



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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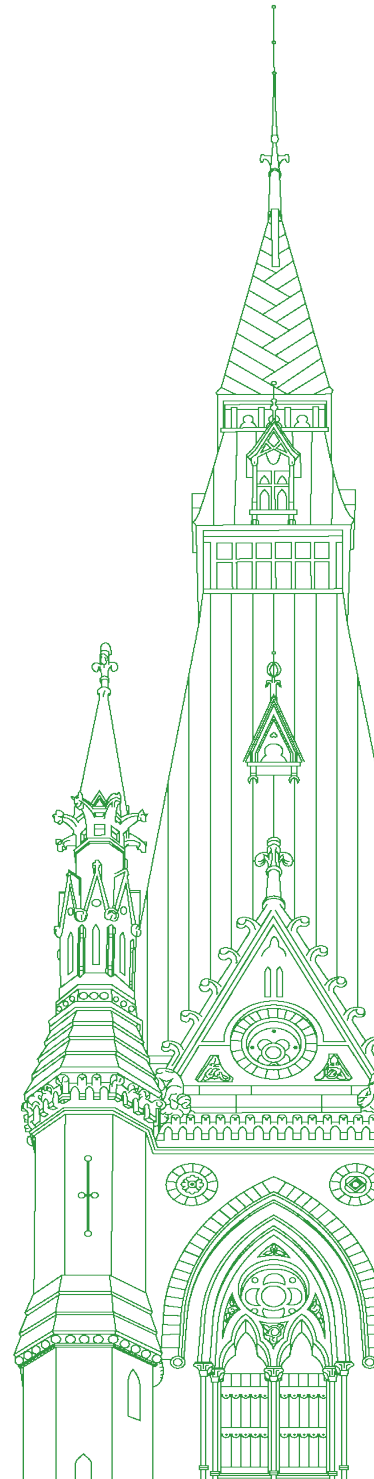
# House of Commons Debates

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Wednesday, March 29, 2023

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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● (1400)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay will lead us in the singing of the national anthem.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### DEMOCRATIC VALUES

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, on March 26, my *bà ngoai*, my grandmother, passed away at the age of 94. She lived a long life that began in a democratic Vietnam and started anew in Canada. Her story is similar to those of other immigrants who saw Canada as a safe place to call home and where democratic values and human rights flourished.

Yesterday also marked the one-year anniversary of my mom's passing. They were a dynamic duo who challenged Asian customs that were typically very hierarchical, patriarchal and traditional. While recognizing Asian studiousness, hard work and discipline, they also saw tremendous value in Canadian ingenuity and creativity.

They learned from their past, took what they believed to be the best of both worlds, and stitched together their own unique Canadian mosaic, one that helped me become the person I am today. I shall think often of these strong and fiercely proud Canadians. Through them, I learned how precious democracy and the rule of law are and that they should never be taken for granted.

Canadians must be ready to defend our values and way of life from those who seek to interfere, especially those from ideological and oppressive regimes who are in direct opposition to the things that define Canada and what it means to be Canadian.

### FREEDOM OF RELIGION

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the efforts of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in Mississauga and across the country.

This week, I had the privilege of enjoying an Iftar with members from the House and the community here in Ottawa, where we broke bread and had wonderful conversations. I want to thank the members of the community for the invitation. It was truly a wonderful evening.

Its slogan, “Love for All, Hatred for None” demonstrates the continuous desire to give back to the community through various initiatives and humanitarian work.

Unfortunately, the reality is that this peaceful community faces persecution in many countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, where its situation continues to worsen.

It is imperative that we stand in solidarity with Ahmadiyya Muslims and demand that those perpetrating their persecution be obligated to protect and uphold human rights.

I also want to take a moment to wish all Muslims a peaceful and safe Ramadan.

*Ramadan Mubarak.*

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● (1405)

### BIG BEAR CYAC

**Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight Ms. Tara Ettinger's work as executive director of Big Bear Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, or CY-AC.

Big Bear provides a place for child victims of crimes like sexual assault, Internet luring or production of child sexual abuse and exploitation materials, as well as their families, to speak to police, access supports, and seek medical care.

As someone who worked in the system, I know that these centres play a pivotal role in fighting crimes against children.

Ms. Ettinger has been the advocate, social media coordinator and even the janitor for Big Bear, in spite of its budget shortfall. She does this work all while completing her Ph.D., which she hopes to defend in the coming months.

*Statements by Members*

Tara's tireless work has not gone unnoticed. It has changed the trajectory of so many lives. Big Bear and Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo owe her a debt of gratitude, and I thank her.

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**CONSTITUENT OF ST. JOHN'S EAST**

**Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at age 72, Herman Perry of St. John's knows better than most that age is just a number, but here are some numbers that really do matter: a 2,500-kilometre paddle, over 50 days, spanning from La Loche, Saskatchewan to Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories. That is exactly what Mr. Perry wanted to undertake on a journey to retrace historic trade routes.

A passionate outdoor enthusiast, his love of paddling took him across Labrador, the Quebec wilderness, Indonesia and the Churchill River. With the support of his wife, Sheila, and his kids and grandkids, he said he had another 10 years of paddling in him.

I look forward to hearing about this remarkable journey and I applaud Herman's courageous spirit and love of adventure.

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**CARLETON UNIVERSITY RAVENS**

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the talented student athletes at Carleton University, located in my community of Ottawa Centre, who just a few weeks ago captured both the 2023 men's and women's national basketball championships.

These exceptional accomplishments reflect the dedication, hard work and perseverance of these young athletes as well as their coaches and the entire Carleton University community.

The Ravens have been a force in U Sports basketball for some time, and they have now become the first school since 1985 to win the men's and women's titles in the same season.

On behalf of all members of Parliament in the House, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Carleton Ravens basketball teams for their exceptional performances this year, with more to come in 2024 and beyond.

[*Translation*]

Congratulations, Carleton. We are proud of them.

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[*English*]

**SUPPORT FOR DISPLACED UKRAINIANS**

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine rages on, our government continues to provide support to those seeking safe haven here in Canada. Last week, we extended the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel and, to date, we have approved over 616,000 applications, with over 190,000 Ukrainians having landed in Canada since the start of the conflict. It is essential that all levels of government continue to provide settlement services in support of displaced Ukrainians and their families.

Today, I rise to thank the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, the staff at Wesley in the city of Hamilton, as well as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Hamilton, for their support of Ukrainians arriving in my city. Municipalities in the greater Hamilton and Toronto areas have invested tens of millions of dollars in settlement services and they need our financial support. These are shared federal responsibilities and I look forward to working with the minister and IRCC representatives to ensure settlement agencies and municipalities receive the necessary resources they require to continue to provide this invaluable service.

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**UKRAINE**

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my unwavering support for the brave people of Ukraine as they continue to fight off Russia's unwarranted and illegal invasion. Since February last year, more than 26,000 Ukrainians have arrived in Alberta alone, many of whom are settling in my riding of Red Deer—Lacombe. I want to take this opportunity to thank Heidi Baumbach; her parents, Karen and Trent; and Olena Karachentseva for their dedication in assisting in the resettlement and integration of Ukrainians in our communities. Their efforts serve as examples of the kind of community spirit that makes Canada such a wonderful place to live.

I admire the strength of the Ukrainian people. The sacrifices they have made to protect their independence and liberty are truly remarkable. Canada must remain resilient in the wake of challenges posed by the common enemy: the adversaries of democracy and freedom. Ukrainian bravery and inspiration should serve as a reminder that democracy should never be taken for granted. We must do everything possible to ensure that their fight for freedom ends with victory. *Slava Ukraini.*

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● (1410)

**KANATA-CARLETON YOUTH COUNCIL**

**Ms. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to rise today to welcome the Kanata-Carleton Youth Council to the House of Commons. It is an honour to welcome our youth prime minister, Jacqueline Carson; and fellow members, Kosar, Yalda, Santiago, Natalia, Dominic and Gray. Not only are these youth our future; they are our leaders today.

Like many young people, the youth council members care deeply about the issues that matter to young Canadians: mental health, climate change and fiscal policy. They are using their voices to make a real difference right now in our communities, in our schools and in our world.

*Statements by Members*

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in giving a warm welcome to the amazing members of the Kanata-Carleton Youth Council.

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**WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY**

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day, an annual opportunity for dedicated conversations about autism spectrum disorder. Autism touches more than 70 million people globally, and in Canada, one in 66 people is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. While each individual with autism is unique, they all face challenges in social communication, behaviour and sensory processing. Despite these challenges, those with autism have much to offer our society.

It is important we continue to strive for inclusion and understanding for those with autism. This means providing access to resources, support and opportunities for those living with autism and to the family members and others who provide support to them. Today, people like Dana and her daughter, Melanie, are here for Autism on the Hill. Melanie spoke today, describing the challenges she faces, but we also saw the unique gifts she has. Melanie did a great job.

My riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill is home to many community organizations that provide support and services for families living with autism, including York Hill Centre for Children, Youth and Families; Kerry's Place Autism Services; and the Children's Treatment Network. I thank them all for the services they provide. I would also like to thank the member who put forward the motion. On this World Autism Day, let us stand together to create a more inclusive and understanding society for those with autism.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, something has gone terribly wrong in this country. The violence is out of control. People, including children, are being stabbed on our streets, and police officers, including from my community in Spruce Grove, have been murdered in the line of duty. Now we know who is committing these acts of violence. Many of them are repeat offenders who have been let loose on our streets by a Liberal justice system that cares more about appeasing woke activists than it does about keeping Canadians safe.

It does not have to be this way. After eight years under the Liberal government, violent crime has skyrocketed in this country. That is an indisputable fact, and instead of facing that fact with decisive action to bring down the violence, the government evades responsibility for its failed policies.

It is time to end the radical Liberal experiments, and put the safety of innocent Canadians, and not the freedom of criminals, first.

**CALEB'S COURAGE MOVEMENT**

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, each year, my constituents Mike and Nicole MacArthur prepare for Caleb's Courage Superhero Walk, Run, and Fly. It is a community fun run in honour of their late son Caleb, who bravely battled cancer until he passed away in 2015 at the age of four.

Notwithstanding that, Caleb's life will always be defined by his long-lasting impact.

The Caleb's Courage movement has raised more than \$750,000 to support critically ill children in Cape Breton. It is thanks to Caleb's Courage that the Cape Breton Regional Hospital is now home to the Caleb's Courage Superhero Suite. It is a superhero-themed pediatrics room that empowers children and their families during their medical battles. It has also allowed many children in my community to receive their treatments, often ones that are life-saving and at home.

In honour of all children affected by cancer, I want to pay a special tribute to all the little superheroes like Caleb who have fought, or continue to fight, big battles. I would also want to thank Mike, Nicole, Ella, Aubreigh, Lauchlin, Emery and all those involved with the Caleb's Courage movement for doing their part to strengthen health care in Cape Breton—Canso.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**HOME OWNERSHIP**

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a home is more than just drywall and lumber. It is the opportunity to raise a family and to be part of a community. It is a place to build memories and a place to have a future. However, for far too many Canadians, the dream of owning a home has been replaced by a cold reality. Even if someone works hard and does everything right the best they can hope for is couch surfing, car sleeping, fish huts, trailer parks or living in their parents' basements. Under the Liberal government, a record number of Canadians believe they will never own a home.

With the budget, the Liberals are doubling down on their failed policies. They have done nothing to fix the housing crisis or to take on the government gatekeepers who put up red tape and barriers. There are so many obstacles facing Canadians seeking to buy a home: rising interest rates, eye-watering down payments, soaring house prices and skyrocketing rent. However, the root cause and the biggest obstacle of them all is the Liberal Prime Minister. It is true, though.

**The Speaker:** Order.

I just want to remind everyone that S. O. 31s are taking place. I know there are some people talking, and it is great to see everyone talk among themselves, but let us keep it down to a whisper and not talk loudly. If members want to talk louder, they can just take it out to the lobby until we are done.

The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

*Statements by Members***TAXATION**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday's budget tried to fool Canadians into thinking the Liberals had capped the tax on beer, wine and spirits, but they did no such thing. If it was actually capped, the tax would not be going up on Saturday. Canada already has one of the highest excise duty rates in the world, and the tax is still going up on Saturday, and it will still go up automatically next year.

New spending in the budget will cost \$4,300 per Canadian family. The budget promises Canadians more taxes and more deficits, which means more inflation. Taxes and inflation are crushing Canadians to the point that having a beer with friends or enjoying a bottle of wine with a loved one are becoming unaffordable luxuries for the middle class and those desperately trying to cling to it.

I call on MPs to support my private member's bill to repeal the automatic escalator tax and bring back happy hour for Canadians.

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[*Translation*]**DENIS GRATTON**

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness but much hope that I join all Franco-Ontarians and my colleagues in the House to pay tribute to an extraordinary man and journalist for the past 32 years at *Le Droit*, a man beginning an unprecedented battle against an enemy—cancer—he characterized as Goliath in his latest, but not last, column.

I am referring to Mr. Denis Gratton, a proud Franco-Ontarian and passionate man who works tirelessly to defend the French fact here in Ottawa, in columns that we read with interest, despite, at times, a touch of friendly sarcasm.

Today, we want to send a message of hope and courage to dear Mr. Gratton. Our thoughts are with him during this time. We encourage him to stay strong as he has always been while defending our right to speak French. We eagerly await his next column.

I wish Mr. Gratton much strength.

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[*English*]**GUARANTEED LIVABLE BASIC INCOME**

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, seniors across Canada are facing significant challenges. I hear from seniors, largely single women, who are struggling to make ends meet. They cannot afford housing, basic food, medication and heat. Almost 600,000 Canadian senior women are living in poverty. Far too many of those women are further marginalized because of who they are: indigenous, Black, persons of colour and those from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Others are widows of veterans who married their spouse of after 60 years of age and are left without a pension because of a sexist, outdated gold-diggers clause.

In Canada, we should have a guaranteed livable basic income, as Bill C-223 by my friend, the member for Winnipeg Centre, would do. It is an amount that would allow no one in this country to fall below the bar of basic dignity.

Canadians must ask themselves about the expense of abandoning those most in need and of their suffering. It is time to do better for seniors.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

[*Translation*]**FRENCH**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker,

In the Quebec of days gone by,  
English stole the words “French” and “Canadian”.

Quebeckers were born.  
Out of a dream, anger, the street and words.

Michèle Lalonde voiced the indignation of our nation in the Americas,  
of hard-working Quebeckers and African slaves.

Speak white!  
Speak white!  
Speak the language of whites!  
Speak the language of the conqueror!  
Speak English!

Speak white!  
An insult that Quebec neither chose,  
nor appropriated.  
An insult that the English, this House!  
threw in the face of Henri Bourassa when he spoke French here...  
to the French-speakers of the country,  
to the Africans of the continent.

History identifies what happened,  
literature records it.  
A people that lies to itself has neither history nor literature.

If censorship wins,  
*Speak white*, a poem, will become a symbol of racism.

The n-word is not for me.  
It belongs to those who suffer from it.

Poetry is the weapon of Justice.

\* \* \*

[*English*]**WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY**

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, April 2 is World Autism Awareness Day, and a quarter century since my son, Jaden, was diagnosed.

Over the years, I have focused a lot of my public words on Jaden's strengths. This is not because he does not need help but rather because, all too often, all people see is the help he needs.

To be clear, as incredible as Jaden is, he needs a lot of help. He has considerable strengths in the concrete world, but they are inhibited by his struggles in the abstract world. He does not understand danger, so he literally needs help to survive every day.

In other ways, Jaden's differences are healthier than our societal "normal". He is obsessed with pictures, not because of how many "likes" they get on Instagram, but because of how much he loves the people, pets and places in them. He is honest with his expressions: giggling, yawning, crying or "tongue-out" intense. He rarely feels pressure to be something he is not. He is unwaveringly loyal, trusting, forgiving and trusting again, seemingly without hesitation.

Yes, Jaden needs help, but for those who give him that help, invariably they receive much more in return.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### DENISE POIRIER-RIVARD

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I want to take advantage of the fact that Ms. Poirier-Rivard is visiting Parliament and pay her the tribute she deserves. She has a long list of accomplishments to her name, and her life partner, Jean-Paul, has been by her side for all of them.

At the age of 40, this mother became a farmer, purchasing a farm and starting up a cheese business called Ruban bleu. She earned the admiration of her peers and received numerous honours, including the UPA's female farmer of the year award in 2003.

This distinguished businesswoman served as the Bloc Québécois member of Parliament for Châteauguay—Saint-Constant from 2004 to 2006, but her political and social involvement did not stop there. She was also a municipal councillor, vice-president of the Fondation Anna-Laberge and president of La Rencontre Châteauguaise.

I wish to join my friend and mayor of Saint-Constant, Jean-Claude Boyer, who is also here, in thanking Ms. Poirier-Rivard from the bottom of my heart for her contribution, which has left an indelible mark on our wonderful community.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### FINANCE

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one year ago, the Minister of Finance admitted that deficits add fuel to the fire of inflation.

She promised four things. She promised that the debt-to-GDP ratio would decline, but it is going up. She promised that the deficits would be reduced, but they are going up. She promised that the debts incurred due to COVID-19 would be paid down, but they are going up. She promised that the budget would be balanced in 2027, but now she is promising that it will never balance itself.

How can Canadians believe anything this minister and the Prime Minister say about money?

### Oral Questions

• (1425)

[English]

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during a challenging time in the world, this budget will ensure that Canadians can continue to count on their government being there for them. We are meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow by introducing a new grocery rebate that will deliver targeted support to 11 million Canadians, lowering credit card transaction fees for small businesses, increasing investments in our public health care system, making transformative investments in our economy.

This is a budget of hope and ambition. We are putting in place the building blocks today so that we can realize today's dreams tomorrow.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pipe dream.

A year ago, the finance minister said, "We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline." It is going up. She also said, "Our [pandemic] deficits must continue to be reduced." They are going up. She went on to say, "The [extraordinary] debt[s] we incurred...must...be paid down." They are not only not being paid down, but they are going up. She said as well that the budget would be balanced in 2027. Now the Liberals admit that the budget will never balance itself.

Given these four falsehoods, how can Canadians believe anything the minister or the Prime Minister says about money?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are going to take no lessons from a Leader of the Opposition who tells Canadians to hedge on inflation by putting money into crypto.

Let us look at fiscal responsibility. Canada will have the lowest deficit and the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. The deficit is projected to decline every year. Public debt charges, as a share of the economy, will remain historically low. We have the strongest economic growth in the G7, with 830,000 jobs created since the beginning of the pandemic, and a record 85.7% participation of Canadian women in the labour force.

The future is bright for Canada, and this budget delivers that future.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they are so out of touch.

They have presented a budget containing \$60 billion in additional inflationary spending, which represents an extra \$4,200 for every family in Canada. That is insane. Canadians can no longer foot the bill for a government that has lost control of spending in our country.

Canadians are struggling to pay their bills, feed their children and buy a house. How will they survive this budget?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians who are watching us from home today saw a disconnected Leader of the Opposition.

We listened carefully to Canadians. They asked us to do three things: take action to tackle the cost of living and, of course, the cost of food; invest in health care and dental care; and invest in the green economy to create the jobs of the future.

That is exactly what Canadians said. That is exactly what we are doing. We are building the future with Canadians to be a leader in the economy of the 21st century.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they admitted that deficits drive inflation and promised restraint. Instead, what they delivered was \$60 billion of brand new spending. That is \$4,200 for every family in Canada. These are families that are already skipping meals because they cannot afford food, and 35-year-olds are living in their parents' basements because they cannot afford housing.

