. One is that with the exception of a few of our Liberal colleagues who are here, this member of Parliament, our hon. colleague, has gotten up three times on this topic: triple, triple, triple.

I sit on the health committee and the concern I have is that we literally were given two hours to study a bill worth \$10 billion. There were two hours for parliamentarians to study a bill worth \$10 billion. I do not discount that Canadians are in need of some help because of the costly government. However, the other side likes to talk about working collaboratively. Those members have not worked collaboratively with the opposition. They have actually rammed this through. If anything, all 338 members of Parliament have been sent here to be the voices of Canadians.

Why does my hon. colleague feel it is important to ram a bill through that is worth \$10 billion and will be on the backs of Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the bill is a very costly bill, but we must realize that the money we are talking about is going into the pockets of Canadians. That is why it is a costly bill.

For the most part, the reason the committee was somewhat limited is that the Conservative Party did not want to give any indication in terms of passing the bill out of committee well before it was ultimately passed. If the Conservatives wanted to have more time for it in committee, then why did they not negotiate or at least allow Bill C-31 to pass second reading at an earlier time so there would have been more time for it to be debated in committee? They cannot have it both ways.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, a child in Quebec will receive about half of what a child outside Quebec will receive. There is considerable inequity. Why?

It is because we already pay for dental care in Quebec. Quebec taxpayers already pay once for children's dental care and they are going to pay a second time for the federal program, even though Quebec will only receive half the money handed out elsewhere. That is really inequitable.

We could have fixed this when this bill was being studied in committee. The government just bulldozed it through by imposing a super closure motion.

We could also have fixed the rental assistance component. Why is the government refusing to accommodate Quebec?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there are some people who would like to sabotage the bill. I argue that there are thousands of people who move interprovincially every year. A child in Quebec today could be a child in Manitoba tomorrow, or vice versa. I would like a program to be there for all children in Canada, no matter where they live. That is what this legislation would do.

• (1640)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, The Economy; the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Calgary Centre, The Economy.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today to represent the constituents of Regina—Qu'Appelle in opposition to the bill that would add more inflationary fuel to the fire.

I caught the last few minutes of my hon. colleague's speech, the Liberal member for Winnipeg North, and I am astounded at how much he can get wrong in just a short 20-minute period of time. However, I give him full marks for efficiency. He crammed a lot of errors and misinformation into one 20-minute speech. I probably do not have enough time to address all of them in my speech because of the sheer volume of inaccuracies in his speech.

I will start by helping the hon. member understand what caused inflation, because that is what this bill is supposed to be about. It is supposed to help address the suffering of families who are experiencing the sticker shock every time they go into a grocery store, a hardware store or any other store they might have to buy goods or obtain services from. Prices they have been used to over the past few years are now much higher. We know the Prime Minister does not think about monetary policy. I am not sure if anybody else in the caucus does that the member leads, but I will help him understand what causes inflation.

The inflation that Canadians are suffering from is directly linked to the massive Liberal deficits that the government chose to run before the pandemic even started. Why do I say that? That is what the Bank of Canada admitted. The Bank of Canada, which is in charge of Canada's money supply, has acknowledged that it was the money creation that it embarked upon in March of 2020, just as the current government was racking up record-high deficits, the biggest deficits Canadians have ever seen. It was on its way to adding more to the national debt than every single other prime minister combined. The government added \$500 billion to the national debt.

When the government spends more than it takes in, it has to borrow. It has to find someone who has money to lend to it. That is normally carried out during normal economic times by the bond market. Large investors buy government treasury bonds that are basically IOUs that the government writes after borrowing money from someone who has it and spending it with the promise to pay it back. It is that promise to pay it back with interest that is costing

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the Bank of Canada money now. As a little aside, the Bank of Canada is now actually losing money for the first time in Canadian history. This has never happened before. However, I will get back to that in a moment.

The government turned to the Bank of Canada and started floating these IOUs, these government bonds, and the Bank of Canada said it would buy the bonds the government was issuing with these massive deficits. The problem is that the Bank of Canada did not have anybody else's money. The Bank of Canada did not have lots of deposits from Canadians or deposits on account from financial institutions that it could use. When I say it did not have deposits, I mean it did not have any of its own money on deposit. It did not have some vaults of cash that it could buy those government bonds with.

What did it do? It had to create the money. It created that money right out of thin air. It exchanged the bonds that other institutions had bought, large profitable banks like the big five banks in Canada and other types of large financial institutions that have accounts with Canada's central bank. They bought the bonds from the federal government and sold them to the Bank of Canada in exchange for brand new money that had never existed before. With little ones and zeros and keyboard strokes, the Bank of Canada just dumped cash into those big banks and large financial institutions and then took those bonds in exchange. That is how the Canadian economy was flooded with over \$400 billion of brand new money.

We have seen the effects of that, the Liberal government's trickle-down economics, where it pumped hundreds of billions of dollars into the most wealthy and most profitable corporations in Canada: the big banks. It pushed that money through that system. The big winners, when it comes to this type of arrangement, is whoever gets the money first as there is a bit of a lag between rising prices and money creation, because the market has not yet learned that there is a whole bunch of new money chasing the same number of goods. The prices in the grocery store have not yet, at this point, started to go up, and the prices for commodities have not yet, at this point, started to go up.

• (1645)

Those large financial institutions, those massively profitable banks, got to buy up all these assets. They got to push that money through on everything from commodities to real estate to anything else we can imagine, while the prices were still low. They got the new money first, bought as much as they could, and that is when the prices started to rise.

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By the time that new money hits Canadians' pockets, it is already too late. The prices at the grocery store have already skyrocketed. We have seen food inflation go over 8% for a couple of months now. The average inflation index, the CPI, has been hovering around 7% for several months now. By the time Canadians start to get the new money the government has created, the prices have already gone up, and that is when those big banks and financial institutions can sell. They make those massive profits on what they can buy low with newly created money and sell high after the inflationary effects are taken into account. That is why we saw record profits during and after the pandemic by Canada's largest banks.

This is the result of the Prime Minister's economic policy, allowing the richest and most profitable corporations in Canada to make even more money, while Canadians subsidize that profit through higher prices in the grocery store aisles. That is why these inflationary deficits are so devastating, and that is why Conservatives are opposed to new measures that force the government to borrow more money to pay for new spending. It is a little like a superficial treatment to a problem.

We can all think of examples of what might look like a course of action that would help with a problem but that actually makes the problem worse. We might have experienced in our lives and have seen public service videos about fire safety where they say to never pour water on a grease fire. However, we can imagine a young child perhaps or someone who was never educated along the lines of fire safety seeing a fire, and we are all taught from a very young age that water beats fire. We put out fires with water, and we always keep a bucket of water if we are having a campfire and things like that. We all understand that. We see pictures of firefighters putting out fires with big hoses of water.

We can imagine someone about to dump water on a grease fire, thinking that they are helping, but we all know what will actually happen. We have to resist the temptation to apply a superficial antidote to a problem. We all know on this side of the House that instead of pouring water on that fire, we have to treat it in other ways. We have to put a lid on that fire and remove it from the heating element. There are others ways to tackle that fire rather than making it worse.

A thirsty person might look at an ocean shore and think, "Boy, I'm so thirsty, I'm going to go down and take a nice long drink of water." As Homer Simpson taught us, "Water, water everywhere, so let's all have a drink," but that is not actually how the poem goes. It is "Water, water, every where, nor any drop to drink," because ocean water makes thirst worse. However, that is what we are seeing with this Liberal government bill.

The member for Winnipeg North gave a speech pretending and trying to convince Canadians that this would help, that while prices are going up in many aspects of their lives, the government is coming along with a way to reduce some costs for them. Where are they going to get the money for that? They are going to have to borrow more money to pay for that, so any benefit that any Canadian might hope to receive under the government's plan that we are debating today will evaporate because of the effects of this new government plan.

In other words, the government is trying to convince us that a government program will help alleviate the problems caused by government programs, and that is where Conservatives come along because we take a more comprehensive look at issues.

The Liberals and their allies in the costly coalition, the NDP who are pushing all this new spending and working hand-in-hand with the government to drive up the costs of living with higher spending and more borrowing to pay for it, is where this is coming from. That costly coalition's approach is always very superficial. We can make the comparison to candy before supper. There is a problem, so here is a simplistic solution: We are just going to have a new government program to dole out more money.

● (1650)

Conservatives understand that we have to treat the fundamental issues that caused it first. We would be doing Canadians a far greater service, including low-income Canadians who are being hit hardest by inflation, if we came to this place every day trying to reduce the cost of government, looking for ways to reduce spending and cutting out inefficiencies, like the half a billion dollars the government tried to give to its friends at the WE organization or the \$54 million for the arrive scam app that did not work, was not needed and could have been designed and programmed in a weekend for a fraction of the \$54 million taxpayers had to pay for it. The Prime Minister might have looked at ways to visit London where he did not have to charge \$6,000 a night for a single room. Those would be the types of things.