How will Canadian families carry on their backs an extra \$4,200 in government costs when we are already going broke as a country?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** What is really disappointing, Mr. Speaker, is that the Leader of the Opposition has already told Canadians that he is voting against this budget and he is voting against them, because what he is voting against is a grocery rebate for 11 million Canadians. What he is voting against is dental care for nine million Canadians, including children, seniors and people with disabilities. What he is voting against is a tax-free savings account for first-time homebuyers.

He is not there for Canadians. We are.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we had eight years of these multi-billion dollar government programs, and what has it given us? We have 40-year highs in inflation, one in five Canadians skipping meals because they cannot afford groceries, nine in 10 young people stuck in their parents' basements because they cannot afford housing, and students living in homeless shelters because the cost of living has risen so fast. These hard-working Canadians who do the work deserve a country that works for them, not an out-of-control tax-and-squander NDP budget like the one we have before us today.

When will they rein in their spending so Canadians can pay their bills?

• (1430)

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what Canadians deserve is a government that is going to respond to them in their time of need. That is exactly what we are doing with this budget, and that is exactly what we have been doing for the past seven and a half years. Just as the Conservatives voted against the Canada child benefit, which provides up to \$7,000 a year for vulnerable families, they are voting against Canadians who need help in this difficult time. They are going to vote against a grocery rebate that is going to help 11 million Canadians. If they care about these issues, they have a sim-

ple option: reverse course, support this budget and support Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as it stands, carbon capture is not green, grey hydrogen is not green, nuclear energy is not green and Arctic offshore oil is not green.

Will the government admit that the big news in yesterday's budget, approximately \$17 billion, is intended exclusively for oil companies?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the short answer for my colleague is no. We will admit no such thing since that is not the case.

I would like to quote the David Suzuki Foundation, which said yesterday that investments in renewable electricity in budget 2023 could position Canada as a global leader in the clean economy.

I could also quote Greenpeace Canada, which talked about “unprecedented federal investments” in greening the grid, which will allow us to end our reliance on fossil fuels.

We agree with the Suzuki Foundation and Greenpeace but not with the Bloc Québécois.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the National Assembly, which speaks for Quebec, adopted a unanimous motion asking that no more money be invested in subsidies for the oil industry. However, that is just what Ottawa is doing.

Incidentally, Quebec also asked that the federal government not interfere in provincial jurisdictions, including dental care. That is exactly what Ottawa is doing.

Will the government admit that the budget it has tabled—which essentially caters to oil companies and the NDP—is a budget that does not work for Quebec?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for allowing me to continue the list of organizations that praised yesterday's federal budget.

I would like to quote the International Institute for Sustainable Development, which said that Canada is making historic investments in clean electricity and fresh water throughout the country.

I agree with the International Institute for Sustainable Development, but not with the leader of the Bloc Québécois.



*Oral Questions**[English]***HOUSING**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats are proud that we forced the government for a historic expansion of medicare to include dental care for the first time. That, alongside our push to double the GST rebate, means that families will save up to \$1,700 on average per year. We have also forced the government, for the first time ever, to have strings attached to investments to fight the climate crisis, which require guarantees of good wages and good union jobs. If the government is running out of ideas, we have more.

Will the government take the housing crisis seriously and finally build more homes that people can afford faster?

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I direct the hon. member to look at our national housing strategy, a record number of investments to make sure we build more affordable housing in this country, including the \$4-billion recently announced housing accelerator fund to set us as a country to double housing construction and pay particular attention to affordable housing. In addition to that, we are making sure we are protecting renters and helping them, through the Canada housing benefit and the top-up of \$500 for almost two million Canadian renters to help them with the high cost of rent.

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**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government is not meeting the urgency of the crisis with the steps required.

*[Translation]*

We are proud we forced this government to create a dental care program. We are proud we forced this government to double the GST credit, which will save families a lot of money. However, there is more work to be done. Economists have made it clear that a recession is very likely coming our way.

When will this Prime Minister introduce an EI system that covers all workers?

• (1435)

*[English]*

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that Canada's EI system is complex, and that is why we are focused on improving it. Budget 2023 invests in seasonal workers so that they have five additional weeks of coverage, for a total of 45 weeks. Also, in budget 2023, we propose establishing a new independent tripartite board of appeal, to hear cases regarding employment insurance claims.

In the past two years, the minister has led more than 35 national and regional round tables with workers, employers and academics. EI reform is a priority. We are on it and we will get it done.

*[Translation]***PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister fled the House of Commons instead of answering questions about public safety.

The current crime wave is the direct result of Liberal-NDP policies that put the criminals who are usually considered the most dangerous back on the streets. Half a dozen people have been murdered in the past week, including a police officer in Quebec.

Will the Prime Minister reverse the policies that set the most dangerous offenders loose? Will he protect the safety of Canadians?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that my hon. colleague did not hear the response from yesterday. I will repeat it.

We have worked with the provinces and territories to make changes to the bail system in order to address the issue of serious repeat offenders and to give the community a role in bail decisions.

Together we will address this issue and find solutions.

*[English]*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, still the Prime Minister does not have the guts to stand up and answer the question. Of course not. He is protected by armed men every single day, so he is not worried about the streets that are turning into savage chaos since he brought about catch-and-release bail.

We do not need to work with the provinces to change the bail laws. They are exclusively federal jurisdiction, right in the Criminal Code. The Prime Minister has unleashed a 32% increase in violent crime since he brought in the catch-and-release bail policies.

Will he finally summon the courage to stand on his feet, admit he was wrong, reverse the policies and choose jail, not bail, for violent offenders?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we see the Leader of the Opposition do, time and time again, is launch personal attacks and make outlandish allegations, like saying the Prime Minister of this country does not care about victims and does not care about those who are victimized.

*Oral Questions*

I can tell members right now that the policy advocated by the Leader of the Opposition was tried. In fact, in the United States, Newt Gingrich, when we go back to the Contract with America, said that the biggest mistake he made in his career was following the policies that the member is advocating. They were an abject failure. They did nothing for public safety, and neither will personal attacks on the Prime Minister or any other member of the House.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the policies of the Liberal government have led to this: on Saturday, another stabbing death on the TTC in Toronto. A sixteen-year-old boy was murdered. On Sunday, a 37-year-old man was stabbed to death at a Starbucks in Vancouver. On Monday, a police officer was killed in Quebec while responding to a call. On Tuesday, a teenage girl was shot to death in a car in Calgary. Today, a woman was stabbed and severely injured on a train in Calgary.

Violent crime is up 32% as a result of the Liberals' catch-and-release policy. What is it going to take? How many people have to die before they step up and fix it?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that our hearts go out to every single victim who has been impacted by violent crime.

The Conservatives heckle. They speak a lot about common sense. I will tell them what common sense is. Common sense is not returning to the stale and failed policies that led to police cuts by Conservatives, which led to weakened borders as a result of the Conservative cuts, and that saw Conservatives give up on vulnerable Canadians, while this government continues to support them.

Drop the slogans. Let us focus on solutions. Let us do this work together so we can protect our communities.

• (1440)

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal minister can make up whatever stories he wants, but the proof of the priority, or lack of priority, on fighting violent crime is in black and white in the Liberals' budget. There was not one mention of fighting violent crime in the budget yesterday. It is not a priority for the Liberals.

The reality is if Canadians want repeat violent offenders out of our communities, the Liberal government is the very last government that is going to do it. Its eight-year record of catch-and-release policies proves that. Is that not right?

It is never going to fix this and it is only going to make it worse. Is that not right?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague purports to care about victims. Where was she when there was an opportunity for her to support the \$450 million invested in the CBSA to stop the illegal flow of guns into our country? Where was she, and the rest of the Conservative Party, when it came to supporting law enforcement with over \$360 million? What did they do? They voted against it. Where was she when it came to the \$250 million under the building safer communities fund to support vulnerable Canadians with mental health supports? They voted against it. I invite the Conservatives to get on board so we can protect our communities.

[*Translation*]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Tuesday, in Calgary, a teenage girl was shot while sitting in a car. No one knows why. The night before in Louisville, Sergeant Maureen Breau was killed in the line of duty. Violence in on the rise everywhere in Canada. In order to deal with this issue, the Prime Minister passed Bill C-5, which allows violent criminals to serve their sentence from the comfort of their own home and in the communities where they committed their crimes.

I introduced Bill C-325 to correct the monumental error that is Bill C-5. Will the Prime Minister and his caucus support it?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member is saying is entirely false. Serious crimes deserve serious consequences. Bill C-5 allows for such sentences only in cases where there is no threat to public safety. We are working with the provinces and territories to address the problems in the system. We will improve the system by working together. Sloganeering does not help. It is by working together that we will find the solution.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Justice just said was preposterous. Before the holidays, as soon as Bill C-5 passed, Jonathan Gravel, a man who had violently sexually assaulted a woman, was given a 20-month sentence that he could serve at home, while watching Netflix, rather than going to prison. If not for Bill C-5, that guy would be behind bars.

I just introduced Bill C-325, which would correct those kinds of appalling situations. These cases are really shocking. Will the Minister of Justice try to understand that and agree to support my bill?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-5 was to address the problem of systemic racism and the systemic overrepresentation of indigenous and Black people in the justice system. Serious crimes always deserve serious consequences. If my hon. colleague wants to attack a judgment handed down by a judge in our system, he is free to do so, but I think it would be far more productive to work together to come up with solutions to other problems in the system.

*Oral Questions***DENTAL CARE**

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in yesterday's budget, the Liberals chose to spend heavily in areas of provincial jurisdiction to please the NDP, but that is not what Quebecers need. That is why, this morning, the Quebec government asked to opt out with compensation from the federal dental care program because it already has one. Quebec rightly explains that, before new programs are created, existing programs should be adequately funded.

Is the government committed to giving Quebec the right to opt out with full compensation?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear the member make the connection with the major investments announced by the Prime Minister on February 7 and confirmed in the budget tabled yesterday by the Minister of Finance. These investments will support hundreds of thousands of Canadians, patients and workers across Quebec. In addition, the dental insurance program that will be implemented in the coming years and months will also help millions of Quebecers take better care of their oral health.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

**OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec is also concerned that the budget is diverting our money away from the environment to line the pockets of oil companies, with good reason. Up to \$37 billion over 10 years could be used for dirty energy projects or to indirectly stimulate the production of hydrocarbons. This morning, the National Assembly was unanimous. It is asking the federal government to halt all direct or indirect subsidies to oil and gas companies with Quebecers' money.

Will the government finally listen to the unanimous voice of Quebec and stop investing our money in dirty energy?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois constantly acts like the mother-in-law who is never satisfied and who is constantly pouting.

We invest in people in need, they pout. We invest in the environment, they pout. We invest in society as a whole, they pout. They are constantly pouting.

Instead, they should be happy that we are investing in health, dental care, the environment, and support to buy groceries.

That is a government that takes action.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister of inflation said she did not want to add fuel to the inflationary fire, yet in yesterday's budget she literally threw a \$43-billion jerry can on the inflationary fire that she created in the first place and literally put \$4,300 of extra cost on each and every Canadian household. Inflation is at a 40-year high. Gas, groceries,

home heating, mortgages and rents have all doubled because of the failed policies of the Liberal-NDP government.

In what world is it fair to add an extra \$4,300 on the backs of hard-working Canadian households?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives can lack ambition for this country, but the Liberals know that we have a golden opportunity to build the economy for the future, to have hundreds of thousands of jobs in hydrogen, clean tech and green tech to feed and fuel the world. That is why our budget puts in the building blocks for the economy of the future, puts a marker down to help Canadians struggling with inflation and reinforces our health care system for the next 10 years.

The Conservatives do not like it. Canadians asked us to do it and that is our job. We are going to continue to deliver for Canadians.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it will be adding \$4,300 on the backs of each and every household. The Liberals think everyone is stupid, that we should join in on their war on work and on paycheques, that we should support their failed inflationary policies. We are not gullible like the NDP. We are going to stand up for Canadians every single day. This is a government that says it is fiscally prudent, then turns around and pile-drives Canadians with an extra \$4,300 of cost.

The Liberals claim that they care about the pain of Canadians, yet they are going to increase the costs of their failed carbon tax this Saturday. Again, in what world is it fair to add an extra \$4,300 on the backs of hard-working Canadian families?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in what world is it fair to talk to Canadians who are dealing with the most difficult times since the Second World War, while using the kind of incendiary language and misrepresentation of fact that we heard from the other side?

We are going through a global inflation challenge, but this is a pattern of behaviour where they make it personal, they attack and they make up facts. Take the Prime Minister being in London, where they talked about the cost of a hotel room. That hotel room was for more than one room and it included rooms for security. There is a constant effort on the part of the party opposite—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member has 10 seconds left. Please proceed.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Mark Holland:** Mr. Speaker, it would behoove us in this House when we are dealing with issues that are as serious as what we are dealing with, instead of advancing a partisan interest, which was certainly incredibly evident in that last question with its hyperbole and misrepresentation, to instead deal seriously with the issues in front of us honestly.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, after eight years, the Liberal government clearly demonstrated that the out-of-control spending is not over.

We have a \$43-billion deficit. That is \$43 billion that we do not have. That is \$43 billion that our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren will have to pay back. That is \$43 billion that will contribute to inflation. Furthermore, taxes will increase on Saturday.

Ultimately, the \$43-billion deficit means an extra \$4,200 in debt for every Canadian family.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to rise in the House and repeat his famous line, “The budget is going to balance itself”?

• (1450)

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during these difficult times around the world, the budget tells Canadians they can continue to count on the government being at their side.

We will meet the challenge posed today and in the future by introducing a new grocery rebate that will benefit 11 million Canadians. We will increase payments for the health system.

We will invest in the future of our economy. We will lay the cornerstone for a strong economy and a strong future. It is our duty, and we will do it for and with Canadians.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, almost exactly a year ago today, the Minister of Finance said, “We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline.” Today, the opposite is true.

She said, “Our deficits must continue to be reduced.” Today, the opposite is true.

She also said that the debt “must—and will—be paid down”, but the exact opposite is true.

Will the finance minister rise from her seat in the House of Commons, look Canadians in the eye and apologize for lying to them?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent. Yes, I will look him and the Canadians watching at home in the eye.

We listened to Canadians. That is something that the members on that side of the House should do a little more often.

Canadians asked us to help them with the cost of living. The grocery rebate will help 11 million Canadians. That is what being there for people looks like.

Canadians also asked us to help them with health care. We are making investments in that sector because it is a priority for Canadians.

They also asked us to create the jobs of tomorrow because they want a future for their children, and that is exactly what we are doing.

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[English]

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the average price for a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto has now hit \$2,500. The cost of housing in the country is skyrocketing. We are in a housing crisis that is gripping the entire nation. Every community is feeling the impact.

People cannot find a home that is in their budget. People are struggling with inadequate housing. This government does not understand how serious it is. When will this Prime Minister take the housing crisis seriously and finally build more homes that people can afford faster?

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in addition to the \$4-billion housing accelerator fund to speed up the construction of new housing for more Canadians, a rent-to-own program, a \$500 federal top-up for Canadian renters, a \$40,000 tax-free first home savings account and new guidelines for protecting Canadians with mortgages facing exceptional circumstances, budget 2023 doubles housing construction in this decade, directly supports those with the cost of housing, helps Canadians to save for their first home, curbs unfair practices that drive up the price of housing and supports the construction of deeply affordable housing.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, economists are warning that a recession is very likely coming our way. The reality is that the debate is not about whether or not it is coming, but about how big or small it is.

Workers are staring down the face of a recession with an EI program that does not cover all workers. Unions, leaders and organizers have all raised the concern and alarm bells that we need an EI system that works. When will this government fix EI so that it is there for every worker?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we understand that EI benefits need to be fair, more responsive and more adequate to the needs of Canada's evolving workforce. That is why we are committed to comprehensively modernizing the EI system.

We consulted widely with unions, workers, employers and other partners so that we can build an EI system that meets the needs of Canadians for decades to come. We have already extended EI sickness benefits from 15 to 26 weeks, and with budget 2023, we propose extending support for seasonal workers until October 2024.

The minister has always said that we need to get this right. This is a priority, we are on it and we will get this done.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, increases in duties such as those on alcohol can sometimes provide predictability to businesses. However, as all members of this House know, we are in an unusually high inflation situation. On April 1, the excise inflation adjustment on alcohol was set to increase by 6.3%.

I am asking the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance to tell this House what the government is doing to assist breweries, wine makers and spirit providers in this country.

• (1455)

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and friend from Etobicoke—Lakeshore and indeed all members of the Liberal caucus for raising this important issue for the government and for the hard work on the file.

In the budget we tabled yesterday, we temporarily capped the excise inflation adjustment for alcohol at 2% for one year as of April 1, 2023. This important—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I am sorry, I am going to have to interrupt. I am having time hearing the answer.

The hon. minister has about 20 seconds.

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore and all Liberals for leaning in on this issue. In the budget yesterday, we capped the inflation excise tax at 2%. That is great news for the tourism sector and great news for Canadians. We listened, and we delivered.

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**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's new spending spree in this year's budget would cost every Canadian family more than \$4,300, and Canada's food price index is showing that groceries for a family of four are going to be more than \$1,000 in 2023, yet the Prime Minister wants to make food even more expensive by increasing the carbon tax on April 1.

Why is the Prime Minister choosing to increase taxes and fan the inflationary flames, rather than make food more affordable for every Canadian family?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the Conservative members of Parliament really cared about the cost of food, they would do something really simple, which is support this budget, because in it there is a grocery rebate for 11 million Canadians, which would help them with the high cost of food.

If the Conservative members of Parliament cared about the high cost of living on families, they would have supported our Canada child benefit, which provides up to \$7,000 per child per family for the most vulnerable. They have some easy things that they could do to support Canadians.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if they really cared about the price of food, they would decrease the carbon tax because then Canadians would not need a grocery rebate.

A food professor, Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, said the grocery rebate is not going to help because it is the carbon tax and not climate change that is driving food inflation, and he is right. The Liberals' new spending in this year's budget would cost every Canadian \$4,300 a year, and when the Liberals triple the carbon tax, it will cost Alberta families a net loss of \$2,200 a year. How many families are going to have to go hungry before the Liberals realize that this is a mistake, and axe the carbon tax?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the difference between us and the Conservatives is that no matter what happens or what is going on, the Conservatives always cling to one ideology: austerity and cuts.

Canadians know that we on this side of the House are there for them, whether that is during a pandemic, during a war in Ukraine or facing the rising cost of living. They know we are there to help those in need with the cost of groceries and rent, and to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality universal public health care across the country.

*Oral Questions**[English]***THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, less than one year ago, the Deputy Prime Minister stood in the House and said, “We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline and our deficits must continue to be reduced.... This is our fiscal anchor. This is a line we will not cross.”

That is a promise made and a promise broken. The big spending budget yesterday would add \$4,300 a year of spending and debt for every household in Canada, and it increases the debt-to-GDP ratio next year. Why does the government continue to make promises it has no intention of keeping?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite can look at the budget, right in the lines, and see very clearly that the deficit would continue to go down every single year for the next five years. In fact, this year's budget is lower than last year's budget, and all of this is happening amid great economic headwinds around the globe.

Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. It has the lowest debt in the G7 and the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in all of the G7. Those are the facts, and that is on our watch.

• (1500)

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister also said, “The pandemic debt we incurred to keep Canadians safe and solvent must [and will] be paid down.” Even just a few months ago, the Deputy Prime Minister said that the budget would be balanced. That is another promise made and another promise broken.

Now the government is adding \$4,300 in new spending and debt for every household in Canada, and there is no balance in sight. Why do the broken promises keep costing Canadians so much?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that, despite the extraordinary need to respond to a once-in-a-century global pandemic, Canada maintains the healthiest fiscal position of any G7 economy. The reality is that it is fascinating for me to watch the Conservatives refuse to acknowledge the measures we are putting in place to support Canadians. These are the measures to ensure that people can afford the cost of living as families struggle with the cost of inflation, the measures that are creating jobs in our communities and the measures that are investing in health care so people who live in our neighbourhoods can have access to quality care and maybe have a family doctor. We make these promises, and we keep these promises, plus we do it in a fiscally responsible way.

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*[Translation]***AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Ottawa is betraying Quebec's aerospace industry.

Commenting on the budget, Aéro Montréal laments the lack of meaningful measures to help SMEs.

As if that were not enough, Ottawa is actually undermining our industry. The Liberals are handing Boeing a \$9-billion military contract on a silver platter, excluding Bombardier and not giving Quebec one penny in economic spinoffs.

When will Ottawa start supporting Quebec's aerospace industry instead of giving our money to our American competitors without a tender process?

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

We are there for the aerospace industry. We always have been and always will be.

It seems that my colleague's memory is failing a bit. He should recall that Premier Legault and the Canadian Prime Minister made the biggest announcement in Canadian aerospace history. That was just a few months ago.

We have always been there. We will be there for aerospace workers.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it would seem that Ottawa is doing it on purpose. Not only is there nothing in the budget for the future of the aerospace industry, but the Liberals are maintaining a poorly named and ill-conceived luxury tax that will prevent our industry from selling its planes at competitive prices.

Not only is Ottawa not doing anything to get us more contracts tomorrow, but it is ensuring that there will not be any today either. Right now, 2,000 jobs are in jeopardy if the Liberals keep the tax as is.

Will they finally suspend it so that the mistakes can be fixed before jobs are lost?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have an income tax regime here in Canada and a tax system that requires all Canadians to pay their fair share.

Let us look at the budget announcements for Quebec. There is \$447 million for Quebec through a health transfer top-up; \$47.8 million over 9 years to redevelop the Bonaventure expressway; and new investments, meaning over \$1 million, to protect French in Quebec.

We are meeting expectations, and the Bloc wants to pick a fight.

[English]

### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, lost in yesterday's budget bonanza was the announcement of the appointment of the interim Ethics Commissioner, a Ms. Martine Richard. Can the Prime Minister confirm for the House, and reassure Canadians, that Ms. Martine Richard is not the same person who is the sister-in-law of the intergovernmental affairs minister, who has been found guilty of breaking the Conflict of Interest Act?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, the interim Ethics Commissioner is a career public servant who was, in fact, engaged by the Stephen Harper government to come into the Ethics Commissioner's office. She was number two in the Ethics Commissioner's office, and she has been working there for over a decade.

It makes absolute and complete logical sense that she would be acting on an interim capacity, considering all the information I just shared. The member will be aware that an ethical screen always exists to ensure no such conflict occurs.

• (1505)

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have got to be kidding. I guess they got tired of being found guilty. These are the Liberals. The intergovernmental affairs minister, the new Ethics Commissioner's brother-in-law, was found guilty of breaking the Conflict of Interest Act. The Prime Minister was found guilty of breaking the act. The trade minister was found guilty of breaking the act.

This is a cabinet of serial lawbreakers, and now they have an inside man working at the Ethics Commissioner's office. How can Canadians have confidence in the officers of Parliament if these guys are stacking the deck?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, Martine Richard is a woman, not a man. Second, that individual has worked in the Ethics Commissioner's office for 10 years. She was engaged when Stephen Harper was in government.

Questioning her credibility, attacking her in that way and continuing with those kinds of conspiracy theories all have a place on Reddit. I am not sure they have a place in this chamber.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what is not a conspiracy theory is that Prime Minister Stephen Harper was never found guilty of breaking the Conflict of Interest Act, unlike the current Prime Minister. The Conservatives never appointed family members to serve in the Ethics Commissioner's office because they wanted Canadians to have confidence in their public institutions, unlike the serial law-breaking Prime Minister, who has twice been found guilty of breaking ethics laws. His intergovernmental affairs minister now has his sister-in-law, who is going to make sure there are no more guilty findings for the Liberals.

### Oral Questions

Will the Liberals assure Canadians today that they will appoint someone who is independent and does not have the appearance of a conflict of interest?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we absolutely will. In the employment of any independent officer of Parliament, we always ensure that such individuals are independent and beyond reproach. I find it extremely disappointing that they are taking somebody who has worked in the Ethics Commissioner's office for a decade and is now operating in an interim capacity—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. government House leader has the floor.

**Hon. Mark Holland:** Mr. Speaker, when we throw around accusations in this place, and when we take public servants who have served their country for more than a decade, I would suggest that we be judicious in the way we approach it.

This is somebody who was appointed when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, who has worked in the Ethics Commissioner's office for a decade and is acting in an interim capacity while we work with all parties collaboratively to find the right individual to be the permanent Ethics Commissioner.

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[Translation]

### DENTAL CARE

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that provincial and territorial programs do not cover dental care needs equally across Canada. Yesterday, as part of the 2023 budget, our government announced that it was committed to moving forward with a transformative investment to provide dental care to Canadians who need it by creating the new Canadian dental care plan.

Can the Minister of Health tell us more about the current plan to move forward with our dental care plan?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from London West for her question. She knows, as we all do, that good oral health is essential for physical and mental health.

That is why we are so pleased that, to date, 250,000 children have received the \$650 benefit to take better care of their oral health. That is why we are so pleased that, by 2025, we will be rolling out our dental care plan for all Canadians who do not have private insurance and earn less than \$90,000 a year. That is why we are so pleased that people with disabilities, seniors and children will have access to the plan by the end of 2023.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week we found out that Canada imports all its baby formula from other countries. For over a year, there have been shortages of baby formula all across this country, with no end in sight. The shelves are now bare, leaving many families stressed, frustrated and desperate.

Moms and dads who rely on formula to feed their kids are now scared they will not be able to feed their babies. When does the Prime Minister intend to do something about this crisis?

• (1510)

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear this question, although I am also very troubled by the challenges that families, mothers, parents and fathers, like me, with children face in those very tight circumstances.

That is why Health Canada has made sure that, with special interim regulation policies, more than 70 additional formulas have been imported in the last few months to Canada, and more will come. We are working with international providers to have more infant formulas come more quickly to those children and families who need them.

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**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for the second year in a row, Liberals have expropriated \$5 million a quota from elver harvesters to give to others without compensation. This is against two decades of DFO policy that a willing buyer needs a willing seller.

The minister, in committee this week, stated that the expropriation will come mainly from harvesters who have not used their quota, yet her department has said it will come equally from all licence holders. Who was right? Was it the minister, or her officials?

**Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to advancing first nations' treaty right to fish. The elver fishery is unique and the preferred approach remains a willing buyer and a willing seller. That is the way to create predictability in the market and allow all harvesters to adequately plan.

However, in keeping with the Ahousaht court decision, we acknowledge that there are times that there is not a willing seller at a market price. A decision for the 2023 season has not been made, and it will be shared soon.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, more than 50,000 gathered in Toronto last Saturday to support a free Iran. Families of the victims of flight PS752 were there. Survivors of the regime were there, and people with loved ones suffering in Iran were there.

However, the member for Don Valley West stormed out in the middle of the speech of a world-renowned women's rights advocate muttering something that I cannot repeat in the House. Her crime was to call out the government for not banning the IRGC terrorists.

Does he have the courage to stand up to apologize for his embarrassing display of disrespect, or is he going to storm out of here too?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think I can say safely that, without exception, everyone in this House stands with the people of Iran and their struggles against the regime, making sure that they stand with human rights. Every one of us is incredibly aligned on that issue.

Canada is recognized as a world leader in leading the way against the regime and for human rights. We have announced the 10th package of sanctions this last week. We have also made sure that IRGC officials cannot come to this country. We will continue to work.

Let me say that we may have different strategies—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

\* \* \*

**THE BUDGET**

**Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance presented budget 2023, "A Made-in-Canada Plan". Unlike the empty rhetoric of the Conservative Party, this is a real plan to deliver results for Canadians and one I am proud to share with my constituents of Hamilton Mountain.

Can the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance explain what this budget means for a strong middle class, an affordable economy and a healthy future for Canadians?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for her hard work on the file.

The budget aims to ensure that Canadians have more money in their pockets and invest in the challenges that we are facing today. It delivers on affordability by making sure there is a new grocery rebate that will help 11 million Canadians. It stabilizes and invests in our health care system in the long term, and it makes transformative investments to fight climate change, to build the economy of the future and to support Canadian businesses. That is what budget 2023 is about: delivering for Canadians.



*Points of Order*

Speaker of the House of Assembly for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ALLEGED USE OF UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday just before we adjourned, you made it very clear to the House that we are only supposed to address people by their riding or their title. However, yet again today we have seen, and in particular from the member for Calgary Forest Lawn, the use of names. I am not going to repeat it. Basically, he did not use the minister's real title, but rather a fictitious title he decided to make up.

I wonder if you could once again remind the House of this very important rule and perhaps even ask the member to apologize.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn want to respond? No, he does not.

I want to remind everyone, regardless of what side they are on, to please use respectful language and show some respect to each other. When we show disrespect, it bleeds out and comes back to bite us.

We will check Hansard, find out exactly what was said and go from there.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre is rising on a point of order.

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in describing increased rates of crime on the streets during question period, the member for Carleton used the derogatory term "savage", which is often used to describe indigenous people. Not only is that term racist, but it is also unparliamentary.

I want to invite the member for Carleton to retract that word and apologize.

**The Speaker:** Once again we will look into it, see exactly what the context was of the use and come back to it if we see it to be necessary.

We have another point of order, the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

● (1520)

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to the previous point of order that was just raised and the use of derogatory language in this place. Right now as we speak, there are members of the Conservatives who are trying to speak over us on a really serious issue. The use of that unparliamentary language is not satisfactory to the members of the House, including many of the indigenous members.

I ask that the Speaker take seriously the consideration by the member for Winnipeg Centre and that this word be retracted.

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we need to fight the climate crisis like we actually want to win. There is an incredible opportunity. If we make the right investments to tackle the climate crisis and tie that to good jobs, good union jobs and good wages, we can actually create positive economic growth. We did that in this budget. We forced the government to have strings attached to investments so that any dollar that goes to a company has to be tied to guarantees for good wages, good salaries and good union jobs.

Will the government commit to having strings attached to good jobs, good pay and union jobs for any future investments to incentivize business?

● (1515)

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. leader of the NDP for raising this question because we have done something in budget 2023 that is new and demonstrates leadership by our Liberal government. In the top investment tax credits, whether it is clean technology, hydrogen or the clean electricity grid, to earn the top credits, there needs to be labour participation. That labour participation needs to include apprentices. It will mean prevailing wages, as our labour partners asked. We are delivering for union workers, and we are delivering for Canadians.

\* \* \*

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, people with disabilities deserve better from the government. When the government was serious about child care, first came a federal investment of \$30 billion, then agreements with provinces and territories and then legislation. However, for Canadians with disabilities living in poverty, yesterday's budget told them to just keep waiting, putting billions for a car on the moon and new gifts for oil and gas companies ahead of their basic needs.

When will the government stop pretending agreements and legislation must be done before it puts some money on the table?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in Canada, no person with a disability should live in poverty. That is why we are creating the Canada disability benefit, a thoughtfully designed income supplement with the potential to seriously reduce poverty and improve financial security for hundreds of thousands of working-age persons with disabilities from coast to coast to coast. On February 3, Bill C-22 passed unanimously in this House, and it is currently being studied at a Senate committee. We look forward to its swift passage.

I am pleased to say that budget 2023 provides funding of \$21.5 million to continue work on the Canada disability benefit.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Derek Bennett,

*Private Members' Business*

**The Speaker:** I want to repeat what I just said. We will take a look in Hansard at the context of what was said, and I will get back to the House should I see fit.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

### NATIONAL STRATEGY RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACT

The House resumed from March 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-226, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice, be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:20 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of C-226 under Private Members' Business.

[*Translation*]

Call in the members.

• (1530)

[*English*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 288*)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garrison

Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
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)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—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	Sari
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sorbara
Sousa	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Trudeau	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Virani	Vuong
Weiler	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi— 179	

#### NAYS

##### Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers

*Private Members' Business*

**GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT**

The House resumed from March 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to order made Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-234 under Private Members' Business.

● (1545)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 289)*

**YEAS**

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blaikie	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Blois	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Green
Hallan	Hughes
Idlout	Jeneroux
Johns	Julian
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	Maguire
Martel	Masse

**PAIRED**

Members

Hoback	Simard
Vandenbeld	Wilkinson— 4

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.  
(Bill read the third time and passed)

Champoux	Chong
Cooper	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	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shiplay	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer— 145	

*Private Members' Business*

Mathysse	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Jaczek	Joly
Mazier	McCaulley (Edmonton West)	Jowhari	Kayabaga
McLean	McPherson	Kelloway	Khalid
Melillo	Michaud	Khera	Koutrakis
Moore	Morantz	Kusmierczyk	Lalonde
Morrice	Morrison	Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Morrissey	Motz	Lapointe	Lattanzio
Muys	Nater	Lauzon	LeBlanc
Normandin	O'Toole	Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Patzer	Paul-Hus	Long	Longfield
Pauzé	Perkins	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Perron	Plamondon	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Poilievre	Rayes	Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
Redekopp	Reid	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Rempel Garner	Richards	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Roberts	Rood	McLeod	Mendès
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay	Medicino	Miao
Scheer	Schmale	Miller	Murray
Seeback	Shields	Naqvi	Ng
Shipley	Sinclair-Desgagné	Noormohamed	O'Connell
Singh	Small	Oliphant	O'Regan
Soroka	Steinley	Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Ste-Marie	Stewart	Qualtrough	Robillard
Strahl	Stubbs	Rodriguez	Rogers
Thériault	Therrien	Romanado	Sahota
Thomas	Tochor	Sajjan	Saks
Tolmie	Trudel	Samson	Sari
Uppal	Van Popta	Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Vecchio	Vidal	Serré	Sgro
Vien	Viersen	Shanahan	Sheehan
Vignola	Villemure	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Vis	Vuong	Sorbara	Sousa
Wagantall	Warkentin	St-Onge	Sudds
Waugh	Webber	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Williams	Williamson	Thompson	Trudeau
Zarrillo	Zimmer— 176	Turnbull	Valdez
		Van Bynen	van Koeverden
		Vandal	Virani
		Weiler	Yip
		Zahid	Zuberi— 146

## NAYS

## Members

Aldag	Ali
Anand	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bradford	Brière
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gerretsen
Gould	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien

## PAIRED

## Members

Hoback	Simard
Vandenbeld	Wilkinson— 4

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Mr. Speaker, there were serious technical problems and I was unable to submit my vote for the first vote. I would ask for unanimous consent to do so now.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** Consent is granted and the member may cast her vote.

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ALLEGED USE OF UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to add to the point of order that was raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, who took issue with the use of the word “savage”. I want to provide some context.

On October 30, 2020, the member herself used that word in her intervention. On December 7, 2018, in Hansard, the NDP member for North Island—Powell River used that word as well. The Chair did not have any problem with that.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie used it on June 7, 2021.

[English]

I understand that the NDP likes to fake outrage, but it is ironic because this party has no problem propping up a government led by someone who has performed racist acts so many times that he has lost count—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I think it started off as a point of order, but it kind of went into debate.

As I mentioned, I will be looking into it to see the context of how it was said and then go from there.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre is rising on a point of order.

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that I have used the word “savage” when referring to the racist colonial history in this country. I wonder if the leader of the King's loyal opposition wants to go back to the time when there were acts with titles like an act to gradually civilize the savage in Canada. I hope we have moved past that in our—

• (1550)

**The Speaker:** Again, we are moving into debate.

I will be back with a ruling on that. We will look at the context that it was used in and come back should the House be required to.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 25 minutes.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to three petitions.

These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT**

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Income Tax Act.

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

\* \* \*

[English]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans entitled “Main Estimates 2023-24: Votes 1, 5 and 10 under Department of Fisheries and Oceans”.

## HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eight report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities entitled “Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative”.

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 33rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

It is Wednesday, and this is my third report this week, which is how much work the procedure and House affairs committee has been doing.

The committee advises that, pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the items added to the order of precedence on Thursday, March 16, and recommended that the items listed herein, which it has determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the report is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on International Trade entitled “Main Estimates 2023-24: Vote 1 under Canadian Commercial Corporation, Vote 1 under Invest in Canada Hub”.

*Routine Proceedings***STUDENT DEBT RELIEF ACT**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce C-328, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy on student loan debt.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to introduce the student debt relief act, with thanks to the great member for Edmonton Griesbach for seconding this legislation.

Far too many Canadian students have been forced to assume a crushing debt load simply to receive an education. In Canada, the average student loan debt is now \$28,000 for a bachelor's degree and \$15,300 for college graduates. This legislation provides for the development of a national strategy to address student loan debt by cancelling debt from government-provided students loans, permanently eliminating interest from all government-provided student loans, increasing nonrepayable student grants and protecting future students by reducing the cost of post-secondary education across Canada.

In fact, in my view it should be free.

New Democrats believe that every student who studies hard should be able to access a world-class education without going into debt.

I call on all parliamentarians to work together to make debt-free, accessible post-secondary education a reality for all students across Canada.

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

\* \* \*

• (1555)

**PETITIONS****HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Winnipeg North was hoping I would present a concurrence motion today, but the House is eagerly awaiting the address of the Leader of the Opposition on the budget, and I know that the member did not want to miss that.

I will only be presenting one petition today in anticipation of the great speech to come. It is in support of Bill C-257, my private member's bill. This is a bill that would combat the grave problem of political discrimination in this country.

Petitioners want the House to support Bill C-257, which would work to end discrimination on the basis of political belief or activity and also defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

I hope members will support this legislation.

**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition from the wonderful parishioners of Saint Clare of Assisi Catholic Church in my riding, where they go on to state that the undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the House of Commons to adopt human rights and environmental due diligence legislation.

I will just quickly say two of the points that they seek, which are to require companies to prevent adverse human rights impacts and environmental damage throughout their global operations and their supply chains, and for there to be meaningful consequences for companies that fail to carry out or report on adequate due diligence and to establish a legal right for people who have been harmed to seek justice in Canadian courts.

[*Translation*]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition today on behalf of one of Pastor Guilhot's victims who suffered very severe physical abuse for which the pastor was found guilty.

The petition was signed by over 1,100 people across the country. They are calling for section 43 of the Criminal Code to be repealed once and for all. The petition states the following: whereas it is unacceptable that, in 2023, section 43 of the Criminal Code which came into force in 1892 allows parents and their representatives to use force to inflict corporal punishment on a child as long as the force is deemed reasonable; that the definition of reasonable force is subjective and variable; that Canadian legislation must evolve to reflect society's values; and that Canada abolished the use of corporal punishment toward adults in 1972.

I want to point out that the government of Canada has committed to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, including call to action 6 which calls for the repeal of section 43.