We could all come together and every member of Parliament could go back to their offices tonight and scroll through the public accounts, which were just tabled this morning. We could all put our collective heads together to look for ways we could eliminate wasteful spending and bring down that cost of government, so that the government could pay back those IOUs, retire those bonds and take that brand new created money that is floating in the system out of the system to return it back to normal, where that money is backed up by real economic activity and not just ones and zeroes on the computer terminals at the Bank of Canada.

If we did that, we would put a lot more purchasing power back in the hands of Canadians who have worked so hard to earn it. That is why they call inflation the hidden tax, the most insidious tax of all. When the government raises a tax rate, it has to do it in the House for all to see. It has to bring forward a motion or a bill to raise those taxes, opposition parties hold it to account and every Canadian has an elected representative who can vote yes or no, based on that proposal.

However, when the government causes inflation through the Bank of Canada by forcing the bank to purchase those government bonds, there is no vote in the House, there is no debate and there is no accountability. Not any one of us got to read the proposal, make a decision and vote based on our constituents, and our constituents cannot hold us to account because none of that ever took place. It just happens. It happens because those powerful unaccountable officials just made a decision one day, and that is why Conservatives are opposed to this legislation, knowing it would make the problem worse.

There are other ways the government could tackle the cost of living crisis. This opposition has proposed a very concrete proposal, which we should be debating today instead of a bill that would add more borrowing costs on the government and, therefore, lead to even worse inflation.

We are about to head into the winter months, and many Canadians are already getting a taste of what those home heating costs are going to look like over the next few months. I want to take a few moments right now to inform members that the higher costs that Canadians are about to get hit with, and some have already started to experience, are not some accidental outcomes from government policies. These are not unintended consequences. It is not like the government was trying to do something and accidentally caused home energy costs to rise.

This is a feature of the NDP and Liberal coalition's plan to make home heating costs more expensive. They want Canadians to pay more for filling up their tanks and for heating their homes. Members do not have to take my word for it. They have admitted it. They have built a fake environmental policy around the idea of making Canadians pay more for fuelling their cars, for purchasing goods that have to be transported to Canada and for the crime of heating their homes in the winter.

That is what they want. They want Canadians to feel pain when it comes to those types of goods. They admit it. It is in the rationale for the carbon tax. Here is the thing: The carbon tax is not working. Canadians are getting all of the pain and none of the environmental gain. The government has not hit a single target it has set for itself. The people who are concerned about climate change the most should be opposed to the carbon tax the most, because the government has gone all in on a failed policy that, for seven years now, has been proven not to work.

That is why the official opposition and Conservative members of Parliament have been working so hard, since this fall sitting began, to convince the government to do no further harm when it comes to borrowing and spending and driving up inflation, to control some of the things it can control and to cancel the planned tax hikes.

● (1655)

The government's plan is to triple the carbon tax. The member for Winnipeg North might like to make jokes about the Tim Hortons double double, but there is a reason we are highlighting it and a reason we want Canadians to understand. It is because it is already hard enough to make ends meet for the vast majority of Canadians. We are hearing really shocking stats. Canada is a G7 developed country, and 1.5 million people visited a food bank last month. That is unbelievable.

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It is a record high. It has gone up 15%. There have been 15% more visits to food banks last month than the month before. It is Canadians who are working, who have two jobs in some cases, and those in double-income households. Because they have to pay more for their mortgage as interest rates go up and costs are higher at the grocery store, they now have to turn to charity at food banks just to be able to feed their children.

What else is very alarming is that food banks are running out too, because Canadians have fewer goods to donate to the food banks. That is the thing about Liberal-NDP coalition economic policies. They lead to scarcity.

When Conservatives are in government, we lower the cost of government. We leave more money in the economy and more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadians, and that does more good for low-income Canadians, because there are more jobs to fill and there is more opportunity. When Canadians have more at the end of the month, they can make decisions to be charitable. They can fill up those shelves at the food banks so that the less fortunate have more choice, more options and more support when they need it.

NDP and Liberal policies that drive up the cost of fuel, home heating and other essentials and chase away jobs and investment mean there is less at the end of the month for Canadian families to donate to charities, so those families who do need it have less.

That is the constant and unblemished record of failure of the government and its failed policies. That is why Conservatives are fighting this instead of voting in favour of a bill that would just add to the cost of government, leaving Canadians with a situation in which the government has to go out and borrow more, paying higher interest rates.

I mentioned at the beginning of my speech how the Bank of Canada is losing money for the first time in Canadian history. This is the perverse outcome of the bond purchase program the Bank of Canada initiated to help pay for the government deficits. When it bought the bonds, the Bank of Canada bought them at very low rates. The Bank of Canada had lowered its overnight rates as low as 50 basis points; it was down to 0.5%. The interest the government had to pay on the bonds the Bank of Canada holds was at 0.5%.

Let us remember that the way it bought those bonds was by putting large deposits into the bank accounts of the large financial institutions. For example, TD Bank and CIBC have accounts at the Bank of Canada, and there are deposits in those accounts for the bonds the bank sold to the Bank of Canada. As interest rates rise, the Bank of Canada has to pay more interest to those large financial institutions than the government pays the Bank of Canada in interest. That is unbelievable.

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This is a direct transfer of wealth: Hard-working taxpayers pay money to the government; the government then turns around and pays the Bank of Canada interest, and the Bank of Canada does not have enough, so it is going to lose money. I believe it has indicated that it expects to lose about \$4 billion this year. That is from the bank's website. If the member for Winnipeg North thinks I should not believe everything I read on the bank's website, he should maybe call his friend, Tiff Macklem, and ask him to be a little more accurate.

The question for the government is, is it going to have to bail out the Bank of Canada with taxpayers' money? After taking taxpayers' money to pay interest on the bonds it sold, it will now have to underwrite the difference that the Bank is paying out to other large banks. If we follow the logic here, basically the government is going to have to underwrite the deficits that the Bank of Canada is racking up due to its own deficit spending. It is a triple insult to Canadians, when we look at all the interest that is being paid.

● (1700)

I will close by urging my colleagues on all sides of the House to stop digging when they are in a hole and to not pour water on that grease fire. Let us have no more inflationary spending that will make the problem even worse.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are so many questions I would love to be able to ask the opposition House leader, but, due to time limitations, let me take advantage of his economic analysis and ask him to reflect on countries like the United States and England and many European countries, where the inflation rate is higher than it is here in Canada.

Would he draw the same sorts of conclusions, given that some in the western world have taken the ideas from Canada and others? Why do they have the inflation rates they have? Did they have bad policies too?

Why do they have the inflation rate there? Perhaps he could use his same principled economic analysis system.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I do not know if the member for Winnipeg North's mother ever used the expression, "Just because someone's friends go jump off a bridge does not mean they should too."

It is true. There are other countries that have inflation. They followed the same failed policies the government did. There are lots of times in human history when there seem to be a lot of people making the same mistakes. That does not make it right. To the Canadian who is going through the grocery store aisle and buying things we make here in Canada at inflated prices, it is no comfort to know that other countries are paying higher prices too.

Other countries made the same mistakes. They printed money. They have inflation. Some countries did not print money to pay for their spending. Some countries, like Switzerland, maintained fiscal discipline, and that is why they are not experiencing inflation. That is the reason other countries—

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, we had a good, constructive opposition day this week. Throughout the day, both Liberal and Conservative members told us that there was no time to talk about such important issues in the House.

I would like to ask the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle if he believes that the fact that the Liberals and the NDP tripled the number of closure motions in the House leaves us more time to debate such important issues as the monarchy.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I enjoy debating philosophical aspects.

[*Translation*]

I really enjoy esoteric philosophy-based discussions. I studied political science, and it is always interesting to talk about the best way to build a government and have a debate, perhaps over a glass of wine after dinner. However, I am sure that Canadians are more concerned about what their money can buy than they are about whose face is on it.

I basically agree with the member about government motions. We have had a few motions and bills that have nothing to do with the cost of living crisis.

I hope the government will present real solutions.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle. I did not hear, in his speech, any mention of dental care.

I imagine this is because he does not, in fact, support the idea of expanding universal health care to include care for people's teeth. I appreciate an honest disagreement as much as the next guy.

My question is around consistency. Through much of his remarks, he talked about his view that the government should not be providing directed financial relief to the people hardest hit by this crisis, because, in his view, it is inflationary.

Why, then, did he vote for Bill C-30, given that the measures in Bill C-30 are very similar to the relief measures in Bill C-31? The money all comes from the same place. I think people appreciate consistency more than anything. Perhaps he could explain.

● (1705)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I am happy to do that. There is a big difference between lowering the tax burden on Canadians and new spending. It is as simple as that.

I just want to take issue with one of the major principles with the far left these days and this idea that the government has a big pile of cash and all we are really doing is fighting over how to spend it.

The government does not have a dollar that it does not first take out of the economy, that it does not first take out of someone's pocket.