For those reasons and many others, I am tabling this petition, and I hope that the government will hear the call of all these people and the victims who are trying to get this section repealed.

[*English*]

**CHILD ABDUCTION**

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table petition e-4151, which deals with the scourge of international parental child abduction. This is where one parent takes a child out of the country to attempt to deny the other parent contact with their child.

The petition points out that the last time the House of Commons studied this problem was more than 25 years ago. It calls on us to designate April 25 as a day of observation for victims of international parental child abduction, and it calls on the House to study ways that the government could provide effective assistance for parents trying to recover contact with their children and to protect those children's rights to be in contact with both parents.

• (1600)

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present several petitions in the House today. They were all spearheaded by one of my constituents, Pat Derbyshire, and reflect her genuine concern for human rights and protecting the environment internationally.

YEMEN

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents and stakeholders in my community of Mississauga—Erin Mills and citizens across Canada.

Petition e-3899 considers the ongoing humanitarian and refugee crisis in Yemen and has garnered over 1,000 signatures. As of today, more than four and a half million Yemeni people have been displaced or forced to flee their homes due to conflict, and millions more face daily threats that require urgent humanitarian aid. These petitioners consider vulnerable Yemeni people, including children, who face ongoing violence while their country deals with the real threat of widespread famine.

The undersigned, who are citizens and residents of Canada, call upon the Government of Canada to accept Yemeni citizens as refugees by applying the same support granted to Ukrainians, Afghans, Syrians and Iraqis.

CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith who are calling on the government to take the climate crisis seriously and to enact legislation that would ensure an inclusive and equitable transition to a sustainable economy. This petition includes calls to, among other things, reduce emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels, wind down the fossil fuel industry, create good green jobs and drive inclusive workforce development, protect and strengthen human rights and workers' rights, expand the social safety net and pay for the transition by increasing taxes on the wealthiest.

I would like to thank The Council of Canadians and all signatories for bringing forward this important petition.

SPORT

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first one says, whereas children and youth have the right to participate in any sport in Canada free of maltreatment, abuse and harm, athletes' human rights are being violated. With the current sports system approach, which lacks a transparent mechanism completely independent of sport to address maltreatment complaints, an inquiry has been set with the Dublin Inquiry. These petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to call a judicial inquiry into the sports system of Canada.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition I have is talking about companies that are based in Canada but operating elsewhere in the world, committing human

*Routine Proceedings*

rights abuse, doing environmental damage or not operating with integrity. The undersigned citizens are calling on the House of Commons to require companies to prevent adverse human rights impacts and environmental damage throughout their global operations and supply chains, to do its due diligence and make sure there are meaningful consequences for those companies that fail to carry out and report with due diligence and to establish a legal right for people who have been harmed to seek justice in Canadian courts.

**Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present a petition on behalf of 434 signatories from across Canada calling for new federal legislation that would require Canadian companies to prevent adverse human rights impacts and environmental damage throughout their global operations and supply chains. This petition also calls for Canadian companies to carefully assess how they may be contributing to human rights abuses and for the establishment of a legal right for people who have been harmed to seek justice in Canadian courts.

[Translation]

INSECTICIDES

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present this petition regarding insect pollinators, specifically honeybees.

Honeybees are essential to our food system, to food security and to our ecosystem. It is clear that honeybees are threatened by insecticides, specifically the pesticides known as “neonicotinoids”.

Global studies, including studies from the European Commission, prove that neonicotinoids pose a threat to honeybees. The European Commission began the process of implementing a full ban on the use of neonicotinoids in 2017.

Accordingly, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to do the same.

• (1605)

[English]

SHIP RECYCLING

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition on behalf of residents of Union Bay, British Columbia, where there is an unregulated ship-breaking outfit doing business.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners raise concerns to the House that there is a significant risk to workers and the environment associated with ship-breaking due to the presence of a wide variety of hazardous materials at the end of life of marine vessels. Unlike other jurisdictions, Canada lacks standards when it comes to ship-breaking, and there is a lack of domestic oversight of ship recycling and disposal of end-of-life vessels.

The petitioners are calling on the government to simply develop enforceable federal standards to reduce the negative environmental and social impacts of ship recycling that meet or exceed the ship-recycling regulations in the EU, to provide assistance through loans or grants to seek long-term reputable ship-recycling companies to facilitate the implementation of new federal standards into operations and, finally, to develop a strategy for recycling end-of-life federally owned marine vessels.

HOUSING

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of residents of my community. It states that whereas every Canadian has a right to a safe and affordable place to call home, whereas the Canadian government legislated the recognition of housing as a human right—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** It is the first time I am being heckled during a petition.

Whereas the Canadian government—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has the floor.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize this is very complimentary of the government, so I understand why the Conservatives would heckle.

Whereas the Canadian government has launched its first-ever national housing strategy, with more than \$72 billion invested, and whereas budget 2022 earmarked a historic \$14-billion investment to double the construction of new housing in this decade, the undersigned residents of Kingston and the Islands call upon the Government of Canada to continue investing in affordable housing and improve housing outcomes for all Canadians.

**Hon. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to correct the record from my answer in question period today. Licences for the elver fishery have been issued for the 2023 season.

\* \* \*

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1230, 1232, 1233, 1235, 1238, 1239 and 1242.

[Text]

Question No. 1230—**Ms. Niki Ashton:**

With regard to nurses employed by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to provide health care to rural, remote and Northern communities, broken down by province or

territory: (a) what is the current number of nurses employed by ISC who are (i) full-time, (ii) part-time; (b) what is the total number of new nurses hired since September 1, 2022; (c) what is the current number of vacant nursing positions; and (d) which nursing stations had their capacity reduced due to staffing shortages in other communities?

**Mr. Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, is concerned, the response is as follows.

With regard to part (a), as of January 31, 2023, across the department, ISC employed 783 nurses in a variety of direct and supportive services. With regard to part (a)(i), there are 375 full-time community health nurses, or NUCHN, and 29 full-time general duty nurses, or NUHOS.

For the NUHOS, classified nurses work in the two federal hospitals in Manitoba.

With regard to part (a)(ii), there are 368 part-time NUCHN and 11 part-time NUHOS.

With regard to part (b), since September 1, 2022, ISC has hired 111 NUCHN and two NUHOS.

With regard to part (c), in the 50 remote and isolated communities where ISC directly manages primary health care, registered nurses are the primary health human resource, and they are supplemented by other regulated nurses, such as nurse practitioners and licensed practical nurses, and other disciplines such as paramedics. Team rotations in nursing stations are managed through a national nurse scheduling system, and as a result of the transient rotational nature of the workforce, meaning two weeks in and two weeks out of community, ISC determines a point in time measure of “operational vacancy”.

As of February 15, 2023, the average operational vacancy was determined to be 68% for the public servant positions, which was then augmented with auxiliary and contracted resources. The actual number of public servant nursing positions in ISC staffed nursing stations in order to be fully staffed on any given day is 223, which is 100% occupancy. The average fill rate in recent months of these 223 positions includes 71 public servant nurses, leaving 152 positions required to be augmented by 79 contracted agency nurses and 30 auxiliary health human resources, and leaving 43 nursing positions unstaffed. It is therefore 223 less 71, which is 152, divided by 223, or 68% minus the 35% covered by contracted resources. That leaves a 33% overall nurse vacancy, which has been augmented with 30 auxiliary positions.



With regard to part (d), in Manitoba and Ontario, all remote and isolated ISC-managed nursing stations have experienced reduced capacity due to staffing shortages in the past two months. Over the past two months, all Manitoba and Ontario nursing stations ran below capacity for at least one day. This is due primarily to staffing shortages and the rotational nature of this kind of nursing.

To address these vacancies, ISC contracts agencies to quickly augment staff levels in nursing stations with high, urgent needs. ISC continues to monitor staff levels on a daily basis and adjusts staffing as necessary.

Nurses working in remote and isolated communities are some of the most resourceful and resilient health care professionals across Canada. In acknowledgement of their efforts and the current challenges in staffing, the Government of Canada and the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada have reached an agreement to increase the existing recruitment and retention allowances for ISC nurses working in these locations.

It is essential now more than ever to ensure nurses are available and accessible to indigenous peoples living in remote and isolated locations. We recognize the effects that staffing challenges at health centres and nursing stations in remote and isolated communities can have on first nations communities. As such, ISC continues to work closely with indigenous partners, communities and leaders to pursue timely solutions to raise staffing levels and maintain the health and well-being of indigenous peoples.

**Question No. 1232—Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to the new Apprenticeship Service announced in budget 2021: (a) how many employers applied to receive the \$5,000 financial support (i) in 2021-22, (ii) between January 2022 and February 8, 2023; (b) how many employers applied to receive the \$10,000 financial support (i) in 2021-22, (ii) between January 2022 and February 8, 2023; (c) how many first-year apprentices in (i) construction, (ii) manufacturing, Red Seal trades, were hired through this program; (d) how many first-year apprentices identified as (i) women, (ii) racialized Canadians, (iii) persons with disabilities, were hired through this program; and (e) how much program spending was done (i) in 2021-22, (ii) between January 2022 and February 8, 2023?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the new apprenticeship service announced in budget 2021, the answer is as follows. With regard to part (a)(i), all projects started in fiscal year 2022-23; therefore, no employers applied to receive financial support in 2021-22.

With regard to part (a)(ii), ESDC's systems only capture data by the number of employers that received financial support to hire new first-year apprentices, according to province or territory. The program can only report on financial incentives when paid to employers by intermediaries. ESDC's systems only record the total number of employers that have received financial incentives and do not yet distinguish between the first \$5,000 and the additional \$5,000 if the apprentice hired is from an equity-deserving group, for a total of \$10,000.

With regard to part (b)(i), all projects started in fiscal year 2022-23; therefore, no employers applied to receive financial support in 2021-22. With regard to part (b)(ii), ESDC's systems only capture data by the number of employers that received financial support to hire new first-year apprentices, according to province or

*Routine Proceedings*

territory. The program can only report on financial incentives when paid to employers by intermediaries. ESDC's systems only record the total number of employers that have received financial incentives and do not yet distinguish between the first \$5,000 and the additional \$5,000 if the apprentice hired is from an equity-deserving group, for a total of \$10,000.

With regard to part (c), from April 2022 to December 2022, a total of 1076 new apprentices were hired in the 39 eligible Red Seal trades, with 947 in construction trades and 129 in manufacturing trades.

With regard to part (d), the information required to determine how many first-year apprentices identified as women, racialized Canadians and/or persons with disabilities is not captured through regular reporting. Data will be collected at the beginning of the next fiscal year through an annual survey of recipients.

With regard to part (e)(i), all projects started in fiscal year 2022-23; consequently, zero dollars were spent in 2021-22. With regard to part (e)(ii), between April 1, 2022, and February 8, 2023, \$112.25 million was spent.

**Question No. 1233—Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the Integrity Services Branch (ISB) of Employment and Social Development Canada: (a) how many investigators were employed as of (i) January 1, 2022, (ii) January 1, 2023; (b) how many individuals were trained to be ISB investigators in 2022; (c) how many ISB investigators were (i) hired, (ii) stopped working (retired, resigned, etc.), in 2022; (d) how many ISB investigators completed the post-training monitoring in 2022; and (e) how many ISB investigators were in post-training monitoring as of January 1, 2023?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to how many investigators were employed as of January 1, 2022, it was 1,219, and as of January 1, 2023, it was 1,242.

With regard to how many individuals were trained to be ISB investigators in 2022, it was 759.

With regard to how many ISB investigators were hired, it was 430, and 402 stopped working after retiring, resigning, etc., in 2022.

With regard to how many ISB investigators completed the post-training monitoring in 2022, it was 435.

With regard to how many ISB investigators were in post-training monitoring as of January 1, 2023, it was 603.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1235—Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:**

With regard to the request from the promoters of Democratic Spaces and Cuba Decide to impose targeted sanctions on 12 Cuban officials and entities responsible for gross violations of human rights in the aftermath of the protests of July 11, 2021: (a) has Global Affairs Canada (GAC) reviewed this request; (b) what information does GAC have on the human rights situation in Cuba, and how is GAC currently acting on this information and on the reports of growing repression on the island; (c) what information does GAC have on the situation of political prisoners and persons detained solely for exercising their freedom of assembly and expression in Cuba, and how is GAC currently following up on this information and on the reports of their being kept in arbitrary detention, mistreatment and torture; and (d) what are the details of any document or correspondence relating to the request to impose targeted sanctions?

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response to parts (a) to (d), approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

Canada strongly advocates for freedom of expression throughout the world, including in Cuba.

Canada strongly supports the rights and democratic aspirations of the Cuban people. Cubans have the right to express themselves, and their voices should be heard. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has raised the importance of human rights with her Cuban counterpart, and Canadian officials regularly raise human rights issues at every opportunity, including during the recent political consultations held in Havana.

Through bilateral engagement, in-person meetings and phone calls, Canadian officials have had frank exchanges with Cuba on Canada's continued concerns over crackdowns against peaceful protesters. Global Affairs Canada is aware that there are over 800 detainees following protests in July 2021 and has been monitoring any new developments. In October 2022, Canada joined with other like-minded countries to formally raise human rights concerns, including arbitrary detention, with the Cuban government.

Canada is committed to continuing this work through both dialogue and diplomatic pressure. Canada's embassy regularly reports on human rights developments, including through a comprehensive human rights report on human rights to Cuba during the United Nations universal periodic review process, which will be conducted again in 2023. The embassy also regularly meets with like-minded countries to discuss recent events and developments on the human rights front.

Furthermore, Canada supports open dialogue to create the space for interested stakeholders to express their concerns and present ideas for constructive solutions to advancing human rights in Cuba and globally. For example, in November 2022, Canadian officials met with Democratic Spaces and Cuba Decide with respect to their recommendations to advance human rights in Cuba.

Finally, Canada is judicious in its approach to deploying sanctions and is committed to their effective and coordinated use when appropriate. To that end, Canada has established a rigorous due diligence process to consider and evaluate possible cases of human rights violations, corruption or other circumstances that may warrant the use of sanctions, taking into consideration the broader political and international contexts when deciding whether sanctions or any other tools in Canada's foreign policy tool box may be an appropriate response.

**Question No. 1238—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:**

With regard to the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), since its inception: (a) what is the total number of individuals eligible for CRB who have (i) paid back their CRB debt in full, (ii) paid back their CRB debt partially, (iii) not paid back any portion of their CRB debt; (b) what is the total number of individuals who were deemed ineligible for CRB who have (i) paid back their CRB debt in full, (ii) paid back their CRB debt partially, (iii) not paid back any portion of their CRB debt; (c) how many individuals have had CRB debt recollected through (i) withholding of tax refunds or GST credits, (ii) reduction of EI benefits, (iii) garnishing of wages or other income, (iv) seizures or holds on bank accounts, (v) liens on homes or other properties; and (d) what is the total number of individuals with outstanding CRB debt who fall below the (i) low-income cut-off, (ii) market basket measure, (iii) low-income measure?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, what follows is the response from the CRA since the inception of the Canada recovery benefit, or CRB, to February 16, 2023. Note that due to system limitations, the data is live and can only be pulled as of the day of the extract, not as of the date of the question, February 10, 2023.

With respect to parts (a)(i) to (a)(iii), the CRA cannot provide statistics on the "total number of individuals eligible" for CRB, as all accounts with a repayment have a corresponding ineligible period. As such, there are no "eligible" individuals who have repaid against a CRB debt. Therefore, the CRA cannot respond in the manner requested.

With respect to part (b), please note that for the purposes of these questions, the data is as of February 16, 2023. Due to system limitations, the data is live and can only be pulled as of the day of the extract. As of February 16, 2023, 36,695 individuals have paid back their CRB debt in full. As of February 16, 2023, 18,281 individuals have paid back their CRB partially. As of February 16, 2023, 207,589 individuals have not paid back any of their CRB debt.

With respect to part (c), please note that for the purposes of these questions, the data is as of February 16, 2023. Due to system limitations, the data is live and can only be pulled as of the day of the extract. As of February 16, 2023, 4,206 individuals have had CRB debt recovered through withholding of T1 tax refunds. As of the date of this question, February 10, 2023, there were no GST/HST credits applied against a CRB debt. With respect to part (c)(ii), the CRA is unable to respond in the manner requested as CRA systems do not capture a reduction of EI benefits. With respect to parts (c)(iii) to (c)(v), the CRA has not taken any legal action to date.

With respect to part (d), while the CRA does have an overall number of individuals with outstanding CRB debts, it currently does not track the CRB debts by the total number of individuals who fall below the requested measures. The CRA does not have the tools or relevant information to provide the statistical information in the manner requested.

Question No. 1239—**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:**

With regard to the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), broken down by federal electoral district: what is the total number of individuals with outstanding CRB debt who fall below the (i) low-income cut-off, (ii) market basket measure, (iii) low-income measure?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, what follows is the response from the CRA as of February 10, 2023, the date of the question.

With respect to parts (i), (ii) and (iii), the CRA does not have the tools or relevant information to provide the statistical data in the manner requested, nor does it have sufficient information to provide a breakdown based on low-income cut-off, market basket measure or low-income measure.

Question No. 1242—**Ms. Leslyn Lewis:**

With regard to the Canada Growth Fund (CGF): (a) what are the details of the proposed standards and metrics of the environmental, social and governance (ESG) framework to be imposed on investments; (b) how will deals be measured or assessed against the ESG framework; (c) what will be the ESG measurement and reporting standards required of companies; (d) will the CGF require that the measurements and reports in (c) be externally audited; (e) will the (i) measurements and reports, (ii) findings of the related audits, be made publicly available, and, if so, how; (f) what are the details of the corporate structure responsible for administering the Canada Growth Fund, including the (i) board composition, (ii) appointment process, (iii) terms of service; (g) what are the selection criteria, the process and the status for hiring the senior executive management team; and (h) what specific accountability mechanisms, if any, is the government putting in place to ensure that CGF funds, including operational funding, are not mismanaged or used fraudulently?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canada growth fund, or CGF, was incorporated by the Canada Development Investment Corporation, or CDEV, on December 13, 2022. The CGF is currently in a preoperational phase, and CDEV is undertaking work to support the implementation of the CGF, including reporting and accountability frameworks. Additional details will be released in the first half of 2023.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 1228, 1229, 1231, 1234, 1236, 1237, 1240, 1241, 1243 and 1244 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1228—**Mr. Tim Uppal:**

With regard to aircraft owned by the government, broken down by department, agency or other government entity that owns the aircraft, excluding aircraft owned

#### Routine Proceedings

by the Department of National Defence: (a) what is the total number of aircraft currently owned by the government; and (b) what are the details of each aircraft, including (i) the make, (ii) the model, (iii) the age, (iv) the date of purchase, (v) the original purchase price, (vi) whether the aircraft was new or used when purchased, (vii) the estimated cost to operate per flight hour, (viii) the estimated hourly fuel usage, (ix) the operational readiness or the percentage of time the aircraft is available for use, (x) the primary purpose of the aircraft?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1229—**Mr. John Barlow:**

With regard to the revocation of government security clearances since 2016, broken down by year: (a) how many individuals have had their security clearances revoked for cause (i.e. not as a result of retirement or resignation); (b) of the revocations in (a), how many were due to the individual spying or otherwise acting on behalf of a foreign government; and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1231—**Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to the one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit and the dental benefits in Bill C-32, Fall Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2022: (a) since the applications opened in December 2022, how many applications have been received for the (i) Canada Housing Benefit top-up, (ii) dental benefits; (b) how many of the applications in (a) were (i) accepted, (ii) rejected; (c) what are the total amounts paid out to date to recipients of the (i) Canada Housing Benefit top-up, (ii) dental benefits; (d) how many separate individuals have received payments to date for the (i) Canada Housing Benefit top-up, (ii) dental benefits; (e) what is the total amount spent to date on advertising to promote the (i) Canada Housing Benefit top-up, (ii) dental benefit; (f) what is the total advertising budget, including amounts not spent to date, to promote the Canada Housing Benefit top-up; (g) what is the total advertising budget for the (i) current fiscal year, (ii) next fiscal year, to promote the dental benefit; and (h) what is the breakdown of each part of (a) through (d) by province or territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1234—**Mr. Andrew Scheer:**

With regard to audits conducted by the Canada Revenue Agency, broken down by each of the last five tax years: (a) how many individuals and couples were chosen for personal income tax audits, broken down by each tax bracket; and (b) what percentage of the total number of personal income tax filers in each bracket do the numbers in (a) represent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1236—**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:**

With regard to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), since its inception: (a) what is the total number of individuals eligible for CERB who have (i) paid back their CERB debt in full, (ii) paid back their CERB debt partially, (iii) not paid back any portion of their CERB debt; (b) what is the total number of individuals who were deemed ineligible for CERB who have (i) paid back their CERB debt in full, (ii) paid back their CERB debt partially, (iii) not paid back any portion of their CERB debt; (c) how many individuals have had CERB debt recollected through (i) withholding of tax refunds or GST credits, (ii) reduction of EI benefits, (iii) garnishing of wages or other income, (iv) seizures or holds on bank accounts, (v) liens on homes or other properties; and (d) what is the total number of individuals with outstanding CERB debt who fall below the (i) low-income cut-off, (ii) market basket measure, (iii) low-income measure?

(Return tabled)

*The Budget***Question No. 1237—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:**

With regard to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), broken down by federal electoral district: what is the total number of individuals with outstanding CERB debt who fall below the (i) low-income cut-off, (ii) market basket measure, (iii) low-income measure?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1240—Mr. Martin Shields:**

With regard to the statement made by the Minister of Labour in the Senate on February 9, 2023, that “I need more workers in the oil and gas industry, not less”: (a) what is the minister's plan to get more workers employed in the oil and gas industry; and (b) how many more workers does the government estimate are needed in the oil and gas industry?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1241—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:**

With regard to the Smart Cities Challenge (SCC): (a) what are the specific results, outcomes, and measurable objectives expected to be achieved through the SCC; (b) what are the results of any performance assessments done to date; (c) how many smart cities projects have been approved to date, including, for each project, the (i) description, (ii) location, (iii) total federal funding, (iv) project status; (d) with which domestic and international stakeholders did consultations take place when proposing and implementing the SCC; (e) what are the names of all partners associated with the SCC program; (f) what is the role of each partner in (e) and what specific tasks is each partner expected to do; (g) was the former Sidewalk Toronto project at any time considered for Smart Cities funding or associated with the program in any way, and, if so, what are the details; and (h) what plans does the government have for expanding the SCC or starting new, similar initiatives?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1243—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:**

With regard to Canada's participation in the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, from January 16 to 20, 2023: (a) how many individuals were part of Canada's delegation in Davos; (b) who were the members of the delegation, including, for each, their (i) name, (ii) title, (iii) role; (c) what are the details of all meetings held in Davos involving the Deputy Prime Minister, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) names and titles of the attendees, (iii) purpose of the meeting, (iv) agenda items, (v) summary of what occurred at the meeting, including any agreements made; (d) what are the details of all meetings held in Davos involving members of the Canadian delegation other than the Deputy Prime Minister, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) names and titles of the attendees, (iii) purpose of the meeting, (iv) agenda items, (v) summary of what occurred at the meeting, including anything that was agreed to; (e) what are the details, including the summary of terms, of any agreements entered into during the forum; (f) what are the details of all follow-up action taken by the government as a result of what happened at the forum; and (g) what are the details of all memoranda or briefing notes prepared to support Canada's delegation to the forum, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) subject matter, (vi) summary of contents, (vii) file number?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1244—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:**

With regard to the Agile Nations Charter: (a) how was Canada selected to participate in the Panel on Agile Governance for the Post-Pandemic World and subsequently the Agile Nations; (b) how were the companies selected to participate in the Agile Nations discussions; (c) what are the details of Canada's submissions or contributions to the early drafts of the Charter, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) subject matter, (vi) summary of the contents, (vii) file number; (d) what are the differences between the different drafts of the Charter; (e) which officials negotiated the Charter on behalf of Canada, including, for each, their (i) name, (ii) title, (iii) role; (f) what are the details of Canada's initial interactions with the World Economic Forum or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development with regard to an Agile Nations concept or panel, including the (i) date of the interaction, (ii) nature of the interaction (in-person, virtual, correspondence, etc.), (iii) sender, (iv) recipient, (v) title, (vi) subject matter, (vii) summary of the interaction, (viii) file number; (g) what consultations took place with the public or with Canadian stakeholders before Canada signed the Charter in November 2020; (h) are the plenary meetings and the working group meetings that have taken place since the inception of Agile Nations recorded and available for public viewing; (i) if the answer to (h) is affirmative, where can the public

access the links to view the meetings, and if the answer is negative, why are they not available; (j) what consultations has the government undertaken for the development of the first and second Agile Nations work programs, including the (i) dates of applicable meetings, (ii) type of consultation, (iii) organizations consulted, (iv) summary of the feedback received; (k) what kinds of information and data is the government sharing with Agile Nations members and observers as part of its participation in the forum; and (l) what are the parameters for how department resources, both in terms of spending and personnel hours, are used in connection to Agile Nations projects within (i) the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, (ii) the Standards Council of Canada, (iii) Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, (iv) Health Canada?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to call Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-13.

That an order of the House do issue for copies of the transcripts concerning the member for Don Valley North, which were reviewed by the Office of the Prime Minister, as reported by The Globe and Mail on March 24, 2023.

[Translation]

**Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that this notice of motion for the production of papers be transferred for debate.

• (1610)

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion is transferred for debate, pursuant to Standing Order 97(1).

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all other notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET****FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE**

The House resumed from March 28 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is insane.

*The Budget*

The government has already caused the highest inflation in 40 years by doubling the national debt and adding more to our debt than all the other prime ministers in the history of this country combined. He admitted that government spending is increasing the cost of living for ordinary Canadians.

For three years, I have been warning the House of Commons. The so-called experts, including the Governor of the Bank of Canada, former finance minister Bill Morneau and others, have admitted that the government's spending is driving up inflation. The minister herself finally came to that same conclusion. Two weeks ago, she said that she did not want to add fuel to the fire of inflation, so yesterday, we expected the government to introduce a budget that would curb the inflationary spending that is harming ordinary Canadians. What we got was the exact opposite.

The Liberals made four promises, but they broke them all. They said that the debt-to-GDP ratio would decline, but every year, it goes up. They said that the deficits would come down but they are going up. They said that the pandemic debt incurred would be paid down. It has not been and it continues to rise. Finally, they said that the budget would be balanced in 2027. Now, they admit there will never be a balanced budget.

We realize that the government can only give what it has taken. The government has no money. Every cent spent by the government must come from taxpayers. There are three ways to pay for expenditures: through inflation, by printing money; through debt; and through taxes. This government has chosen those three methods.

I am going to share some shocking figures about government expenditures with my colleagues. I would like to thank the official opposition's innovation, science and industry critic, the member for South Shore—St. Margarets, for this data. The budget sets total expenditures for the next five years at a record \$3.1 trillion.

**An hon. member:** Billion.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, it is not a billion; we are talking about a trillion. We have a problem here. There is not actually a word for trillion in the French language. It does not actually exist. The government's debt is so big it violates the Official Languages Act.

[*Translation*]

Today I am announcing that we will be filing a complaint with the Commissioner of Official Languages.

The reality is that it is 3,000 billion dollars. That is how much the Liberals are going to spend over the next five years. That is more than this country's annual economy.

Then, if these numbers are to be believed—but their numbers are never to be believed—and if they do not increase spending until the end of their term, the projected deficits will add another \$130 billion to the national debt. The national debt will reach a record \$1.3 trillion. Interest on the national debt will increase from \$44 billion today to \$50 billion in five years, if the interest rate calculations are correct.

That is not all. The Prime Minister laughed when a reporter asked him how we were going to pay for all this debt. He said it was not an issue, that interest rates were low, that we were never going to have to pay for this spending. That was two years ago. Two years ago, he said interest rates were going to stay low for the rest of our lives.

• (1615)

Now the interest costs on the national debt have doubled. We are spending double the national defence budget on the interest costs on the national debt. It is ridiculous. We are spending nearly as much money to pay the interest costs on the debt as we are spending on health transfers. These interest payments hinder the government's ability to provide services to everyday Canadians, people who pay the bills.

Let us look at other facts. The \$3 trillion in spending and the massive deficits will throw fuel on the inflation fire and cause the interest rates to increase even more. During the last year that our Conservative government was in power, spending for programs was \$280 billion. Now it is \$465 billion. That is a 63% increase. According to the numbers, the government is going to increase spending until it reaches \$543 billion. That is an increase in spending of nearly 100%, or double.

Have Canadians received twice as much for health, public safety or quality of life in Canada? No, that is not really the case. That is the point. The Liberals measure their success on the fact that they cost a lot of money. Imagine a restaurant where the food is disgusting, where the service is bad, where the atmosphere is terrible, but it costs \$500 to eat there. That must be the best restaurant. That is the Liberals' logic.

Every time I ask why the crime rate has increased by 32%, the Prime Minister tells victims of crime that there is no problem because he is spending a lot of money on public safety. When we talk about firearms crossing the border, he says not to worry because he is spending more money to protect our borders.

Failure is not acceptable but it is even worse to pay dearly for failure, and that is what this government is doing right now. These exorbitant expenditures have given us a country that is truly broken.

What is broken is the fact that people can no longer walk in the streets and feel safe when the crime rate has gone up 32%. Street gang murders have increased by 92%.

We can also think about the number of families who need to use food banks each month. There are 1.5 million Canadians who cannot feed themselves. One in five Canadians has to skip a meal because food is too expensive. Nine out of 10 young Canadians cannot even dream of owning a home some day, because mortgage payments, rent and costs associated with purchasing a home have doubled, even though the government spent \$89 billion on affordable housing.

*The Budget*

The country is worse off after all this spending, and everything is broken. Worst of all, the contract that existed between the citizens and this country is broken. It was a very simple contract: Here in Canada, people who work hard can have a house, good food, a good quality of life and can achieve all of their dreams. That is why immigrants come here. They do not come for the weather; they come here for that contract. When people come here, they basically sign that contract when they make their declaration of citizenship. People declare that they will work hard and obey the law, and that way they can have a home and a good quality of life. That was the contract between our country and ordinary people. It is just common sense.

That is why people chose Canada, but that deal is broken. We, the Conservatives, will restore that contract between the country and the people. Our country will work for those who work. We believe in common sense, and we want to bring common sense back.

• (1620)

We are going to bring the loans back to a lower rate by eliminating government waste, the carbon tax and inflationary deficits.

We are going to reward work by eliminating and reducing penalties and taxes on paycheques thereby boosting their value. Here in Canada, people are punished for working. They can lose 89¢ on every additional dollar earned when all the government taxes and penalties and all the payroll taxes are added up. A government I lead will eliminate those penalties and make working more profitable.

We are going to give Canadians back the ability to buy a home. We are going to eliminate the red tape and barriers to building houses across the country.

We are going to make Canada's streets safe again so that people feel safe. We are going to do that by eliminating the bail and parole policies that the government put in place so that we can put the real criminals in prison.

We will ban drugs like heroin, fentanyl and others to protect our citizens. We will also stop spending taxpayer money to pay for drugs for people who are addicted. Instead, we will ensure that people get real treatment. We will go after the big pharmaceutical companies that caused the crisis in the first place. We will bring our brothers, sisters and friends home by helping them end their addiction and rebuild their lives.

We are also going to bring freedom back to Canada. Freedom will be protected and strengthened when I become prime minister.

We will also bring democratic power back to Canada by eliminating foreign interference in our electoral and democratic system. The capital of Canada is Ottawa. It is not Beijing or Davos. This is our home, and we will make our own decisions for the future.

We are going to give back to Canadians control of their lives and give them the power back. We will make Canada the freest country in the world by giving people back control of their lives.

What I am talking about is just common sense. It is the common sense of ordinary Canadians, working people who are paying the price for this incompetent government's overspending. That is who

we are working for. That is our mission and that is what we will do as Canadians and as a Conservative government.

[English]

The government cannot give people anything it has not taken away. The Liberals have no money over there. All the money they spend belongs to other people. There are only three ways they can extract it: by taxing, borrowing or inflating. The current government has done all three. It is incredible.

Just weeks ago, the finance minister admitted that deficit spending leads to inflation; it pours fuel on the inflationary fire. This admission was a long time coming. I have to admit I was waiting anxiously. It only took her three years after I started warning her about that. Slowly but surely, a group of random Liberals started to agree with me.

First it was the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who had originally predicted that deflation would result from his money printing. He came around to the view that inflation is caused by government deficits and money printing. Then it was a former Liberal deputy prime minister. John Manley said that all this spending is going to drive up the cost of living. Then it was another random Liberal, Bill Morneau, the former finance minister. Bill Morneau, who has become "Bill no more", said that we would have inflation as a result of all this spending. Then, finally, the finance minister we have now came out and said that spending money we do not have drives up the cost of living.

• (1625)

It was a wonderful epiphany, and we thought that weeks later it would translate into a budget that would show responsibility with the people's money. Instead, after the Liberals doubled the national debt, adding more debt than all previous prime ministers combined, they decided to dig even deeper.

Let me share some of the astounding facts that the shadow minister of industry dug up about the government's financial plan. The budget sets cumulative spending for the next five years at a record \$3.1 trillion. That is bigger than the entire GDP of Canada.

Remember that we cannot believe almost anything they project, but if these numbers are to be believed and they do not add more spending, they admit that they plan to add another \$130 billion to our debt. The debt will rise to \$1.3 trillion. Interest on the national debt this year is \$44 billion; it would rise to \$50 billion under this fiscal plan.

To put that in perspective, the Liberals have literally doubled the amount that Canadians have to spend on bankers and bond holders since the Prime Minister promised that interest rates would stay low and there would be no cost to all this debt.

*The Budget*

We now spend more on interest for debt than we spend on our military, child care benefits and transfers for education and social services to the provinces and almost as much as we spend on health care. Instead of giving the money to soldiers and nurses, the Prime Minister gives it to wealthy bond holders and bankers. This is exactly the opposite of what he promised.

The Liberals admit that the spending this year will be a staggering \$456 billion. This is an increase of 63% since the Prime Minister took office just eight years ago. That is almost a 10% year over year annual increase in spending.

If we believe their projections, spending is set to rise to over half a trillion dollars over the life of the five-year plan we have before us. That means they will have literally doubled government spending.

What is twice as good in Canada today? Can members think of anything? Are our streets twice as safe? We just have to look around this week to get an answer to that question.

A father was stabbed to death in broad daylight at a Starbucks in front of his kids for asking someone not to blow smoke from a vaping instrument into his children's faces. A 16-year-old was stabbed to death on the Toronto transit system by someone who had multiple prior criminal offences. In the last 36 hours from the time I stand and give this speech today, two young people have been stabbed, and one of them killed, on Calgary's transit system.

Violent crime has increased by 32%. Gang killings have gone up by 92% under the government. We do not have streets that are twice as safe under the twice-as-costly government.

Have we got twice as affordable housing? No, it is exactly the opposite. The average mortgage payment and average rent have doubled. The average required down payment to get into a home has doubled.

We do not have better health care. The time it takes to get treatment has gone up to 26 weeks, which is double what it was when the Prime Minister took office.

What are we getting for all this money? Every time we stand up and highlight problems that are raging out of control in this broken country of ours, the Prime Minister stands and defends himself by bragging about how much money he has spent. It is incredible.

It is like saying he got a car. It breaks down on the road, and the air conditioning does not work. One of the windows was broken when he drove away from the dealership. However, we should not worry because he paid \$200,000 for it, so it must be a terrific car. That is how Liberals judge success. It is by how expensive they can be. They have no common sense.

The average single mother would do a far better job of managing this budget than the Prime Minister does because she understands budgets do not balance themselves.

The good news is that we are going to turn the hurt that he caused into the hope that Canadians need. We need to bring home a country that works for the people who do the work. That means bringing home lower prices by eliminating the inflationary spending, deficits and carbon taxes.

We know that more money chasing fewer goods always equals higher prices. We need to reduce the burden of government on the shoulders of people to bring down costs and bring home more dollars with more purchasing power for people to have a better life.

• (1630)

We are going to bring home more powerful paycheques by ending the war on work the Prime Minister has unleashed in this country. At some income levels, when one earns an extra dollar, one loses as much as 89¢ in income tax, payroll tax and clawbacks of benefits that governments give out. We wonder why people do not want to work and why we have a labour shortage. If one taxes labour, one gets less labour.

We have become a country that does not reward good or punish bad. If a hard-working person puts in an extra day's work, they lose it all to clawbacks and taxes. If a criminal goes out in the streets and commits a violent crime, they pay no penalty. We do not differentiate between good and bad behaviour, and that is why we see everything coming crashing down across the country and in the lives of everyday Canadians.

We need to reward the good work of the people who work hard, pay their taxes and play by the rules. That is why a Conservative government would reform our tax and clawback system to make work pay so people can once again bring home powerful paycheques in this country.

Bringing home powerful paycheques means we also need to get out the gatekeepers who prevent those paycheques from coming home in the first place. Brilliant immigrants come to our country ready to contribute but then are prevented from working in their very professions. Right now, we have a doctor shortage of 40,000 doctors. We have 19,000 immigrant doctors who are banned from working in our hospitals. Most of them are qualified to do the work.

I had to help one doctor who had been doing heart surgeries in Singapore get his licence to practise here in Ottawa. I hate to break it to members, but Singapore is actually a more advanced country than Canada is; yet we block someone like that from doing surgeries at the Ottawa Heart Institute. We have 19,000 foreign-trained doctors who could be helping in our medical system but for these government gatekeepers. There are 34,000 foreign-trained nurses blocked from working in our health care system.

It is not just doctors and nurses; it is all professions. We had the head of the Aviation Association testify that there was an aviation mechanic working for Air Canada in Munich for 20 years. Then he moved to Canada, assuming he would just keep his job with Air Canada. However, they would not let him do the same job on the same planes that he did in Germany. This is insane.

*The Budget*

A Conservative government, led by me, would bring in a common sense blue seal standard, a national merit-based test to determine who is qualified and who is not. Therefore, our internationally trained professionals can take a test, get a “yes” or “no” based on their proven abilities within 60 days and get to work in their fields.

We would back up 30,000 small study loans so our immigrants can take time off work to study up to our standard. We would make it possible for future immigrants to this country to begin preparing to get licensed to practice in their field before they even arrive in Canada. That way, our immigrants could have big, powerful, inflation-proof paycheques, and we could have more doctors, nurses and engineers in this country.

Bringing home powerful paycheques means getting the gatekeepers out of the way of our resource sector. We have the sixth-biggest supply of lithium on Planet Earth. The government now wants to spend \$80 billion on subsidies for so-called green businesses.