Is the hon. member comfortable saddling Canadians with more financial burdens and higher costs of government? That cost, the cost for this program, has to be paid for by taxpayers. It adds to the inflation crisis, because the government has to first borrow to pay for it.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle well, and I was in this place and certainly a close watcher of the Harper administration for years. I would like to put to the member that if Stephen Harper had been prime minister at the beginning of the COVID outbreak, there is no doubt in my mind that he would have done exactly the same things the Liberal government did. That is because every economy and central bank throughout the G20 followed the same prescription. It was dictated to us through the International Monetary Fund. I urge the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle to check the June 17, 2020 report of the IMF. The central banks throughout the G20 followed all the same prescriptions: low interest rates and fiscal quantitative easing. Any member of the public can check it out.

The reasons for Switzerland's not having high inflation have nothing to do with what the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle said. The reasons have a lot to do with the fact that before the war in Ukraine the cost of living in Switzerland was already 51% higher than in Germany, because it has a very regulated economy. It has renewable energy locked in and high electricity prices.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, unfortunately I will not have enough time to point out all the errors that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands just made in her statement.

I have here the “Economic and Fiscal Update 2021: Issues for Parliamentarians”, from the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. While there is no doubt that a Conservative government would have found ways to support Canadians through an unprecedented pandemic, there are lots of ways that governments can do it without running the printing presses at the central bank.

I just want to read a very important stat from the report: “[S]ince the start of the pandemic, the Government has spent, or has planned to spend, \$541.9 billion in new measures...of which [\$176 billion] is not part of the COVID-19 Response Plan.

That is the major point here. Yes, there was a pandemic. Yes, there were unprecedented actions that governments had to take. However, there were lots of things along the way that the government did not have to do. The Liberal government chose to use the pandemic to try to enrich its friends at the WE organization. It chose to use the pandemic to give contracts out to former Liberal MPs. It chose to use the pandemic to create—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, this bill is \$10 billion in new spending. There is a \$500 one-time payment in it. I was reading an article about mort-

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gage rates, and from October 2021 to May 2022 the average mortgage price per month went up \$800. I cannot even imagine how much it has gone up since then as interest rates have continued to go up. I am just wondering what my hon. colleague thinks prices would be like now.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, this is the devastating reality that many Canadians are waking up to in the coming weeks and months as mortgages come up for renewal. I have already heard from friends and relatives of mine who maybe had a 2% or a 2.25% interest rate four or five years ago and are now renewing at 6%, 7% or 8%. Many Canadians are going to be faced with the tragic, sad reality that they are going to have to just toss the keys back to the bank, because they will not be able to make those payments.

The Prime Minister erroneously said to Canadians that the government was going to go into debt so Canadians did not have to. This is how Canadians are paying for it. They are getting stuck with the bill. The Liberals got the party. Canadians are paying the bill, and the sticker shock on that bill is awful. It is one more reason we should come here with sleeves rolled up and pencils out to be finding new ways to lower the cost of government, rather than finding new ways to borrow money to spend.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle. Bill C-31 sets out a dental care program. That is part of health care, which, according to the Constitution, falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces.

The government chose to interfere in that jurisdiction rather than doing its job in its own jurisdictions. Meanwhile, in Quebec, we have a dental care program for kids that is almost the same as the one proposed here. However, the government fails to take Quebec's program into account in its bill. It is ramming its bill through by imposing gag orders. There is no harmonization with provincial jurisdictions. This centralizing government has no regard for jurisdiction and what exists elsewhere.

What does my hon. colleague think about that?

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that there are a lot of provincial programs and that this new program will increase the cost of government and interfere in areas under provincial jurisdiction.

However, it is ironic that this question would come from the Bloc Québécois, because the Bloc wants the government to increase the carbon tax, which is also an intrusion into—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Mirabel.

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Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would ask the consent of the House to share my time with the eminently honourable member for Joliette.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to share his time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, there are 338 members in the House. We were elected by people who went to the polls and asked us to work for them in a constructive manner to develop better public policies, better transfer programs, to improve their quality of life and the quality of services. I am utterly convinced that despite our different views on a number of things, the 338 people seated here today are here for the right reasons. That is why we need to work together.

When we develop public policies like the ones in Bill C-31, we have to work hard in a non-partisan way to deliver better programs, especially with an ambitious bill like this. This forces us to collaborate, reflect, draft several versions of the bill, amend it, consult people, experts, the communities and respect the voice of those who elected us. That too is part of our job.

That is the part of our job we were prevented from doing with the botched process surrounding Bill C-31, which was disrespectful of parliamentarians. This bill was concocted at the last minute in the middle of the summer because the leader of the NDP went on the news and said that their agreement might be off. Now we find ourselves stuck with Bill C-31. Truly, this bill seems like it was drafted on a napkin. When something is cobbled together at the last minute, the parliamentary process becomes even more important. The role of members of Parliament and the opposition parties, the experience and the expertise on both sides of the House become even more crucial in improving this bill, which is obviously more likely to be flawed than bills that have been introduced once, twice or three times in the House and that have already been examined in parliament.

How can we contribute to this work? Through hours of debate in the House and the work we do in committee. That takes time, planning and preparation. We can speed things up a little, but it takes energy, time and witnesses from society at large. We cannot do our work in a vacuum. We cannot do that. The people who elect us deserve better. We need numbers, like the ones we get from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. It takes time to introduce amendments, to consider those amendments, to study and debate them. Sometimes, amendments enable us to ensure nobody is excluded by these policies. That is definitely true of Bill C-31.

Then we come back to the House at report stage and third reading. The hours we spend debating bills to improve them are important. Anyone who truly believes in the parliamentary system and in our institutions sees the value in that.

I see the hon. member for Winnipeg North over there. He knows this better than most because he spends 23 hours a day debating in the House.

After doing that work, then at least we can be confident that the work was done. Obviously we are not all going to vote the same

way. Most of the time, we are not going to agree, but we will all have the sense that we did what we were supposed to and that we are voting on work that is as complete as it should be.

In this case, we did not skip one step, we did not skip two steps, we did not skip three steps. We skipped every step of the legislative process. Parliamentarians were fully prevented from doing their job. We were subjugated by the executive branch of government. In effect, parliamentarians were muzzled, both in committee and here in the House. It felt like we were being told that we had nothing to say, that we were not being constructive, when the government imposed not just closure, but super closure.

After muzzling the House, the government told us we had nothing more to say. Apparently we did have things to say, things that could have improved this bill. Members on this side of the House are just as competent as members across the way. We were told that the committee would sit on a Monday evening from 7 p.m. until midnight. If the work was not done at midnight, if there was a fire alarm or some such interruption, the amendments would no longer be negotiated and would no longer be discussed. Our work would go in the garbage, and the bill would be adopted as-is at report stage.

• (1715)

We were prevented from hearing from some witnesses. Oddly enough, we had originally agreed to have four hours of testimony. We had an in camera meeting two days later, and the witnesses were gone. We had only an hour and a half with two ministers at the same time. I must say, the ministers were ill prepared and visibly uncomfortable with the bill. The Minister of Health is an excellent economist of international renown. I could see in his eyes how uncomfortable he was with certain parts of the bill. It was palpable.

Thus, it was decided that witnesses would no longer appear and, in the end, we wound up with a bill that was not amended by the committee. What is worse, we were prevented from presenting amendments after the ministers appeared, even though we had already been prevented from hearing from witnesses. The whole amendment process was therefore short-circuited. We know that sometimes amendments are not adopted. We know that the government and the NDP, which joined forces—that is not an accusation; it is a fact—might not have adopted the amendments, but those amendments still deserved to be discussed.

This bill is therefore going to be rammed through today without any parliamentary scrutiny. As a relatively new parliamentarian, I am very disappointed by that. This is not just a closure motion. It is a super closure motion.

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I see members of the Standing Committee on Health here in the House. We are in the habit of working together, talking to each other and understanding each other. We do not agree on everything, but we are able to compromise. We know that we are capable of doing that. However, the government prevented us from doing so. I felt the discomfort on both sides of the House. I felt it from the Bloc Québécois and from the Conservatives. I also felt it from government members on Monday evening in committee because they were not being allowed to do their job.

Who pays for that? We know that voter turnout is dropping. People are becoming increasingly cynical about politics. People are less and less interested in it, and now we are showing those people that this is what the democratic process is like, that MPs serve no purpose, that there is no regard for their work. Then we wonder why the public has lost confidence in our institutions.

Who will pay because people were left out of Bill C-31? It will be the progressive parents and children in Quebec who decided to pay for certain services for those 10 and under, services that are also paid for by the federal program but that we will not be compensated for. Progressive parents in Quebec are therefore being penalized, and future generations are being jeopardized.

The Liberals and the NDP say that dental care is health care, and rightly so. It is part of overall health, but we are talking about the future of universal public health care. Essentially, the provinces are being told that if they develop these services and eventually integrate them into their health care system, the federal government will penalize them.

Who will pay for that? It will be the 86,000 people who do not qualify for the housing benefit because they live in low-rent housing or co-operatives, which are progressive housing construction models adopted by Quebec. With a small, two-line amendment, we could have included these people in the federal program, but the government refused. My colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert and I wrote again to the two ministers concerned, the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion and the Minister of Health. Since they love the Queen and the King, we implored them to use their royal prerogative to include those people. We received an acknowledgement of receipt, but that is about all.