Would it not be nice to actually harvest the lithium we have in this country and put that lithium in the batteries of the future rather than relying on slave camps in other parts of the world, in dictatorial parts of the world, or relying on China to refine 60% of all the lithium that comes to surface? Do members know how much lithium we had mined in Canada in 2021, after six years under the Prime Minister? It was zero, nada, nothing. We did not even get a tablespoon of the stuff. Why is this? It is because, by the government's own admission, it takes up to 25 years to get a mine approved in this country. No wonder every other country in the world is leaving us in the past.

We could be shipping our natural gas overseas. There were 15 proposed natural gas liquefaction plants on the table when the Prime Minister took office. Zero have been built, even though the Americans have built seven in the exact same time. The Germans built an import plant, from the application process through the final construction, in 194 days. We could be shipping our gas overseas.

With me as prime minister, we could remove the gatekeepers, deliver fast permits, build natural gas liquefaction plants, cool that gas down to -161°C, and ship it over to Europe to break the European dependence on Putin and over to Asia to break the Asian dependence on dirty coal fire. We would turn dollars for dictators into paycheques for our people in this country.

● (1635)

We are going to bring homes that people can afford again. It is hard to believe that housing was cheap in this country eight years ago before the Prime Minister. A person could buy the average home for \$450,000. That was all it cost. The average mortgage payment was a reasonable \$1,400. The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Canada's 10 biggest cities was \$1,100. What is it now? The average mortgage payment is now well over \$3,000. It has doubled. The average down payment required for a minimum down payment of 5% is \$45,000. It has doubled. The average rent is now \$2,200. It has also doubled.

Why has this happened? There are two obvious reasons. Inflationary deficits are driving up interest rates on mortgage borrowers and local government gatekeepers are blocking construction from

happening in the first place. That is why we have the fewest houses per capita of any country in the G7. In fact, according to Scotiabank, we actually have fewer houses today, per capita, than when the Prime Minister took office.

In Vancouver, the cost of government gatekeepers and red tape is \$650,000 for every single unit of housing. We are not building anything because we are ranked 64th in the world for the time it takes to get a building permit. If they cannot build houses, they cannot house people. They want to bring in half a million people every single year and they have no idea where they are going to put them all. They are setting us up for a massive financial and social catastrophe over the next two years as people have nowhere to live and nowhere to go. We are going to see a massive breakdown in our communities as a result of this policy.

Luckily, we can get the gatekeepers out of the way. Do colleagues know who showed us how? The first nations people in Vancouver. There is a reserve in Vancouver, inside the city of Vancouver. The Squamish people took on 10 acres of land. They are building 6,000 units of housing. That is 600 units per acre. The reason they are able to do it is because they do not have the rules of the City of Vancouver. They are their own boss and they got the gatekeepers out of the way. They did what would have never been possible with big-city mayors.

There has been this tradition that prime ministers do not criticize mayors and use all of the fluffy language we read in press releases about “working together in collaboration and partnership for a better future”, all the garble that we are so used to hearing.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** It sounds like you're pretty familiar on what to say.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** You're right. You had better believe a big change is coming.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister accused me of fighting with the mayors. Damn right, I am going to be fighting. I will be fighting to get housing for our people. Our young people deserve to live in a home and I will be putting in place serious financial penalties for big-city mayors who block housing construction and big building bonuses for those who get out of the way and allow housing to be built. Yes, absolutely, we will bring it home. Their solution is to shovel another \$4 billion into municipal bureaucracies so that there are even more gatekeepers to block construction.



*The Budget*

My view is very simple. I will pay for results. Their infrastructure budget from the federal government will be based on the number of keys in doors. The houses will have to be finished and there will have to be people moving in for every dollar they want to get in federal infrastructure money. I will require every federally funded transit station to have high-density apartments built around and over top. Why is it that Hong Kong has the only profitable transit system on Planet Earth? They sell the air rights right over the stations so that people live right on top of the transit. That is the most effective way to do it. However, in Canada, the gatekeepers and the rich, leafy neighbourhoods filled with champagne socialists do not want anybody else living in the neighbourhood. They want the transit stations all to themselves. That is not going to happen any more. If I am going to fund transit stations, I am going to require that working-class people are allowed to live next to them and they will be able to live there without even having to work there.

• (1640)

We have these big, ugly buildings, 37,000 federal buildings. Most of them are actually empty with people working from home. These big, ugly, empty buildings are shrines to the incompetence of the government. I will sell them off to developers so that they can be converted into low-income housing. It warms my heart to think of the beautiful family rolling up in their U-Haul to move into their wonderful new home in the former headquarters of the CBC.

We are going to honour the trades. We need tradespeople who can actually build stuff. We are going to make sure, unlike Liberals, who turn their noses up at working-class tradespeople, that trades and apprenticeships get the same support from government that universities and professionals do.

We are going to accelerate bringing in more tradespeople from abroad and we are going to make sure that young people are told that working in the trades is every bit as honourable and prestigious as working in a profession. Our tradespeople are the backbone of this country.

We are going to bring home safe streets again. We know that the crime, the chaos and the savage violence that has been unleashed across the land is the direct result of Liberal-NDP policies, which have flooded our streets with violent criminals and dangerous drugs. They brought in catch-and-release, so that the same violent criminals get released again and again. The same 40 people were arrested 6,000 times in Vancouver in one year. That is 150 arrests per person per year, as a direct result of the Prime Minister's bail reform.

My government will end the catch-and-release and bring jail, not bail, for repeat violent offenders.

Secondly, we are going to tackle the scourge of drug overdose deaths that have been unleashed in this country under the policies of the Liberals and the NDP.

They told us that they had all the evidence to do the things that made no sense to common-sense people. They said that if we only legalize drugs and we use taxpayers' money to give people the drugs, then there will be no more overdoses because we will be able to guarantee that these drugs are safe.

They actually have heroin vending machines that they are funding with tax dollars. They are very proud of it. They say that they are using biometrics so that people can walk up and put their fingerprint out and out pops hydromorphone.

Oxycontin causes the opioid crisis. Hydromorphone is three times more powerful than oxycontin. It is almost heroin.

What happens? The users take those drugs and they find that they are not strong enough after a while, so what do they do? They sell them to kids and they take the money and use it for fentanyl.

This government is spending, in this budget, hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funds to provide even more drugs that will kill our people.

This policy is an unmitigated nightmare. The lower Eastside of Vancouver has turned into hell on earth. The number of overdose deaths is 300% higher in British Columbia than when this Prime Minister took office.

We are now seeing, across Canada, 22 overdose deaths every single day. It does not make sense.

By the way, the same disgusting pharma companies that started the crisis in the first place are going to get some of the money from this budget to sell the hydromorphone that will perpetuate the ongoing addiction. The same corporate scumbags that unleashed this crisis by deliberately turbocharging sales and encouraging overdoses, with bonuses for distributors who caused them, are now getting money from this government to pay for the so-called safe supply of what is nearly a heroin-grade opioid.

This is the most disgusting and outrageous policy perhaps that the government has ever implemented.

We have a solution. We are going to ban hard drugs. We are going to stop using tax dollars to hand out those drugs. We are going to provide treatment. We are going to make it easier to get treatment than it is to get drugs.

We are going to make the pharmaceutical companies that caused this crisis pay the bill when I launch a \$45-billion lawsuit to recover the money from them. That is what I am going to do.

We are going to bring home our brothers, sisters, friends and neighbours, drug-free. We are going to restore the hope that anything is possible in this country for them, that there is always a chance at redemption, that anybody can turn their lives around. We have seen what treatment can do, the countless stories that I have heard when I go across the country.

*The Budget*

● (1645)

I met a nurse in Timmins who had been a nurse until she got hooked on opioids in the hospital. She lost her job, lost her family and ended up on the street, but went and got treatment and recovered. Now she has a job as a waitress. She has her daughter back, she has her dignity back and she has her life back. There are going to be many more stories like that when we bring home our friends and family drug-free.

We are going to bring home our freedom to this country. The more government we have, the less freedom remains. This big, powerful government forgets its core responsibility. First and foremost is our national defence. We are going to bring the dollars out of the back office and onto the front lines and stop wasting defence dollars on big corporate procurement screw-ups. We will make sure the money goes into the soldiers' hands and into the support of our soldiers, sailors and airmen. We are going to end the woke culture that is driving our young people away from the military and restore pride in our armed forces again.

Bringing home our freedom means bringing back democratic decision-making to this country by fighting against foreign interference, including by introducing a foreign interference registry and stopping foreign governments from interfering in our elections. Our capital is Ottawa; it is not Beijing and it is not Davos. By the way, I would be banning every single minister in my government from any involvement in the World Economic Forum.

We would bring home free speech by repealing Bill C-11, which attempts to give government the control of what people see and say on the Internet. We think that there are already 37 million Canadian content regulators. They are called the citizens of Canada and they have the right to decide what they see and say on the Internet in a free country.

I pointed out earlier that we had a deal in this country that if people work hard they get a good living and a good life. It is a deal that, like everything else in Liberal Canada, is broken. However, it is not the first deal that has ever happened in the history of our democracy. The first deal was over 800 years ago when a spoiled, power-hungry inheritor of the Crown, King John, had taken the Crown from his father. Does that remind people of anyone? He was overtaxing his people. He was taking away their freedoms: arresting without charge, confiscating without compensation and violating all the rules that we now take for granted. However, the commoners forced him to the fields of Runnymede and required that he sign the deal: the Magna Carta, the great charter, which, for the first time, brought liberty under the law and made what is now called "the state" a servant and not a master of the people. That is our purpose here as well.

We understand, on this side of the House, that we are servants. We are not masters. This is the House of Commons, the house of the common people. It is green because the first commoners met in the fields of Runnymede, which were also green. They were the ones who harvested that field. They are the ones for whom we work. We stand for the common sense of the common people, united for our common home: their home, my home, our home. Let us bring it home.

**Some hon. members:** More.

● (1650)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, they want more, so at least I will move a motion. I move:

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

"the House reject the government's budget statement since it will cost every Canadian household \$4,200 and it fails to make Canada work for the people who have done the work, namely:

(a) bring home powerful paycheques with lower taxes, including scrapping the carbon tax;

(b) bring home lower prices by ending inflationary debt and deficits that drive up inflation and interest rates; and

(c) bring homes people can afford by removing government gatekeepers to free up land and speed up building permits.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The amendment is in order.

Before we go to questions and comments, 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 Saanich—Gulf Islands, Finance; the hon. member for Victoria, Climate Change; and the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Canada Post Corporation.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is great to see that the Conservatives know how to jump up and clap. After they were heckled by the President of the United States last week, I was starting to get worried they did not know how to stand up for anything.

In any event, it should not be a surprise to anybody that the Conservatives are against this budget. Yesterday during question period, the Leader of the Opposition's deputy told us she was not voting for it even before she had seen anything in it.

I want to talk about two specific items in the budget that the Conservatives are choosing to vote against.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke at great length about his lack of interest in green technology and green programs in the budget to help grow an electrical grid that is completely green. I hope he knows that the one riding represented in this room, out of the 338 of them, to benefit most from that is my neighbouring riding and that of his seatmate, Hastings—Lennox and Addington. That riding would benefit the most from this program given the announcement of a \$1.5-billion investment by Umicore to set up the largest battery manufacturing plant in North America in that riding.

In addition to that, there are the endless continued supports in the budget for Ukraine. It is the prerogative of the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, who stands up for Ukrainians repeatedly, to vote against it, but those are two incredibly good measures that would benefit Canadians and our allies around the world.

*The Budget*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe there was a question there, but I find it sad that the member has been standing up every single—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, just for the record, it is “questions and comments”. Is that right? I do not have to ask a question, do I?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

The hon. leader of the official opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I find it sad that the member has been standing up here regurgitating the phony talking points of the Prime Minister for eight years, and all he has is a fake position not even halfway up the House of Commons. The member has done nothing but reinforce the inflationist policies that are robbing the paycheques of hard-working people right across this country.

On this side of the House, we stand for the common people, who actually do the work in this nation. We are going to lower the tax burden so that people can bring home more of what they earn. We are going to make this a country that works for the people who do the work, and that will happen as soon as we form a Conservative government.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the leader of the official opposition for his very good speech, especially the parts in French.

As he knows, the French language has a very rich vocabulary. We have a recipe for shepherd's pie: beef, corn, potatoes. For big numbers we say: millions, billions, trillions. I invite him to repeat after me.

He began his speech with a lecture about consistency by using the Minister of Finance's own words. He pointed out inconsistencies and told us that we could no longer believe what the government says because it is not consistent.

Right after that, he quoted the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who he threatened to fire for incompetence a few months ago during the leadership race.

When I openly say that someone is incompetent and that the first thing I would do when I become prime minister is fire him—I can assure members that I will not be prime minister in this place—I do not quote that person. I do not quote incompetent people who I want to fire.

My question is the following: Does he still want to fire the governor of the central bank, whom he quoted in his speech? If he no longer wants to fire him, what thought process led to his change of heart?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, will I fire the Governor of the Bank of Canada? I have a few questions for the Bloc member.

If a mechanic does not do his job, what happens? He gets fired, right? The mechanic gets fired. If an electrician does not do his job, what happens? He gets fired.

If, instead of doing his job, which is to keep inflation at 2%, the Governor of the Bank of Canada borrows and prints money to fund the government's deficits and this leads to inflation that, now, is creating poverty among Canadians, yes, he will be fired.

In the real world, if someone does not do their job, they get fired. I will take the Government of Canada into the real world by firing people who do not do their job.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the question was why quote someone as an authority if they believe that person should be fired.

[*English*]

However, that question was never answered.

I have to say that it is a little hard to know where to start. Obviously we are starting from different positions and indeed a different way of understanding the situation the country finds itself in.

The Leader of the Opposition had a lot of things to say. He said he would prohibit his ministers from participating in the World Economic Forum, I suppose as Stephen Harper did when he was prime minister, a time when he announced from Davos that he would be raising the retirement age in Canada from 65 to 67. That is what he did at the World Economic Forum. I am glad the member will not be sending anyone there so that when an announcement like that is made, the Conservatives can be held accountable in this place.

The member then talked about a blue seal program, which is a good idea and one the Conservatives promised in 2006, but after nine years of government, they did nothing for it.

Then he talked about giving \$4 billion to the gatekeepers in this budget for housing. I presume the member means the “for indigenous, by indigenous” housing strategy being funded to the tune of \$4 billion in this budget. He had the audacity to criticize that after he invoked the example of the Squamish Nation, which is doing a good job of building housing.

Should we be surprised that he does not understand what is in the budget when members of his party announced they were going to vote against it before they even saw it? No, probably not. However, the question is, after saying all of those things and given that he likes to point out people saying things and not following through, why should Canadians believe him when the government he was a part of did not act on the very things he is talking about today?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, to the first question on why I would quote someone I want to fire, I quote members of the Liberal government all the time, and it is my plan to fire them in the next election.

*The Budget*

As for the blue seal, we did not promise that in 2006. We did promise to speed up foreign credential recognition, which we actually achieved. However, we need to go further, and in the last eight years, that has only gone backwards. We would bring in a blue seal standard, a merit-based standard, to test people who are professionals so they can qualify just like those who were born in this country.

The member finally said that I simultaneously criticized the government's spending on housing while praising the first nations that removed gatekeepers to get things built. Let us be clear. The first nations in Vancouver did not build housing with money from government. It is private financing that builds the vast majority of housing in this country. We do not have a lack of financial ability to build housing. The Liberals are spending \$89 billion on it. The problem is that we ban housing from being built in the first place. If we get the gatekeepers out of the way, we will build more homes and spend less money. It is common sense. Let us bring it home.

• (1700)

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I speak in high schools, I ask the kids what they think about spending tens of billions of dollars on health care. I also ask what they think about spending tens of billions of dollars on debt. Then I get to say to them that they do not have to choose, because we do both.

What message of hope do we have from this side of the House for our young people?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. The member is quite right in pointing out that every dollar we have to give to bankers and bondholders is money we cannot spend on hip replacements, heart surgeries and other necessary care in our hospitals.

What is astonishing to me is the wealth transfer endorsed by the NDP and the Liberals. They have no problem taking money away from treasured national social programs to give it to the wealthiest bondholders and bankers. Even the most famous global left-wing economist, Piketty, from France, has pointed out that debt interest is a major wealth transfer from the working class to the super-rich. We are the only party against adding this debt. The other parties want to continue to add to it.

We on this side of the House will bring hope to young people by capping spending and unleashing the productive forces of our talented people so we can produce more of what cash buys rather than just create more cash. We are going to make this a country that works for the people, where it does not matter if a person's name is Martin or Mohamad, Singh or Smith, Poilievre or Patel. As long as they are prepared to work hard, they can bring it home and achieve their dreams.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying that I will be sharing my time with the ineffable member for Mirabel.

Looking at the budget—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I would ask members who are talking to take their discussions outside.

The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons on a point of order.

\* \* \*

[English]

**MOTION NO. 2—SENATE AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-11**

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the consideration of Motion No. 2 regarding Senate amendments to Bill C-11, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts, I give notice that at the next sitting of the House, a minister of the Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that the debate be not further adjourned.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

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

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am flabbergasted. They just announced yet another gag order, as I understand it. That is how eager the government House leader is to shut down debate yet again. Muzzling the House is unacceptable.

About the budget—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to continue with my speech, even though there is a hubbub coming from the Conservatives. Excuse me, it was not the Conservatives. It was the Liberals.

On page 25, there is a chart that shows the forecast for the government's projected debt, despite the large expenditures that were announced in this budget. What it shows is that, in 30 years, the federal debt will be virtually paid off.

Here is the situation. There are so many resources at the federal level—that is what the Parliamentary Budget Officer tells us year after year in every one of his studies—and Ottawa has so much leeway that it will be able to pay off its debt, the one it has had since Confederation, in about 30 years, at the rate things are going.

At the same time, the Parliamentary Budget Officer tells us that at the rate things are going, the provinces will no longer be able to provide the services they need to provide. They will be technically bankrupt in a few decades. This goes back to the unfortunate fiscal imbalance. The federal government is not sharing enough resources for the provinces to deliver the services that are in their jurisdiction and for Ottawa to do the same.

*The Budget*

In this budget, health care funding is six times less than what was requested by Quebec and the provinces. It is six times less. Quebec agreed to take that money because it was either that or nothing, but we know that it will not solve the problems in health care. This is a major issue.

When we look at the deficit in the budget, it is \$40.5 billion for this year. That is what was announced. However, when we look at lapsed funds, meaning the items that were voted in the House and those that did not need to be voted, for the last year available, the total is \$41 billion. This year's deficits and the lapsed funds cancel each other out. Using this approach, we can say that despite this year's record spending, the budget is practically balanced because there is money in Ottawa. I consider that to be very problematic.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has told us that if Ottawa wants to maintain a stable debt-to-GDP ratio, there is another \$40 billion that it could use to lower taxes or increase spending or transfers. When we add those numbers together, there is \$80 billion per year in fiscal room.

Yesterday, I asked officials at the Department of Finance where to find the lapsed funds in the budget. They could not answer my question. They said it was very complicated and that those funds were not necessarily in the budget. At least, that is what I am given to believe until I get a more satisfactory answer.

When Paul Martin was finance minister, he would underestimate the true revenues in his budget by approximately 2% every year. He would present a deficit, saying that we needed to tighten our belts and continue to cut funding for services to the provinces. He would say that we had a deficit and that things were not going well. At the end of the year, he always had good news to announce. He would say that, in the end, the situation was a lot better than it seemed. We figured out his trick. He was lowering the estimated revenues by 2% every year.