Despite all the good intentions, how can we encourage strategic assistance for housing with a bill based on such a principle? How can we encourage the provinces to create permanent programs for housing construction when the federal government establishes programs that will penalize them for it later?

The government is basically saying that since some provinces have made an effort, it will take Canadian taxpayers' money and send it to the provinces that have not made that effort. That is the issue. Clearly, this is a flawed and unacceptable process.

The Bloc Québécois would have liked to do more to improve this bill, but as it stands, we will not be able to support it at second and third reading.

• (1720)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, through previous questioning it is clear that Bloc members support the principle of providing dental benefits to children under the age of 12. They are not objecting to that. It also appears to be clear that they are not against us making that a government expenditure. It seems to me that they should be voting in favour of the legislation, unless there is an alternative reason. The reason the member is putting forward is they need more time and then they will support the bill.

I wonder if the member can be clear as to why members of the Bloc do not support it. I suspect it is because they do not want Ottawa to play a role in this, which I believe would be to the detriment of kids throughout the country, as it should be available to all children.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, we are talking about the children of Quebec, so we must try to be non-partisan when it comes to this issue.

We did not have enough time to contribute and reason with the government about the right way to respect Quebec's programs. Simply put, Quebec already has a program that provides this care. It could be more generous. The provision of care is enshrined in the Constitution as a provincial jurisdiction.

I think there should have been a discussion so that we could enhance the work being done for children. Today, we are demeaning all the efforts that have been made not only by Quebec, but also by Nova Scotia, to build this care. Under the pretext of taking action for dental care, the government is in fact taking action against dental care.

It is obvious that we cannot support this principle.

[*English*]

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my Bloc colleague for really highlighting the hypocrisy coming out of the government when it comes to the different tools that it uses to limit debate in this House. We quite often hear when the Liberals limit debate at second reading that they will solve amendment challenges and get fixes done during committee work.

What is really concerning with this bill is they did not allow expert witnesses to testify at committee and provide their opinions so that we could develop the best bill possible and get the best legislation. I would like the member to expand on that a bit.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, I could understand why the government might want to use a procedure like closure, although maybe not the super closure motion, if there were a filibuster at least.

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The bill we are debating contains so many flaws. In a minority government, we could have worked with the opposition to improve it. This makes the closure motion doubly unacceptable. We are talking about 130,000 parents in Quebec who will not have access to the benefit. We are talking about 86,000 people who make less than \$20,000 or less than \$35,000 or so and who live in low-rent housing or in co-ops but who will not qualify.

Do these people deserve a closure motion? It is worth asking the question.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Bloc has claimed that our dental care program is discriminatory and unneeded in Quebec. This is demonstrably untrue. Every Quebec parent can apply for \$1,300 per child to fix their teeth, just like every other Canadian parent. The provincial Quebec plan only covers children under 10, is poorly funded and has inadequate coverage. The Quebec representative of the Canadian Dental Association has confirmed the poor quality of the Quebec program, supports the federal plan and explicitly opposes sending the federal money directly to the Quebec government.

Why is the Bloc putting politics over public health and opposing a plan that will help some 100,000 Quebec children who do not have the same dental care that Bloc members have?

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, during the Quebec election campaign, groups that have been calling for expanded dental coverage for years held a press conference the same day that Bill C-31 was released, which clearly has not changed. They basically said that the bill was all nonsense.

Quebec parents will be ineligible for much of the care, not all, but a large amount of care, because Quebec has already taken some steps. Now we are told that Quebec should get some help to pay for those efforts. The ministers keep telling us that all parents will be eligible and so on. The problem is the word “eligible”. Their definition of “eligible” excludes 130,000 Quebec parents.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating my colleague and friend from Mirabel on his poignant speech.

As he made clear, we are unhappy with the cavalier way the government is managing Bill C-31.

Bill C-31 was poorly drafted. It does not take into account the reality of Quebec in any way whatsoever. It does not line up with what is happening in Quebec, either with respect to the rental support or the dental care support.

Because Quebec has chosen to pay for its own social measures, it is now being largely excluded from and penalized by this bill. There are many ways to fix that, such as a compensation, or even slight changes to the eligibility rules, but nothing was done. It is the type of problem that could have been fixed through the normal process for studying bills, both in the House and in committee, with a minimum of goodwill. However, the government chose the path of super closure to short-circuit the entire normal process.

The hours of debate were reduced and committee studies were minimal, just two hours, which left no time for witnesses to be heard or for the analysis of experts. That was also the case for the people affected by Bill C-31. Our amendments to accommodate Quebec were rejected because the government preferred to use its bulldozer and not listen to reason or the people affected. The government acted in bad faith by refusing to give the House and its committee the opportunity to reasonably carry out their role. This was all aided and abetted by the third opposition party, all for the purpose of moving hastily and ramming through the bill.

This has given us a bad bill that has come back to us at third reading looking just as bad. The result is that, once again, Quebec is being dismissed by this government and by the House.

Let me be very clear. I am totally in favour of the principles of this bill. The Bloc Québécois is all in favour of the principles of this bill, but we are going to vote against it. The reason is that the application of this bill will create great inequities for Quebec and, by short-circuiting the entire process for studying and improving this bill, the government is making the choice to implement a law that is unfair to Quebec. If the government had let the House do its work, we would not be in this position.

Let me explain. The bill discriminates against Quebeckers in both its housing and dental care components. The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed our concerns. The people of Quebec will not get their fair share with Bill C-31.

Let us start by looking at the housing component. On October 14, the Parliamentary Budget Officer published his estimates of how much the rental assistance component of Bill C-31 would cost and how many people it would benefit. This part of the bill provides for a one-time cheque for \$500. The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that the people of Quebec would not get their fair share and would be discriminated against.

One eligibility requirement is having a modest income, so \$20,000 for a single person or \$35,000 for a couple or family. Another requirement is being a renter and putting more than 30% of one's income towards rent. In Quebec, we have collectively chosen to support social housing.

Many low-income households live in low-rent housing or in housing co-operatives. In these social housing units, the rent is capped at 30% of income, in order to take into account the renters' ability to pay.

These people are therefore excluded from the help being proposed here. Quebec has chosen to be more progressive and collectively pay for a social housing service. With this bill, Quebeckers find themselves paying a second time for a benefit cheque, yet they are largely excluded. There is not a penny in compensation. The result is that this bill discriminates against Quebec because Quebec is too progressive for Ottawa, for this Liberal government and for the NDP, which never stops talking.

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I want to be clear. There is still a serious lack of social housing in Quebec. More must be done, and Ottawa must contribute to social housing.

Because the situation is better in Quebec, low-income Quebecers are being penalized. Because Quebec is too progressive, Ottawa has chosen to deprive Quebec of its rightful portion of the rental assistance. The Parliamentary Budget Officer calculated that because of this 30% rule, as my colleague was saying, 118,000 people in Canada will not be entitled to support, and three-quarters of them live in Quebec. We are talking about 86,700 people.

Why did the government choose to create such an injustice? Why is it refusing to correct it?

• (1730)

Why is it that every time an injustice is inflicted on Quebec, Ottawa chooses to ignore it? Once again, this inequity could have been fixed in committee or in the House. This government refuses to do so, and is deliberately choosing to withhold a significant portion of the assistance to which Quebec is entitled. Is the government ready to commit to correcting this injustice? Thus far, it has refused.

The same goes for the dental component. The Parliamentary Budget Officer also confirmed our fears. Quebec will receive half as much assistance per child on average. According to the PBO's calculations, Quebecers will receive 13% of the program. If we received our share, it would be 23%. That is a 10% difference. In short, Quebec parents are far from receiving their fair share of the program. The scenario per child is not much better. On average, a child in Quebec will receive half as much as a Canadian child living outside Quebec, as I stated earlier. Furthermore, that is without compensation and without any real assurance that the support will adequately cover dental care costs.

See, these are lump-sum cheques, so parents in Quebec will not get smaller cheques. Instead, half of them will not be eligible for this benefit at all even though parents with similar incomes and in similar situations outside Quebec will be. As my colleague explained, that means approximately 130,000 people in Quebec will be excluded from the program even though, all things being equal, they would be included if they lived outside Quebec.

When we met with the Parliamentary Budget Officer last Friday, he pointed out that there were two reasons for this. The first is that Quebec is too progressive. Because of the Government of Quebec's program, many parents pay nothing when they go to the dentist. That means they cannot get money from Ottawa.

Quebeckers chose to provide dental care for children, and we chose to pay for it. Because we pay for this important service, we will get no help from Ottawa, even though we pay for that too. There is no coordination and no compensation.

The second reason for the disparity is that Quebec is overly unionized. Since our unionization rate is higher than Canada's, a higher proportion of our population has group insurance. This excludes us once again from this bill. Quebec is not getting its fair share because we are more progressive and more unionized.

In Ottawa, the Liberal government and the NDP are choosing to discriminate against progressives and union members. I am not making this up. Because it is too progressive, Quebec is being discriminated against by Ottawa. The government refused to propose an alternative arrangement. The government forced the House to pass this all very quickly, without addressing the inequities. This is unacceptable, which is why we have to vote against the bill, even though we support the principle.