What concerns me about this government is that it votes for more money than it needs for its expenditures, which means that it has money left over at the end of the year. When it presents the budget, there is a deficit, and things do not look good. Then, at the end of the year, it has more money than expected. According to the most recent data available, it is \$40 billion a year. When we add that to the other \$40 billion that the Parliamentary Budget Officer says is needed to maintain a stable debt-to-GDP ratio, that makes \$80 billion.

● (1705)

That is three times as much as Quebec and the provinces asked for to fix the health care funding problem and to provide adequate services to the public. Unfortunately, this goes back to the sorry issue of the fiscal imbalance that I was talking about. Ottawa has more resources than it needs to provide its services, while it is the opposite in the provinces.

Here is the proof: Chapter six of the budget says that, with the snap of its fingers, the government is going to spend \$20 billion less a year by cutting expenses related to McKinsey, ministerial travel, and so on. The government is going to save \$20 billion a year doing that. It is as easy as that.

Compare that to the austerity budget of the Couillard government in Quebec. The government chose to cut homework help at elementary schools to save hundreds of millions of dollars, which sounds like peanuts by comparison. That is not on the same level whatsoever. Here in Ottawa, it is easy to do things to spend less, but in the provinces, to save a dollar, they are no longer trimming the fat. They are down to the bone. That is the fiscal imbalance.

The fiscal imbalance means that Ottawa is not being careful with its spending, that it is not controlling costs. The examples I am about to give are not exact comparisons, but they will put things in perspective. When Ottawa handles an EI case, it costs two and a half times more than when Quebec handles a social services case. It is not exactly the same, but it gives us an idea. It costs this government two and a half times more to provide a service that is similar to one provided by Quebec. It costs Ottawa four times more to issue a passport than it does for Quebec to issue a driver's licence. Everyone remembers the passport crisis. Perhaps there is a bit more checking involved, but again, these examples put things in perspective. Ottawa is not careful about costs because it has plenty of resources.

I was very sad to see that funding for health care allocated in the budget is six times lower than the amount needed to provide better services in Quebec. Since the provinces do not have sufficient resources, Ottawa is using this as an opportunity to buy itself areas of jurisdiction. We know that Quebec and the provinces are responsible for health care. Here, the coalition is putting a dental care system in place. The Constitution, which we have not signed and that was imposed on us, states that the provinces are responsible for dental care. Ottawa thinks it has so much money that it will implement this. Ottawa is buying areas of jurisdiction.

At Confederation, the choice of having a federation was a historic compromise to get my nation to embark on this adventure. That way, we would have our government at least, which would be sovereign in its areas of jurisdiction. Since my election, no matter what parties are in power, there is always a move toward centralization, toward the famous legislative union that Macdonald dreamt about. In the context of that centralization, Ottawa would be above other governments, and my government, my National Assembly, would no longer be sovereign in its areas of jurisdiction. When I read the budget, that is what I see.

Ottawa wants to create more programs in areas under the jurisdiction of other governments. Meanwhile, it is bungling the services that it is responsible for. Take employment insurance, for example. We are experiencing inflation and there is a risk of a recession. The budget doubles the GST tax credit, which is a measure that we support. However, other than that measure, there is nothing to indicate that we are in a crisis. Given the risk of a recession, it is urgent that the EI system be reformed. What is this government doing? What is the Minister of Finance doing? They are doing nothing at all. If the country goes into a recession when the EI system is broken, it will not be good.

*The Budget*

What is worse is that Ottawa has decided to cover all of the costs incurred during the pandemic, except the deficit in the EI fund. It is making workers pay higher premiums to pay it off, even though when there was a surplus in the EI fund in the Paul Martin years, the government was dipping into it to pay off the debt. That is unacceptable.

• (1710)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very interesting and very important speech.

[English]

I would like to ask the hon. member from the province of Quebec, one of the signatories of the health care agreements, a question. We have come to an agreement with all 10 provinces and territories. The federal government will have an additional \$198 billion, in total, of health care spending over the next 10 years to the provinces. With the negotiations for the child care agreements, I obviously salute the province of Quebec. It was a first mover on a child care program for its residents.

I ask my hon. colleague across the way if he is not in favour of the health care agreement the Province of Quebec signed with the federal government, which is contained within budget 2023.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is simple: No, because it is not enough. It is six times less than what Quebec and the provinces are asking for to prop up the health care system.

What is Ottawa doing with this agreement? It is stabilizing the proportion of support it provides to the health care system. In 2015, when this government was elected, the federal government was funding 24% of health care spending. With what is being proposed, it will still be 24% in 10 years.

To restore fiscal balance a bit, it needs to be 35%, because it is not enough. The Government of Quebec told us that given the choice between this and nothing, it decided to take this, but it is not enough and it is not going to solve anything.

• (1715)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoy listening to my colleague from Joliette because he is very well versed in public finance. I congratulate him on his speech and thank him.

I would also like to remind members that the member for Joliette and I were elected for the first time in 2015. He will remember that, in 2015, the members opposite got elected by saying that they would run three small deficits and balance the budget in the fourth year. It was true in 2015. That is the reason they were elected.

Over the course of eight years, there has been one colossal deficit after another. Today, we have a \$43-billion deficit and \$44 billion in debt servicing costs, which is twice as much as last year.

My colleague will be pleased with my question, because it will indulge his sovereignist inclination. Here, in the House of Commons, he spoke about “my government” and “my parliament”. He could have gone to the National Assembly of Quebec, given that

elections were held in Quebec a few months ago, but he decided to stay here. I do not have a problem with that because he is a nice guy.

As a sovereignist, what does he think of the attitude of this government, which is intruding in the jurisdiction of health care by becoming involved in child care services and dental care, among other things?

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I salute the hon. member in return. I enjoy serving with him in the House of Commons.

I am here to defend the interests of my nation and to make sure that its priorities are at least heard, even if they are not always respected. This is obvious from the budget and from the examples that my hon. colleague gave.

The point I would like to make here is that, yes, we have a government that spends recklessly. Yes, we have a government that interferes in areas of jurisdiction that are not its own, while failing to look after its own affairs.

My point is that, despite all of this and despite the \$40-billion deficit, it still has fiscal flexibility in the short, medium and long term. As I said, the \$40-billion deficit this year is offset by lapsed funding. On top of that, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer has said, if we maintain the debt-to-GDP ratio, that is another \$40 billion of fiscal flexibility. That is three times what was needed to pay for health care.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the member for Joliette regarding the problems with the current EI system.

I would like him to talk a little more about the importance of a good EI system in a country that is facing a recession.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Elmwood—Transcona for his question and his legitimate concerns.

The government has been promising to reform the EI system since 2015. Since last fall, analysts and economists have been telling us to be careful because there is a risk of a recession. Whether big or small, there is going to be a recession.

We know that the most important automatic stabilizer in a recession is employment insurance. We know that the EI system is not working. Just four out of 10 people who lose their job are covered.

Things have gotten so bad that Minister Morneau suspended the program at the outset of the pandemic because it just was not working. He decided instead to implement costly, improvised short-term programs. That cost a fortune and it was not effective.

The EI system needs to be reformed now.

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on February 14, I wished the NDP and the Liberals a Happy Valentine's Day. Today, to look at the budget document we have before us, I think that the union has been consummated. It is clear.

*The Budget*

What we learn from reading the budget document, which was summed up well by my colleague from Joliette, is that the federal government has a tremendous amount of means and that, with the help of the NDP, which is not surprising, it is having a hard time spending and investing those means wisely in the priorities of people on the ground who are dealing with real problems when it comes to employment insurance, seniors' return to work, or health. There is absolute disparity between the government's financial capacity and the real needs on the ground. It is not for nothing that when the Liberals toss \$4 billion to provinces that are asking for \$28 billion and tell them to accept it or get nothing, they have the nerve to stand up and say that it is an agreement. They have the nerve to do that. I know that they are not lying. They believe themselves and that is even worse.

The budget document is clear. It seems to be very much like what the Parliamentary Budget Officer described, and my colleague put it well. It states that, in 25 years, if we include the new financial commitments, Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio will be zero even in the worse case scenario. There is no other industrialized country that plans to reduce its debt-to-GDP ratio to zero, which means that there will be no debt, without looking after its people. No other developed country is doing that.

There is fiscal flexibility in the budget. The Parliamentary Budget Office has done the calculations. Those people are paid to provide Parliament with information. They are competent. They are quite right in saying that as the government eliminates its debt over time, the provinces will find themselves in more and more trouble, and that when the federal debt is eliminated, the provinces will be technically bankrupt.

The federal government tells us that there is no fiscal imbalance because this year, the current year, some provincial governments are running small surpluses while the federal government has a \$40-billion deficit. All of this is without recognizing that the problems we are experiencing in health care today are the same problems that could not be solved 25 years ago when the Liberals began cutting the transfers. By repeating the same thing today, they will create even more serious problems 25 years from now. In their minds, there is nothing dynamic. They are always thinking six months ahead, to the next election, and it is exactly the same with the NDP.

There is \$40 billion in lapsed spending from last year. We have the figures and the public accounts. That is \$40 billion that was not used. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has said that another \$40 billion could be used to help the provinces with health care and other things. Even so, the federal debt-to-GDP ratio would remain the same and the provinces would be able to take care of people. We are talking about \$80 billion.

We can add to that the fact that inflation is estimated to be 3.5% this year. That number is way off, which means that there will be additional tax revenue. That puts us at more than \$80 billion, which is far more than the \$28 billion the provinces were asking for. They would have \$50 billion or \$60 billion left over while allowing us to take care of our people. This is no joke. They could keep lowering the debt-to-GDP ratio while taking care of people.

Allow me to summarize. The Liberals had an opportunity to relieve the suffering of Quebec's patients. Instead, they decided to relieve the electoral anxieties of the NDP. That is essentially what they did. I can understand why the NDP is crowing about it. If I were them, I would be happy too. That is the reality.

What will the NDP tell us? The NDP is going to tell us that they got us dental care. The budget says that Health Canada is basically going to turn into an insurance company. If you have tried to get a passport, Mr. Speaker, you have every reason to be concerned. By the end of the year, it looks as though Health Canada will become an insurance company. They are going to call all the dental associations in all the provinces and they are going to negotiate agreements. Then we will be able to start submitting dental bills, all by the end of the year.

• (1720)

That is the promise that they are going to make to us, but they need a reality check. The federal government is so bad. The Liberals have no idea how to do anything. They are so far removed from what they are good at—and one has to admit that there is not much that they are good at—that the dental care program is not even included in the budget implementation bill.

They are going to implement the budget without even knowing how to do so. The dental care program is not even there. That will bring us to the summer. We will come back in the fall and there will not even be a dental care program because they just have no idea how to implement one.

There has been no talk of seniors because the Liberals created two classes of seniors, those aged 65 to 74 and those aged 75 and up. There is nothing in the budget for seniors aged 65 to 74. They are taking the injustice they created and indexing it to inflation, and yet this government is supposed to have an aversion to injustice.

When it comes to inflation, the NDP has spent all year getting worked up into a lather over grocery store owners. The Liberals decided to make the NDP happy. They are going to take the GST rebate cheque that they doubled, as the Bloc Québécois has been asking them to do for a year and a half, they are going to issue it early in the year—we asked them to increase the frequency of the cheques—and they are going to call it a grocery rebate. It is a great victory for the NDP. We congratulate them.

On employment insurance, this system that insures one in two people and leaves half the people behind when they lose their job, they are saying that there will be a recession, but no EI reform.

If I were looking to insure my house and the insurer told me that I had a 50% chance of my claim being rejected if my house burned down, I would switch insurers. That is exactly the situation that the unemployed are facing. The Liberals say that, according to actuarial forecasts, the EI fund is good for another 10 years before it needs to be reformed. There is nothing in the budget about getting experienced workers back to work without penalizing them for offering their strength, intelligence and experience to our businesses. When I walk around Mirabel and other places in Quebec, everyone talks to me about it. Everyone is talking about it except for the Liberals and the NDP.

*The Budget*

There is nothing for the aerospace industry. The minister was telling me that he is talking to CEOs and inviting them to invest. The minister is not a lobbyist. His job is not to be a chargé d'affaires but to ensure that the investment climate is favourable to investment, in order to have investment, research and development, investment funds, credits for research and development, and to fix the implementation of this luxury tax, which is about to kill 2,000 jobs in Quebec. People will go elsewhere to buy planes.

We are the laughingstock of the G7. The Liberals tell us that aviation is important, but they are closing the control tower in Mirabel. They have shut down light aircraft access, our flight schools and a runway. The industry's strategic infrastructure is now managed by a board of directors that takes care of Montreal and whose CEO is a former accountant from Coca-Cola. Nobody is accountable and nobody knows anything about aviation. They appear to be really good at this. When they do not know something, it is scary.

With regard to energy, the budget gives \$18 billion in subsidies to oil companies, which have money. When it comes to taxing luxury jets that are used to transport passengers and that harm our industry, there is no problem. They are for equality. However, when it comes to giving subsidies to companies that are making tons of profit, that could invest in reducing their emissions if they wanted to avoid the carbon tax, but instead the government gives them subsidies so that these CEOs can buy private jets to go to their cottages, that is not a problem for western Canada.

Now there is an election coming up in Ontario. Their 15% and 30% clean energy subsidies—because when we get right down to the nitty gritty, CO<sub>2</sub> is all that matters to them—are going to go to Ontario's nuclear plants. Oddly enough, there is an election coming up in Ontario. Oddly enough, the majority of the next Canadian government is going to be in Ontario.

We are willing to collaborate and we are willing to vote in favour of measures that are good for Quebec. That is what we do, but our goodwill is like an elastic. There is a limit.

Since my time is almost up, I will move the following amendment to the amendment:

That the amendment be amended by deleting all the words after the words "since it" and substituting the following:

fails to:

- (a) immediately reform employment insurance and increase old age security for seniors aged 65 to 74;
- (b) fight climate change by ending fossil fuel subsidies; and
- (c) increase health transfers to 35%, preferring instead to interfere in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces, such as by creating dental insurance without giving Quebec the right to opt out with full compensation.

• (1725)

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

Questions and comments.

• (1730)

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague made it very clear that he is going to vote against accelerating the green transition, the grocery rebate and

dental care for more Quebeckers, but is he really going to vote against the \$50 million that we are going to invest in the Mirabel airport in his riding? That \$50 million will make it possible to expand the capacity to export goods, create warehouse and storage facilities and create jobs in his riding of Mirabel.

Will my colleague from Mirabel vote against that measure in our budget?

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, last week, the member for Kingston and the Islands tweeted so much misinformation that Twitter had to put a warning notice on his post. I just realized that the Liberals are okay with that way of doing things. That way of doing things has spread from Kingston to Outremont.

I am going to set the record straight on a number of things. We never said that everything in the budget was bad. However, we made very clear, specific pre-budget requests. In a budget, there is what is included and what is missing. Are the Liberals telling me that it is okay to refuse to grant health care transfers, to reject our seniors and to leave half of unemployed workers out in the cold? Are they telling me that all those things are okay? In any case, that is clearly what the member for Outremont is saying. The member for Outremont is rejecting the needs of Quebec, and that makes me sad.

[English]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed working with my hon. colleague on the health committee.

I am a bit disappointed in my friend's pessimistic view of the efficiency of government. He seems to think government is not capable of delivering programs. He was highly skeptical that the federal government could deliver insurance for a dental plan.

However, we know the federal government administers employment insurance for millions of Canadians. It administers the Canada pension plan for millions of seniors. It administers old age security for millions of citizens, and these programs include many people in the province of Quebec.

I know he is a separatist, so it seems strange that he thinks the Province of Quebec could form a nation, but does not seem to think a nation-state is competent to deliver programs for citizens.

My question is on dental care. The NDP's dental plan would mean that about two million Quebeckers at the end of this year, including seniors, children and people with disabilities, would be able to go to the dentist and have the federal government pay 100% of that cost.

Can he tell the House why he is opposed to having people who are suffering in Quebec get the dental care they need at zero cost to the Government of Quebec?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, there is no need to get angry.



My colleague started by telling me that the government is good at administering programs, and he spoke about employment insurance. I hope that the government will not dip into the dental care fund as it did with the EI fund, because it is not doing a good job of administering that.

Health care is a provincial jurisdiction and an area where the federal government often shows its incompetence. We know that from experience. What the Government of Quebec is saying is that health is important to us and that existing programs must be improved.

What Quebec is saying is that birthing rooms remain closed, there is a lack of palliative care, cancers are going undiagnosed, emergency rooms in the regions are struggling to stay open, and mental health services are unavailable. We are not saying that dental care is not important, but rather that the NDP is using this issue for electoral purposes. We see that clearly. That said, as public decision-makers, we must set our priorities. The NDP is making the next election its priority.

[English]

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the government had signalled that it was going to move into an era of fiscal restraint, yet here we are with a deficit that is as large as ever. I wonder if the hon. colleague has any comments on the size of the deficit in this budget.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, when we look at the debt and the deficit, we have to look at it in proportion to the ability to pay. Any banker who is asked for a \$2,000 or \$3,000 loan does not treat someone with an annual income of \$10,000 the same as someone with an income of \$50,000 or \$100,000. The same applies to people with assets and people with no assets.

The first thing to look at is the debt-to-GDP ratio. The Conservatives go from dollars, which they call nominal, when it suits them, to the ratio when that suits them. A little consistency would be nice. Beyond that, public finances have to be looked at as a whole. It is important to be concerned about both the deficit and the federal debt, but if the provinces are going broke in the meantime and they have to borrow money, or choose between borrowing money and caring for their residents, that has to be taken into account.

● (1735)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise today as the NDP finance critic to say that we will be voting in favour of the budget.

The budget includes initiatives that we think are very important. We worked very hard to ensure that they were included. There is a dental care plan for students, seniors and people with disabilities. The GST credit will be doubled for another six months, which is important right now because of inflation and the high cost of groceries, housing and many other things. There are requirements for the investments that the government is going to make in a clean economy. That will ensure that workers get their fair share, with good pay and benefits.

We are hearing rather common responses to the budget. We can be for it or against it. We have heard some contentious speeches,

### *The Budget*

but the NDP is trying a different approach this time. At a time when hate, anger and polarization are increasingly seeping into our politics, we want to try to find a way to work together, even with people we fundamentally disagree with, on finding common objectives and making progress, instead of simply criticizing what is broken. There are plenty of things that are broken, but we need to find a way to set our differences aside and work together to make progress for the benefit of Canadians.

[English]

We are living in times when politics and doing politics are getting more difficult. There is a lot of anger, a lot of justified anger, with the difficult circumstances we are facing. There is a feeling of unfairness at the burden of things not falling equally on the shoulders of all Canadians. People should be angry about that, but it is not enough to just be angry. People have to try to find solutions, which means trying to bring people together, not dividing them.

New Democrats are prepared to support this budget, as we were prepared to enter into an agreement with the current government to not cause an election in exchange for progress on a number of key policy areas. We see some of those reflected in this budget, according to the timeline that had been agreed to in that agreement. First and foremost is dental care, which is a really important initiative that would allow millions of Canadians, who up until now have not been able to, to get their teeth fixed. Children, seniors and people living with disabilities are finally going to get access to dental care, which has been eluding them for a long time.