Without a doubt, my nation is being ill served by its neighbour, who makes decisions for us about our own money, and who no longer even tries to offer arrangements or accommodations. I hope everyone remembers this.

• (1735)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I guess this is where we differ. Whether one is an 11-year-old child in Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, or any other jurisdiction in Canada, we believe that having that basic dental benefit for all children is a positive thing. There will be some variances. Some provinces, such as Alberta, have another program. Quebec has a program. Some provinces have no program. From a national perspective, we are trying to ensure that every child gets access to dental care.

It is disappointing that the Bloc is being narrow-minded and is not recognizing the true value of providing children in Canada a benefit that will make a difference.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the principle behind my colleague's comments.

However, right now we are talking about technical aspects of the bill, which was drafted quickly. The principle is good, and the Bloc agrees with everything my colleague said. The problem is in the execution. The bill was drafted so quickly that we wanted to know how it could possibly line up with Quebec's program and those of the other provinces and take their reality into account. We were told that this was not up for discussion, that we could not invite witnesses, that no amendments would be accepted and that none would be proposed to deal with that. The government forgot to harmonize its program with the existing programs in Quebec and the other provinces. As a result, Quebec is getting half as much as it should be getting.

In Quebec, we choose to pay for dental insurance for children. We are prepared to pay for federal dental insurance for the part that is not covered, but all we are asking for is harmonization. What the government is doing with the NDP, which is doing nothing but complain, is saying that we have to pay without getting any compensation or harmonization in return. The whole process is flawed because the government imposed super closure, preventing the House and the committees from doing their job. It is because the government botched the process that we are now being forced to vote against the bill today.

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Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the speech by my colleague from Joliette, whom I respect and who does an excellent job.

I agree with the member that the government is misrepresenting the Bloc Québécois when it accuses it of not valuing dental care. That is not what the member just said. After listening to his speech, it is clear that the Bloc is sensitive to this issue. That is not the problem.

I have a question for my colleague from Joliette. Is it because of the agreement between the NDP and the Liberal Party of Canada that we have this bill, which was thrown together without respecting provincial jurisdictions?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for his question and for his kind words. The feeling is mutual. I appreciate my hon. colleague's dedication and desire to do good and work hard and everything he does for democracy in the House.

We are not in the loop, of course, but we do know there was an agreement to create a dental benefit. The problem is, Ottawa does not have the expertise to provide services directly to the people, whereas the provinces do. What officials told us when the most recent budget came out was that they did not know how they were going to set this up, that it was bound to be long and complicated, and that it would not work.

I suspect that, when the government said that to the other opposition party in the context of the agreement, it was told that would not fly and it would have to find another way. The government cannot create a real insurance program, so it opted to send cheques. The NDP said to be quick about it or lose their support, so the government did it quickly and haphazardly without really taking the facts and the technicalities into account. We figured we could make changes in committee, but the government was not interested and swiftly shut things down with a super closure motion. If a bill is bad from the get-go and does not get amended, it is still a bad bill.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been in this House for months and months listening to the Bloc Québécois demand additional Canada health transfers from the federal government to the province, and it is right about that. I agree. We do need the federal government to pay more of its share for health care.

We have a bill before this House that would see the federal government send \$1,300 to all Quebec parents who make under \$70,000 a year and have children under the age of 12 and do not have dental coverage now. It would allow them to take their children to the dentist. There are no conditions whatsoever, and the Bloc opposes it.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague can tell me why he is opposing the federal government sending out \$1,300 for every child in Quebec who does not have dental care now, 100% of which would be paid by the federal government. What is he saying to those Quebec parents by opposing that payment?

• (1740)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I said, we are in favour of the principle. There is a factual problem with his question. He is saying that the program is for every child in Quebec or for the parents of every child in Quebec. That is not true.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer looked into this, and he showed that Quebec will receive only half as much as the rest of Canada will be getting. Quebec is being discriminated against. All we are asking is to drop this super closure motion that the NDP supported so that we can improve this bill in committee. If we had been able to amend it and improve it in committee, we would be voting in favour of the bill now. However, the government imposed super closure on a bill that is out of touch with reality and does not provide fair compensation. If we had had a chance to do the work to ensure that we were not getting just half of what we are entitled to, then we would have voted in favour of the bill. There are consequences to supporting super closure.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I start, I would like to seek unanimous consent from the House to split my time.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Vancouver Kingsway.

I am delighted to enter into this debate. I have been listening all day to members in the House speak to Bill C-31. What are we talking about with Bill C-31? We are talking about making sure that families with incomes of less than \$90,000, and with children under 12 who do not have dental coverage or insurance elsewhere, get oral health support. That is what we are talking about in this bill.

We are also talking about making sure that low-income individuals whose incomes are less than \$20,000, and low-income couples and families whose incomes are less than \$35,000, get a one-time housing benefit of \$500. That is what we are talking about in Bill C-31.

When I listened to members in the House today, I went through a range of emotions, from anger to dismay to sadness. I heard the Conservatives say over and over again that children who need dental care support and who do not have dental care support should not get it. The Conservatives are opposed to this bill, and they used all kinds of rationales, illogical and strange as they may be. They even came right out and said that dental health should not be a priority because there is no crisis. This comes from the people who actually have dental coverage for themselves and their families.

Across the country, 500,000 children do not have access to dental care. Just so Conservative members know, here are the real facts of what is going on. Oral health is actually critical to our overall health. This goes beyond the risk of pain, infection and tooth decay. Particularly in young children, it could impact eating, sleep and growth. It could have long-lasting impacts into adulthood. In fact, oral health is linked to diabetes and respiratory illnesses. The most common surgery performed on preschool children at most pediatric hospitals in Canada is treatment for dental decay.

The Conservatives may not care about people and the pain they may have to suffer through because they do not have access to dental services, but let me say this: They care about money. They talk about money all the time, not that they would ever stop to talk about ultrarich CEOs, who benefit from excessive bonuses and pandemic profitability. The Conservatives are not worried about those companies. They are not worried about the oil and gas industry, which last year alone made \$147 billion. We will never hear them say that those companies should pay their share so those 500,000 children and families can actually get dental care. We will never hear that.

All they talk about is how we cannot afford it and about where the money will come from. The money to support people in Canada can come from the very people who have extra and excessive profits. That is what the New Democrats are here to fight for. Members can bet their bottom dollars that this is what I am here to fight for.

Let us talk about money for a minute. I do not know if any Conservative members know this, but 1% of people end up in the hospital because they do not have dental services. They end up in emergency. Just in British Columbia alone, the cost of that 1% is \$155 million. That is just for one province. If we multiply that across the entire country, all the provinces and territories, it makes up all the money required to do this work and then some.

Imagine the pain and suffering that people have to go through. The Conservatives talk about dollars and cents, but they do not really think about them. When they speak, they say that dental care is not a crisis. My goodness. Really? Do we really want everybody to end up in the hospital, and then we can say let us do something about it?

• (1745)

The worst thing is they try to pit communities against communities. I heard them saying all day today that somehow, because there are insufficient funds to address mental health, we should not address dental health. What sort of twisted, illogical thinking is that? The New Democrats on this side of the House absolutely believe that there should be investments in mental health. In fact, we believe that head-to-toe care should be in place. We want to fight for pharmacare as well. We will go to the wall to fight for these things.

I cannot believe what I am hearing today from the Conservatives, including from their own leader, who has said in different places that dental care is not a priority. I have even heard Conservative members say that no constituents in their ridings need dental care. My goodness. I challenge them to validate that by way of proof that not one of their constituents needs dental care.

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I want to turn for a minute to the housing issue, as I am also hearing twisted logic on housing.

Let us be clear. Earlier today I put on the record the distribution of how many people qualified for the housing benefit, province by province. It was to the tune of 1,785,600 people. They would qualify for this \$500 one-time benefit. In Quebec, 568,800 would qualify for this benefit. It is the second-highest province by number of people who would qualify, so it is simply not true to say that Quebecers would not get this benefit. They would.

I have to say that I admire Quebec from this perspective. When the federal Liberals cancelled the national affordable housing program in 1993, Quebec and British Columbia were the only two provinces that continued social housing and continued to build affordable housing and co-op housing, doing so by themselves. British Columbia did that. We also subsidize people who have that need. Now with an NDP government back in office there, it is investing significant amounts of money into housing.

Just because some people have safe, secure, affordable housing and rent that is geared to income does not mean we should leave everyone else behind. It does not mean we do not need to fight for them to get supports as well. I will go to my grave fighting for people to get that. As my mother has taught me, we need to lift each other up. As indigenous elders have taught me, we need one heart, one mind. That is what we have to do. People have been left behind, and just because I have made it does not mean we have made it. It means we have to work harder to bring everybody forward.

Once upon a time I lived in poverty. Once upon a time my parents made less than minimum wage to support us. Just because we are no longer living in poverty does not mean that I forget my history and background and all the people who were left behind. That is what this bill is all about. That is why the New Democrats are here, 24 of us, to force the government to take more action to support the people in this country.

We all deserve it. We want to be proud of who we are as Canadians. I ran for office to do a job, and that job is to fight for everyone so they are not left behind. Until that is done, the New Democrats will never rest. No matter what the Conservatives want to call us, or anyone else, it does not matter. At the end of the day, it is not about me; it is about the people. That is why we are here in this House.

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• (1750)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the Conservatives are loath to support this bill because they feel that all government spending is inflationary, even though economists have said that the amount of government spending in this bill would not cause inflationary pressure.

Does the member believe that providing dental care to children 12 and under would cause the price of dental care to go up?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, it is, of course, absurd to say that supporting Canadians who need dental services and who cannot access them because they cannot afford them would cause dental services to increase in cost. It is absurd to even say that.

I think the reason the Conservatives are opposed to the bill is that their wealthy friends in the oil and gas sector already have dental services. The Conservatives are loath to support people who do not have it and hate to contribute to them so they too can have the health care services we all deserve.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague's speech just now in the House and heard her speak earlier today. I think it was much the same speech, but we are at third reading now so I appreciate that we had to hear the speech twice.

I heard the member paraphrase what my colleagues and I, as I spoke to the bill today too, had to say about the bill, and it was a stretched paraphrase of what we put on the page about why we are opposed to the bill.

I am going to ask her one question. She talked about how everybody is screaming for this need, but there are 10 premiers across Canada, including her New Democratic premier in British Columbia, and none of them have asked the government for any support on dental care. There is a reason for that: It is in provincial jurisdiction and is meant to stay in provincial jurisdiction. However, the government, to appease the member's party, is putting something nice in the window so that its members can say, "That's why the NPD supports us." It is, as I said earlier, a trinket.

Would the member ask her premier to please ask for this from the federal government before she stands up and says that it is something everybody is demanding?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, it is not paraphrasing. The member for Cumberland—Colchester actually said on Monday at committee, "I think we've established very clearly that there's no dental crisis here", as though the 500,000 children who do not have access to dental care are not faced with a crisis when they have dental pain and dental decay, miss school and end up in surgery, which costs more money that they cannot afford.

On the question of dental care and of health care overall, I have to say that it is a shared jurisdictional issue. That is what it is. The federal government has a responsibility for it, as do the provinces. We do not get to walk away and say that it is not about us, although that is what the Conservatives want to do. They want to close their eyes as though somehow dental services have nothing to do with the federal government. It is simply not true.

My constituents have said to me that they desperately need this service. They need it for their children, and seniors need it as well, as seniors have told me. I have met seniors who could not afford dental services and who have to blend their food into a drink because they do not have teeth to eat it. The member can tell my constituents that they do not need this plan.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear my colleague defend the poor. If she thinks that she is the only one from a poor background, I will tell her right away that artists are used to living on \$20,000 or less a year. I know what I am talking about. We have many artists in Quebec.

We obviously listened carefully to her speech. The same cannot be said of my colleagues when my colleague from Joliette was speaking. At any rate, the best way to understand a situation that seems inequitable is to imagine oneself in the other person's situation. If my colleague put herself in the place of Quebecers, who are being denied part of what they are entitled to, I think she would probably react just as strongly as she just did.

What does she think of Quebec's situation? How does she see it, knowing that there is a member from Quebec in her party?

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, what I know is that under this program, about 100,000 children in Quebec would actually benefit. What I know on the housing benefit is that over 500,000 Quebecers would actually benefit.

From my perspective, it is not about me; it is about the people and their needs. This is what we are trying to address with the bill. We are trying to help as many people as possible across the country.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to speak to Bill C-31, the cost of living relief act. As the health critic for the NDP, I am particularly pleased to speak to the dental aspects of this legislation.

Over 50 years ago, Tommy Douglas used his influence in a minority Parliament in this House to build our public health care system. This made access to physician and hospital care a right of citizenship in Canada rather than a privilege. This cherished institution, our public health care system, defines us as a nation. It is an affirmation that we will take care of each other when we are at our most vulnerable. It is a reflection of our commitment to equality and justice.

However, our health care system is not perfect, and it is not complete. Many important health services remain uncovered across Canada. For these, patients remain at the mercy of their ability to pay. In this minority Parliament, Canada's New Democrats are once again putting progress ahead of partisanship to address one of the most glaring gaps in our public system, that of dental care.

Through our confidence and supply agreement with the government, New Democrats were able to compel the Liberals to commit to a national dental care program for uninsured individuals and families with an income of less than \$90,000 per year, with no co-payments whatsoever for anyone making under \$70,000 annually. We intend to build a comprehensive dental plan that would permit millions of Canadians to get dental services equal to what other insured Canadians enjoy, and ultimately to fold dental care into our public health care system as a universal publicly insured benefit, which it was always intended to be.

The Canada dental benefit in this legislation is the first stage of this plan. It is a bridge payment that would allow children under 12 to get the dental care they need urgently while a comprehensive dental plan is developed by the end of 2023 for children under 18, seniors over 65 and people living with disabilities. That plan would then expand to all families in Canada with an income under \$90,000 per year in 2025, covering an estimated nine million Canadians.

The Canada dental benefit would provide eligible parents or guardians with up to \$1,300 in direct, upfront, tax-free payments to cover dental expenses for their children under 12 years old over the next 14 months. The target implementation date for the program is December 1, 2022, and it would cover expenses retroactive to October 1.

To access this benefit, parents or guardians would need to apply through the Canada Revenue Agency and attest that their child does not have access to private dental care insurance, that they will have out of pocket dental care expenses for which they would use the benefit, and that they understand they would need to retain documentation to verify that out of pocket dental care expenses occurred if required. There would be an effective audit and enforcement policy. Half a million kids across Canada would receive urgently needed investment for dental care.

Unmet oral health needs impose significant costs on other parts of our public health care system through hospital stays for dental emergencies, as well as the long-term impacts of poor oral health on systemic disease. This is particularly true for children, since good oral health practices in childhood serve as a foundation for the rest of a person's life. We know oral health is an essential component of overall health. Tooth decay remains the most common childhood chronic disease in Canada. It is the most common reason for Canadian children to undergo day surgery, and it is a leading cause for children missing school.

In addition to the pain and risk of an infection caused by tooth decay, it can also negatively impact a child's eating, sleeping and growth patterns while increasing the need for treatment later in life. Numbers cannot quantify the impacts of pain, the social impacts and economic losses suffered by people with untreated dental problems, yet today as we debate this bill in this House, over 35% of

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Canadians, some 13 million Canadians, have no dental insurance whatsoever, and nearly seven million Canadians who may even have it avoid going to the dentist every year because of the cost.

Unsurprisingly, this impacts low-income and marginalized Canadians the most. Canada's most vulnerable people have the highest rates of dental decay and disease and the worst access to oral health care services. According to the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, 50% of low-income Canadians, along with the majority of seniors over the age of 60, have no dental coverage.

• (1800)

This is a serious public health issue. Untreated oral health issues lead to many serious conditions, such as cardiac problems, diabetes complications, low birth rates and fatal infections, not to mention the dental health effects of chronic pain, facial disfigurement and shame. That is why Canada's New Democrats have been driving the agenda forward on universal dental care for many years.

At their first meeting following the 2019 election, the leader of the NDP pressed the Prime Minister to work across party lines to implement dental care for all Canadians. I was pleased to see the government acknowledge this NDP priority in the 2019 Speech from the Throne and was heartened to see in the Minister of Health's mandate letter at that time a direction to "Work with Parliament to study and analyze the possibility of national dental care." Unfortunately, the Liberal government failed to take any action on this commitment in the last Parliament.

In fact, when the New Democrats put forward a plan to fund a national dental care plan by taxing the windfalls reaped by pandemic profiteers and the ultrarich, the Liberals and Conservatives voted against that proposal. When my former caucus colleague Jack Harris introduced a motion in June 2021 to establish a federal dental care plan for uninsured Canadians with household incomes under \$90,000 per year, like this plan, as a first step toward universal public dental care, again the Liberals and Conservatives voted it down.

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Today, we have an opportunity finally to move forward on national dental care in Canada. We must not squander it. This will represent the single greatest expansion of public health care in a generation and the largest investment in oral health in Canadian history. To those MPs who oppose this initiative, I wish to remind them that every member of this House receives dental coverage for themselves and their families paid for by taxpayers. When they vote against this bill, they are taking taxpayer dollars to cover their teeth and are saying no to the poorest Canadians for theirs, and that is a shame of the most grotesque proportions.

I see people on the Conservative side showing us their teeth. That is disgusting.

For those who claim we simply cannot afford to establish an urgently needed program, let us look at some numbers. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that the Canada dental benefit will cost \$703 million in total, and once fully implemented our national dental care plan will cost approximately \$1.7 billion a year to provide coverage for nine million Canadians.

We currently spend about \$309 billion every year on health care in Canada. This dental care plan represents less than 1% of that, and that does not account for the savings we will achieve due to fewer emergency room visits and avoided serious health complications from untreated oral health issues later in life.

Oral health is not a luxury; it is essential. Those who say we cannot afford dental care now because we have to fix our Canada health care system do not understand that oral health care is primary health care. We would never ask people what they would rather have, heart or cataract surgery, their broken leg fixed or hip surgery. Having one's mouth covered is as much a part of one's overall health as any other part of one's body.

To those who say that the provinces or territories already cover dental care, I say this: That is a myth. There is no province or territory that covers all citizens with no copays in a comprehensive way for people making under \$70,000. Every program I have looked at in this country virtually without exception is poorly funded, incomplete and reserved for too few people.

It is time for us to put aside partisan differences. The mouth was always intended to be a part of our Canada health care system. It is only a historical anomaly that it is not. When Prime Minister Diefenbaker asked Justice Hall to recommend what should be in the Canada health care system in 1964, Justice Hall recommended that dental care be included. This is an over 50-year omission that we have the chance to rectify and the New Democrats are not going to stop until all Canadians can get their teeth fixed as a matter of right, just like they can with respect to every other necessary medical issue in this country.

• (1805)

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my neighbour from Vancouver Kingsway for his long-time advocacy on this important issue.

We listen in this House to the Conservatives talk about having the best interests of Canadians at heart, but how do they align that with the hypocrisy of saying they are going to deny kids the right to

dental care? I would love to get the member's sense of how that is possible or what it is that must be motivating folks to say they are going to deny children the very right and privilege to dental care that all of us in this House have for ourselves and our families.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I remember the words of J.S. Woodsworth, who said, "What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all." I think that this is an excellent guiding principle as a matter of good citizenship and good governance.

If I flip that around, I think of the utter hypocrisy of people in the House voting against providing dental care to Canada's poorest citizens, while they themselves get their teeth fixed, their spouses' teeth fixed and their children's teeth fixed, not paid for by them but paid for by the taxpayers. The leader of the official opposition has been in the House since he was 25 years old. He has been having his teeth fixed, paid for by the taxpayers, since he was 25, and he is going to stand in the House and say that people who make under \$70,000 should not have dental insurance.

Seniors over 65, do we know how many seniors over 65 make under \$70,000 a year and have no dental insurance? Almost all of them. That is who the NDP is going to bring dental care to. I want to know what Conservatives will say to them next election.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed my friend's speech on this side of the House. I do have some questions for him on the applicability of an actual dental care system. This is a dental payout system. Dental care systems exist in all 10 provinces right now, including in my province of Alberta, where we did some extensive research. All poor people below a certain threshold are covered 100% for dental expenses in Alberta. I think there is much the same system in many of the provinces across Canada. Some are more; some are less. This is an overlap system just to give money to people.

I would ask my colleague if he would consider a better system, as opposed to an overlapping system that is going to be highly bureaucratic and inefficient. Would he actually look, perhaps, at just giving some extra funding to the provincial systems that are not meeting what we see as the requirements people are missing out on in dental care in Canada at this point?

• (1810)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I had the benefit of sitting in on a round table meeting that had not only the Canadian Dental Association but representatives from every province and territory of the country, including Alberta.

This is what they told me about Alberta. They said that Alberta has an existing low-income and seniors program but, like Ontario, the coverage is poor. Dentists do not accept most patients or they ration patients. They said there are 750,000 visits to hospitals every year in Alberta for people who are accessing dental care. They said they need \$4 billion to treat all untreated cavities in the province of Alberta. That does not sound like there is a very good program in Alberta to me.

One of the myths is about the 10 provinces and territories that do have programs. I have met with all of them. None of them have a good program. There are gaps in coverage. There are high copays. What they really do is that they dump the cost onto dental professionals and they pay substandard rates to dentists, denturists and dental hygienists so that they are actually subsidizing the poor coverage that is already there. The plan that we are talking about is a normative plan for all Canadians that is as good as my hon. colleague's plan is.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thought it was a shame that so much chatter was going on in the corner while my colleagues from Mirabel and Joliette were giving their brilliant speeches. Members will still go ahead and ask my two colleagues questions on issues that were covered in great detail in their speeches. Then members will ask how my colleagues can say this or that. My first point is that members should have been listening rather than talking.

My question is this: why the super closure motion?

If the Liberals are so sure of their arguments, in other words, that they are not encroaching on any jurisdictions, that Quebec's jurisdictions are not being trampled, that a right of withdrawal with compensation is therefore unnecessary, that everything is hunky-dory and Ottawa knows best, if that were the case, we could have gone through the committee process. We could have done real committee work and done a real study with the experts, including all those who say that the plan falls short. If they are experts in their fields, the committee could have scrutinized their arguments.

Why are the Liberals so afraid of democracy? Why come and shove this super closure motion down our throats?

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is worried about rushing the bill through Parliament. Dental care has been recommended to be part of our Canada health care system since 1964. I think that Canadians have waited long enough.

Second of all, I was at the health committee the other night when we had every opportunity to put in amendments and, in fact, the Bloc Québécois did put two amendments into the legislation. One of them was to have every province opt out, which, of course, defeats the entire purpose of the program.

Let me read what the Quebec member of the Canadian Dental Association told us. Quebec has a very basic program for kids under 10. There are a lot of procedures not covered. It is poorly funded. Dentists are subsidizing that program. They do not want the transfer to go to the province and they prefer the federal program.

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Why does the hon. member want children in Quebec whose families make under \$70,000 not to get \$1,300, starting in a month or two, so that they can go to the dentist for dental exams, for cleanings, for X-rays and to get their teeth filled? Why would he stand in the way of that for Quebec families? I wonder what he says to them.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, folks who are watching this debate are seeing political theatrics at its best. We just heard from the member for Vancouver East and the member for Vancouver Kingsway. The member for Vancouver East has been in office for 29 years, and the member for Vancouver Kingsway since 2008, and prior to that he worked for a union, so they both have had dental care.

The member for Vancouver Kingsway brought up a good point that, at the health committee, members from the opposition did bring amendments through. Our hon. colleague from the Bloc brought some great amendments through. He is the member for Mirabel. We then saw the costly coalition gang up and deny these amendments, just like they do all the other times.

As a matter of fact, they were ruled out of order, yet the NDP amendments were ruled in order. This did not take place until the next day, but the Speaker of the House actually had to rule those amendments out of order, yet we still see the political theatrics of this group. It really is shameful.

Let me begin by saying there is not one member in His Majesty's official opposition who does not believe Canadian families need more help. There is not one person in my party who does not want to see Canadians' lives get easier and more affordable. There is not one member of our party who does not want to see life made easier for kids and parents. No one on this side believes kids should not have access to dental care.

We have heard all kinds of accusations from the Liberal-NDP coalition today on this, and it is absolute hogwash. I would use stronger language, because them speaking kind of gets me—

An hon. member: It triggers you.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, “triggers” is a good word.

An hon. member: No one is triggered but you.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, they trigger it, but that is what they want. That is exactly what they want—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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• (1815)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Let us try to take the temperature down a little bit. I do not have a big list of speakers, and I want to make sure the ones who are left have the opportunity to present, just like everyone else had the opportunity during this debate.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George has the floor.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate that, because while the Liberals will go on and on saying that people are heckling them, you will notice that I did not even acknowledge them. They can say anything they want to say. It does not bother me at all, because what they are saying is total hogwash. They are triggering. What Bill C-31 is called in the political sphere is a wedge issue, because Liberals are using it to score political points.

The new Conservative leader went out of his way to tell Canadians that we care for them. We want to let everyday, regular people know that we actually have a plan and we care. We want people to have more money in their pockets. What we have seen from the Liberal government and the NDP, which has propped the Liberals up all the way, is that they are going to triple the price for food, triple the price for fuel and triple the price for heating. Yes, members heard that correctly, and I will repeat it for the Liberal-NDP coalition. Its members are going to triple, triple, triple prices. I know they hate that, so I said it again.

Conservatives want life to be more affordable. What is shameful is that we know our friends in Atlantic Canada are struggling after having just gone through a horrendous natural disaster, a weather event. They are struggling. Liberal premiers in Atlantic Canada are begging the government to please cancel raising the carbon tax, because they are struggling.

We also know from a report that was just released today that 1.5 million Canadians accessed food banks last month. That is an increase of 35% year over year. That is happening under the Liberal government's watch. When we tell Liberals that, they blame everybody else but themselves.

I will agree that inflation can be caused by a number of things, including foreign issues, but it starts at home. The government has the keys to the bank. As our friend from Regina—Qu'Appelle said in his great speech, it starts here at home. Over \$176 billion of spending that Liberals say was for COVID had nothing to do with COVID, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report states that today.

We do not want to see people evicted, and we do not want to see kids suffering in pain because they cannot afford a dentist. We have focused the majority of our questions in question period, since electing our new leader, on affordability. While the Liberals and NDP want to spend, spend, spend, we have been talking about making an actual difference in people's lives.

Bill C-31 is not about providing access to dental care or making rent more affordable. It is about maintaining power. Let us be very clear that it is about the Prime Minister's tenuous, at best, hold on his party. There are wolves at the door. They are lining up, getting their soldiers and their organization together to take over power and

be the next leaders of the Liberal Party, because the Prime Minister is struggling to hold on to his power.

It is about an NDP leader who is also struggling with his own internal party politics. If members of the NDP-Liberal coalition were concerned about dental care or rent, they would have wanted a fulsome debate at committee. They would have wanted a fulsome debate here in this chamber. They would have wanted to ensure the best legislation possible.

Let me throw this out. This is not a plan or a program. Programs have checks and balances in place, and this has none. Legislation that would create a program to help kids who are in pain and that would help single moms pay their rent or go to a dentist is a program. This is not the case.

I have been a member of Parliament for seven years and have sat in on countless bill reviews. I have sat in on countless committee meetings, and what I witnessed Monday night was unbelievable. My colleague from Mirabel will attest to this.

• (1820)

What we saw was that the government gave committee members literally two hours to study a piece of legislation, two hours that will commit the Canadian government to \$10 billion of spending. In fact, just talking right now about this actually triggers me even more. It makes me more angry.

The government voted down my hon. colleague from Mirabel's amendments for a certain clause for the reason that committees cannot attach further financial obligations to the government. The amendments were voted down, yet when the NDP brought amendments to this piece of legislation to committee with attached financial obligations, the chair ruled those in order. As a matter of fact, the Liberals and the NDP rammed them through.

As parliamentarians we have a job to do. We were sent here by the people from our ridings to represent them. We were sent here to get the best legislation possible. We were sent here to work together. I have stood in the House so much over this time to talk about mental health and to talk about health. I think all colleagues will agree I take a very non-partisan approach to this. If we can work together to get things done that is the best for Canadians.

What we have seen with the government and its friends, the NDP, the costly Liberal-NDP coalition, is that they do not care what the rest of us and the rest of Canadians think. They will stand in the House and put on a great show for video clips and social media, yet they are misleading Canadians every step of the way.

I understand that partisan politics can get in the way. I know that when we are in this chamber sometimes the level of debate get pretty low. That said, I have always believed in the committee process. I have always believed that committees are where we as parliamentarians do our best work. At least, that is what I had hoped.

I remember a time at the fisheries committee a few years ago when there were a number of amendments that we thought would make the bill better. At that time I was getting up daily in question period to hammer the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on the clam scam. Does everybody remember the clam scam? It was when the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans gave a lucrative contract to a former member of Parliament, a former Liberal member of Parliament, and possibly even some family members of the fisheries minister.

That meant that jobs were lost in the community at Grand Bank. I fought tirelessly for them and not one member from the Atlantic Canada caucus stood up to do that. Why? It was because they were silenced. They were muzzled by the front bench.

When the bill came to committee with some amendments, I reached out to the hon. members from across the way and told them some of our concerns. We were at it every day in question period, but when it came to getting that bill right, we actually got the work done. We got those amendments passed. That is an example of a committee working in the best interests of Canadians.

At committee, the members were listened to. We heard from over 20 witnesses. We heard from the minister. We heard from officials. When it came to doing the clause-by-clause, the members of the committee agreed with some of our amendments and we managed to pass a number of them. We worked together to have a better piece of legislation and Canadians were better for it. Did we get everything we wanted? No, we did not, but we got a few. We had an opportunity to actually study the bill, not like what we saw on Monday night.

We were told we had to have the amendments in before we actually got a chance to hear from the witnesses. On Monday we were supposed to analyze a bill that was going to spend, as I said, \$10 billion. Do members know how many days we were allowed to study that bill? It was one day for two hours. Do members know how many witnesses we had? We had five, with two ministers who could not answer a question if their lives depended on it. They could not answer these questions. When we offered thoughtful questions to the officials, they were stymied. It was two hours and then we had to immediately move into clause-by-clause. Was that really offering parliamentarians of all stripes an opportunity to do their best work for Canadians? I would offer that it was not. It was very discouraging.

● (1825)

I get that the Liberal-NDP coalition members do not care about inflation. They do not care about budgets. They do not care about robbing Peter to pay Paul. They do not really care about families. They think the government has this magic pot of gold or magic pot of money that all this money comes from, or perhaps it is a tree. It is probably not a tree, but seriously, this is such an utter sham. It really, truly is, and it is more of what we see with this Liberal-NDP coalition.

The worst part of all this is that the Liberal and NDP members of the committee attempted to usurp the government's power and increase the spending. I mentioned that. Members heard me correctly. After a negative ruling by the chair on two Bloc amendments, if I remember correctly, that would have increased spending, the coal-

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tion members introduced an NDP amendment to spend even more than \$10 billion. There was no consultation, no cabinet approval and no authorization. They just agreed to add more money. When the chair ruled them out of order, they challenged the chair and they rammed it through. We voted them down and they amended the bill anyway. Of course, we objected. We pointed out that this would require a royal recommendation, but they did not want to hear that.

They did not want to debate dental care for kids. They did not want to debate money for rent. The Liberal members of the committee supported the NDP amendment because they did not want to lose power. They did not want to jeopardize their agreement with the third party. The fix was in before the bill even came to committee. The fix was in to get this passed without scrutiny, without accountability and without care for kids and families.

When the member for Vancouver East moved her amendment to increase the rental eligibility, the chair correctly ruled the motion inadmissible. The *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states this on page 772. I know I do not have to tell you this, Mr. Speaker, but I am going to read it into the record anyway. It states:

Since an amendment may not infringe upon the financial initiative of the Crown, it is inadmissible if it imposes a charge on the public treasury, or if it extends the objects or purposes or relaxes the conditions and qualifications specified in the royal recommendation.

Despite this clear and concise ruling, the Liberals and NDP voted down the chair and proceeded, regardless. It was not until the bill was reported back to the House on Tuesday that the mistake was fixed.

I am going to finish with this. The Canadian Dental Association said this:

The single best way to quickly improve oral health and increase access to dental care is to invest in, and enhance, existing provincial and territorial dental programs. These programs are significantly underfunded and are almost exclusively financed by provincial and territorial governments.

We are surprised by today's announcement that the federal government is considering a new, large-scale, federal dental program. It will be important to ensure that any new initiatives do not disrupt access to dental care for the large majority of Canadians who already have dental coverage through employer-provided health benefits.

The Liberal member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River summed it up best on Monday night with his second question. He admitted that this bill was nothing really about dental care. He said this:

There are a lot of costs in life. Dental is certainly one of them, but you have to buy your kid shoes, you have to buy them food and you have to pay for their minor league hockey. These are all costs for families.

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I do not disagree with the member. Families could always use more money, and we could use a program that has checks and balances in place so that this money would actually get to kids and families who need it the most, and so that it would be consistent and not a one-time top-up that the government is going to claw back anyway. We also heard through our study that first nations children are not eligible for this program.

• (1830)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, for the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George, I very much support Bill C-31. I have heard over and over again that people get dental care if they need it in this country. I have not shared any personal stories up until now, but I have enough respect for the member for Cariboo—Prince George to say that when I was a single mom and earning under \$30,000 per year, I put the priority on getting my daughter to a dentist. I never could afford dental care. I have had a lot of teeth pulled out, and when I got to be able to have some money I went in and got replacements, because it really got in the way of being able to be successful in any way, not to be able to speak properly. I certainly could not pronounce in French “*vérificatrice générale*”. That was impossible with my situation.

I am urging members across the way to vote for this bill, despite the fact that I agree with the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George that an important piece of legislation should not be pushed through in two hours in committee. That is offensive.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I do not disagree with my colleague. I said in my intervention that Canadians need a leg up, that single parents and families that are living dollar to dollar and are having a hard time making ends meet need a leg up. They need a plan. They get this top-up, but then what? How do they live for the rest of the year?

In my intervention, I said that a plan needs to be in place. While this money may make things better at the moment, there is not a long-term plan in place that can truly make a difference. That is something we have been struggling to get the government to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, sometimes there is a lot of invective thrown around in the House.

Earlier, those on the NDP side of the House said we were playing politics with families. The experience I had at the Standing Committee on Health was that the Bloc Québécois wanted to hear witnesses and work for Quebeckers. The Bloc wanted the bill to include people who had been left behind by the NDP. We were prevented from doing our job.

I would like the member who sits with me on the Standing Committee on Health to confirm whether it was us, the real opposition parties, who obstructed the bill or whether it was the Liberals with the NDP who prevented us from being inclusive and doing our work properly. Who has hindered the parliamentary business of the House, them or us?

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I have taken part in a lot of committees. As our colleague can attest to, I absolutely lost my

mind the night that this was taking place and that what we were witnessing was taking place. It was so unparliamentary.

Clearly, as I stated in my speech, the deal was done, and anybody who brought forward any type of amendment, who was not part of the NDP-Liberal coalition, was going to get shut out. We offered to bring more witnesses to the table. We asked for more time to study the bill. We asked to do our job. We offered to sit through the weekend to study this bill and bring witnesses, but we were shut down every step of the way.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: There being no further members rising for debate, pursuant to order made Tuesday, October 18, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

• (1835)

[*English*]

The question is on the motion.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried, or carried on division, or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Mr. Speaker, we would request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1915)

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

(Division No. 205)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
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Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Miller
Morrissey	Morrissey

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Ng
O'Connell
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Bérubé	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeschen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
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PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 7:18 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, October 18, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:18 p.m.)

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