That has had real consequences. It has affected their ability to get and keep a job. It has affected their sense of confidence in socializing with others. It has affected the way people look at them. It has caused them pain. These are real things that we are going to help a lot of Canadians take on in their lives and find solutions to.

We are doubling the GST rebate, not for the first time but for the second time, because we recognize that, in a crisis of affordability, people need to receive help, and that help should be targeted in a way that does not simply pour more fuel on the fire of inflation. This is the best way to do it. Members do not need to take my word for it. They can take the word of many private sector economists who, incidentally, are not NDP members. They do not always have nice things to say about us, but they recognize that this is a way to get help to people who need it and to do it in a way that is responsible and reflects inflation.

*The Budget*

Finally, as this is long overdue, the government is preparing to make some serious investments into the new energy economy that is coming. It must come if we are to reduce our emissions and avoid the worst consequences of climate change. As the government is doing this, we have been working hard to ensure that workers stand to benefit from those investments. They will benefit not because a cheque will be handed to corporations, as the Liberals so often do, and then we are left to beg them to do the right thing, but because it will be written into the funding agreements to pay prevailing union wages with benefits and pensions in those wage packages. This is so we will know that Canadian workers, when they show up to work to build the economy of the future, are going to be fairly compensated, that it will not be paid out in dividends to international or Canadian shareholders, the wealthy shareholders who hide their money offshore so we do not see a benefit here.

● (1740)

That is important as we move forward. One of the biggest concerns that workers have had about the changing economy and the changing role of fossil fuels in our economy has been that they would get left behind, and initiatives like this are what are necessary to make sure they are at the centre of that transition and that they stand to benefit as much as companies.

Those are some of the things we think are positive about the budget. I was saying earlier that there is a lot to be angry about now. We have seen grocery prices go through the roof, and that is affecting families. We know there are record lineups at food banks. We have seen a generation in Canada begin to give up on the dream of home ownership because prices continue to go up and up. We have seen indigenous people continue to suffer from the legacy of colonialism in so many ways, and we have seen them lose family members and friends far too regularly as a result of the intergenerational legacy of colonialism in Canada. People are starting to see the consequences of climate change and appreciate the enormous costs, both personal and financial, that are coming for all of us if we do not find a way to get on top of it.

As such, there is a lot to be angry about. I can get pretty angry about some of these things. I appreciate that members here who care about their communities and care about our future get angry about these things. However, I say to Canadians to watch out for the guy who is selling anger without any real solutions because to be angry, but to not try to channel the legitimate anger people are feeling about the injustices in Canada into a real solution, is to take us nowhere fast. When that anger turns in on itself, it is self-destructive, and that is why we need to take that anger and focus it on solutions so we can make real progress.

If we want to propose solutions, we have to understand the problems. Unfortunately, we do not have to understand a problem to get angry about it. We saw this earlier from the Conservative leader, somebody who is willing to get really angry about problems he clearly does not understand. If he does not understand the problem, it means he is not going to be able to find a solution to it.

What am I talking about? I am going to go through a list. First of all, I will go to the economy because the leader of the Conservative Party likes to talk a lot about the economy. He is right. Inflation is hurting people. We agree on that, but if we want to stop inflation

from hurting people, we have to propose real solutions, and that means we have to understand the problem. He would have us believe that only government has caused inflation in Canada. That is not true. During the pandemic, we saw, across the world, manufacturing facilities shut down and shipping shut down. We saw all sorts of supply chain issues as a result of shutdowns due to a once-in-a-lifetime global pandemic.

It is strange for me as the democratic socialist in the room to have to be teaching market principles to my Conservative colleagues, but anyone who understands the market will know that, when we have that level of significant supply chain disruption, we are going to see an increase in prices. That is going to happen. It is unbelievable to me that the so-called economic analysis of the Leader of the Opposition does not even take a moment to recognize the very real supply chain disruption we have seen as a result of a global pandemic.

The other thing he refuses to mention, which is just what the Governor of the Bank of Canada refused for months to mention until we squeezed it out of him at committee, is that corporate greed has been a significant driver of inflation. Even the Governor of the Bank of Canada has now said that companies have been raising prices beyond the increase in costs they have incurred and that the inflation happening because of the global pandemic created circumstances in which they felt they could raise their prices and get away with it because people would not know why the prices were going up. They might think it was justified. He said that, as inflation comes down, we may see prices come down even further, as companies no longer have a pretense to be raising their prices.

How does the Conservative leader pretend to have answers to inflation when he will not talk about corporate greed? Do members know who else will not talk about corporate greed? It is the Liberal government. That is something they have in common. It is a blind spot in their understanding of what is happening to Canadians right now, and they work together to try to silence the voices that would point out the role of corporate greed. I say shame on them both for that.

● (1745)

That is why we have made it a mission here to push the government to do things that it would not otherwise do. That includes the permanent 1.5% increase in tax on banks and insurance companies, which the Conservative leader loves to decry, but he never once has expressed support for taxing back some of the money that banks and insurance companies improperly took from Canadians during the pandemic. Do not tell me that guy has solutions; it is not true. He does not even have the decency to recognize a good solution when it comes up and slaps him in the face.

*The Budget*

He likes to talk about housing, and rightly so. Canadians are rightfully angry about what is happening in the housing market. The Conservative leader likes to pretend that this is a product of the last eight years. In 2004, a house that sold for \$30,000 in Winnipeg would sell for \$60,000 in 2007, and then for well over \$120,000 in 2012. Housing prices have been doubling in Canada for a long time. They doubled every few years under the last Harper Conservative government. Therefore, they cannot tell me that this is a product just of the last little while. It is a problem, and it is a growing problem, but it has been growing for a long time.

How do we solve the problem around housing? Browbeating municipalities into approving building permits for houses that will be built and that Canadians cannot afford is not a solution. Developers have been building a lot of houses over the last number of years. Do members know who has not been building houses? Governments have not been building housing. Before 1995, the CMHC, in partnership with provincial governments, would build 15,000 to 20,000 units of affordable and social housing every year, but they stopped when their funding was cut in 1995 by the then Liberal government. If we take the last 30 years and multiply the 15,000 to 20,000 units per year that would have been built, we land right around 500,000 units. Do members know what the deficit for affordable housing in Canada today is? It is about 500,000 units.

How did we end up with this deficit of affordable housing? It is not rocket science. It is because governments with the same philosophy as the leader of the official opposition cut and cut and cut the housing budget right out of the federal government's budget. That is why we have such a dearth of affordable housing today. That corresponds with the financialization of housing that we have seen, not over the last two years or the last eight years, but over the last 30 years. That is when it started taking off, because we no longer had more affordable housing being built at the bottom end of the price spectrum. That meant all those folks who otherwise would have moved into affordable or social units had to pinch their pennies and make tough decisions about what they could afford and what they could not, so that they could start to compete in the housing market. That is how we got to where we are.

Therefore, I will say "No thanks" to the leader of the official opposition, who runs around saying he is really angry about housing but does not even understand where the problem came from. He does not understand that policies like the ones he is preaching have caused the housing crisis we are facing today. It did not happen overnight; it took 30 years and, unfortunately, it is going to take a long time to fix. That is why we cannot afford to have somebody who is so ignorant about how we got here in the first place be in charge, because it would push us back another 10 years before we even start addressing the problem.

Let us talk about the indigenous peoples of Canada, who have suffered generations of colonial violence when the government determined to commit genocide, to take children away from their parents, to rob them of their language and to deny them access to their cultural heritage. We are still living out the consequences of that. The answer is not going to come without empowering indigenous people to be masters of their own economic destiny. Obviously, that is important when we talk about developing natural resources. It is important when we talk about the investment of \$4 billion, here in

this budget, for a "for indigenous, by indigenous" housing strategy so that indigenous people have the tools and resources to begin solving the housing crisis for themselves. That is important. If they can bring private capital and do some of that building, in addition to what the government can supply, that is a great thing. There are certainly examples of those successes.

● (1750)

We should not kid ourselves. Just as we cannot rely on the market that has created the housing crisis writ large to solve it without beginning to build again the kinds of affordable housing we had been building before, when times were better in terms of housing affordability, we cannot pretend somehow indigenous people now are going to rely on the market and market mechanisms to be able to house their people. If that was going to work as a strategy, I swear it would have been done already.

Indigenous people are not sitting around waiting for a handout when they have other solutions. What they are waiting around for is a government that is willing to work with them and resource them to be in charge of their own destiny and to be able to find the solutions in their own communities.

They have been economically sabotaged by the Canadian government since Confederation, when they started to have successful businesses and were told they could not take their products off the reserve, that there was going to be a pass system and they needed the permission of the Indian agent. We should not be surprised it did not work out. Now those are some of the problems we are trying to solve.

I hope that gives some understanding of the housing problem and what we are going to need to do in order to be able to fix it. I do not doubt a genuine desire to solve the problem, but I really do question whether the Conservative leader and his group have the intellectual wherewithal to be able to solve it. We would not know it by listening to what they have to say about the problem.

It is a similar thing when it comes to climate. The fact of the matter is we need to get our emissions down; there are no two ways about it. It has to happen, so we need to find ways to be able to do it. We need to find ways of doing it that put workers at the centre of that transition so they have good union jobs that pay well, that provide good benefits and that provide a pension for them when their working life is done, so they are able to support themselves in retirement and support their families along the way. That is how we are going to get this done.

*Private Members' Business*

If we look to the budget, how does this begin to assert some solutions? When it comes to Canadians who are making really difficult choices between caring for their teeth, buying their food and paying the rent, a national dental care program to cover children, seniors and people living with disabilities makes a difference. It makes a difference for their dignity. It makes a difference for their health, which otherwise deteriorates until they present in an emergency room because it has become so bad. We pay for it then, but we pay a lot more than what we are going to pay for some preventive dentist visits.

It is also a question of affordability. For those who are at the margin, who maybe have been able to afford some dental care in the past but for whom it has been difficult, this takes that cost off their plate and allows them to no longer need to put the care of their teeth in that delicate balance of costs they are trying to juggle in a time of increasing costs. The dental piece is very important.

There is another doubling of the GST rebate. The Liberals can call it a grocery rebate, they can call it whatever they want, but it is a doubling of the GST rebate. It makes sense. It is something that is targeted support that does not contribute to inflation. It is not going to households that have the ability to cause inflation; they could not cause inflation if they wanted to. They are just trying to buy the same basket of goods they used to be able to afford and no longer can afford. That money just helps them put most of the same things on the table.

I talked earlier about some of the investment tax credits and the labour conditions that are attached to those, because that is really important. It is also really important Canada begins to decarbonize and electrify. We cannot do that without producing significantly more power than we currently do. We need a grid infrastructure that can support that power if we are going to electrify not just homes and vehicles but industry such as aluminum production and steel production.

Canada has the capacity to be a world leader, so that means an opportunity for some folks to make a lot of money. This is an economic opportunity just as it was in the seventies when Peter Lougheed had the vision to make public investments in the oil and gas industry then to benefit his province.

I do want to talk about some of things that are not in the budget, but I will leave that for questions and comments.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed from December 12, 2022, consideration of the motion that Bill C-215, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (illness, injury or quarantine), be read the third time and passed.

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I wish I could say that I am pleased to be speaking tonight, but that is not really the case. I would have liked to have

seen my colleague's bill, or my own bill, which was introduced in the last Parliament, passed by the House to allow sick workers to fight their illness, get healthy again and get back to work. Unfortunately, that is not what is happening. I am here again tonight, and I think this is my third or fourth speech on the issue of sick workers.

We are talking about seriously ill workers who have paid into EI their whole lives. That means that there is a deduction, an EI premium, on their paycheque. That means that the employer has also paid contributions. It is an insurance program. Currently, sick workers are entitled to only 26 weeks of EI sickness benefits. We know very well that is not enough.

I believe I have repeatedly asked whether this government is a heartless one. There is a story I would like to tell. We talk a lot about statistics and data and documentation, but tonight I am going to talk about one particular person who called me last week. He asked me to speak on his behalf tonight.

I am talking about one of my constituents, Normand Chevalier, who lives in Saint-Polycarpe. He is a worker and has been working for 50 years. I think this is the first time in his life that he has had to apply for unemployment. He is not applying for it because he does not have a job. On the contrary, he had a very good job. Quite honestly, even at 65 years old, he would have liked to continue working.

Normand Chevalier called me last week and said to me, "Mrs. DeBellefeuille, I have tonsil cancer." It is a serious cancer. He has been undergoing treatment for 15 weeks now, and it is costing him a lot of money. He lives in the country. Saint-Polycarpe is a rural town in the Soulanges area of my riding. There is no public transportation to the hospitals in Montreal, so he has to drive himself. He told me that he has worked his entire life and this is the first time he needed help. He has been going to radiation treatments for 15 weeks now, and he has to keep going because it is not over. If he wants to have a chance to survive, he has to continue his treatments.

He said, "You know Mrs. DeBellefeuille, I've used up my benefits." He thought that with the government's top-up, he would be entitled to 26 weeks, but that is not the case. He began his treatments before December 18, 2022, and is not entitled to 26 weeks. He is among those who believed that because the number of weeks was increased from 15 to 26, they would at least be entitled to the additional weeks of EI sickness benefits to continue their treatments, to fight and, above all, not to worry about how they would pay their rent.

Last week, this gentleman told me that he was a driver at a company in Soulanges, that he was well liked and that he could hardly wait to get better so he could return to work. However, he was very worried because he did not know how he was going to pay his rent next month. Everyone has a story. Mr. Chevalier lives with his 16-year-old granddaughter. She, too, does not understand what is happening. Why is her grandfather, who is sick, hard-working and brave, not entitled to 26 weeks?

*Private Members' Business*

The bill we are debating this evening calls for 52 weeks and we support that. Some cancers require 37 to 40 weeks of treatment to get better and to beat the illness. That has been documented.

Mr. Chevalier told me that he was calling because he was so angry and he found the government to be heartless. When the minister increased the number of weeks from 15 to 26, why did she not decide that anyone who was already undergoing treatment would be entitled to 26 weeks? He said, "I thought that was how it was going to work, Mrs. DeBellefeuille." However, he realized that the exact opposite was true.

• (1800)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I would remind the member that she should not use members' names in the House, even if it is her own name.

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Noted, Madam Speaker.

I know that Mr. Chevalier is listening to me, because I promised to speak on his behalf in the House of Commons. There is at least one person listening to my speech tonight. Mr. Chevalier asked me to speak on his behalf because this makes no sense. It has been documented that the government can afford to provide 26 and 52 weeks of benefits to workers who are sick. Our critic on this issue, the member for Thérèse-De Blainville, has said as much, and she is calling for it in committee.

Mr. Chevalier was telling me that he may be reaching retirement and that he has no intention of claiming his pension or his provincial plan benefits because he wants to keep working. There is a shortage of drivers, so he wants to stay on. However, the government is giving him a hard time and messing up his plans because it is not giving him an incentive to return to the workforce.

He told me that he is going to fight his illness and manage on his own, because he has always been self-reliant. It is important for everyone to know that this government had the means and could have done it. This could have been included in the budget. There are times when ministers get it wrong. The minister got it wrong by increasing the benefit period from 15 to 26 weeks.

Bill C-215, which we are debating this evening and was introduced by the member for Lévis—Lotbinière, is a commendable bill that should make sense and could have been accepted and passed a long time ago.

Every member of the House, even on the government side, gets phone calls like the one I received from Mr. Chevalier. People do not understand why the government has not done something meaningful to encourage sick workers to get through their illness with dignity.

Today, I am pleased to be the voice of Mr. Chevalier, but I know that there are other Mr. Chevaliers in every riding who would have liked to congratulate the government for standing by them, as it promised, by helping sick workers recover with dignity and fight their illness without worrying. We know that EI sickness benefits do not cover 100% of a person's income, they cover 55%. That is not a lot. People already do their part, on top of all the expenses they have to cover to go see specialists.

In addition to fighting their illness, people like Mr. Chevalier who live in a rural area have to find transportation and pay someone to bring them to their appointments. I do not know whether my colleagues are aware, but people do not feel all that well after undergoing a radiation treatment. They need support. All of that costs money. In addition to having just 55% of his salary for 15 weeks, Mr. Chevalier had to use what little he had in his pocket to pay for all his treatment-related costs.

Mr. Chevalier told me today that he is going to have to move. He cannot afford his rent for the coming months. He is lucky that his landlord has a heart, unlike this government. The landlord let him out of his lease so that he could go live somewhere else where the rent is cheaper. Quite frankly, Mr. Chevalier does not have any other income. The only other option he has is to apply for social assistance.

What the government is telling this worker, who is in his sixties and who worked and paid into the system his whole life without ever getting an EI cheque, is that it has no heart. The member for Lévis—Lotbinière is trying, once again, to introduce a bill to fix that.

What we want is for those on the other side of the House to wake up and for the government to provide royal recommendation to allow Bill C-215 to pass, to allow people who are sick to be treated and often to fight for their lives, to beat the illness and, above all, to return to work.

I implore the government once again to give royal recommendation to Bill C-215, for all workers and for Normand Chevalier and everyone like him. If the minister does not intend to give royal recommendation, I hope she will go back and say that anyone who is currently receiving treatment is eligible for the 26 weeks.

• (1805)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière for introducing this bill, which would extend workers' benefit period for illness or injury to 52 weeks.

This change is long overdue. It will have a significant impact on the lives of Canadian workers who have an illness or are injured, who are willing to work hard but unable to do so because of a condition beyond their control. I think this change would show compassion, as my colleague said. Moreover, the workers are paying for this. They want to know that they have some insurance if they lose their paycheque because of illness or injury.

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

For a long time, the New Democrats have been advocating for an extension of the EI sickness benefit. We know the difference it will make in the lives of Canadians who are suffering from all sorts of conditions, not least of which is cancer. People cannot go to work when they are sick with cancer, and we want them to be able to take the time they need. In many cases, courses of treatment for cancer go well in excess of 26 weeks, so we are setting people up to fail by telling them there is a sickness benefit for them when they need it that we know very well is not long enough to take them through the course of their treatment. It is heartbreaking to hear of workers who lose their home because they are not able to work and do not have an income when their EI sickness benefit runs out. This is something we know the government can do, something it should do and something we have been calling on it for a long time to do, and I think it is about time.

I am grateful to the member for Lévis—Lotbinière for having presented the bill. However, I also want to take a moment to comment on what I think we also need, which is a larger reform of employment insurance.

It is nice that there is a private member's bill coming from a Conservative member in respect of EI. I note that we just heard the leader of the official opposition speak about the budget. He made a reference to EI, but I think people might have missed it because he used a euphemism, not the actual term for employment insurance. He talked about payroll taxes, and that is the only time we will hear him talk about employment insurance.

The leader of the official opposition only refers to EI as a payroll tax, when in fact it is a premium that workers pay to be insured against loss of work so that when they lose their job, they do not lose their home. EI premiums are actually lower now than they were under the Conservative government, but the only words he has to say about EI are about payroll taxes. I say shame on him for that, because we need far more widespread employment insurance reform as the country faces a recession and as we come out of a pandemic. It was made very clear that our system prepandemic was inadequate, and now we have the same system all over again, with not a whit of difference. The entire lesson of the pandemic was forgotten overnight last September when the Liberals cancelled the temporary employment insurance measures.

It is hard to believe that this is more than a sporadic fit of compassion coming from a Conservative member given the Conservatives do not talk about the need for meaningful employment insurance reform. The only mention they make of employment insurance outside of the bill is as a payroll tax. We will not be able to support the employment insurance system well unless we talk about how we pay for it. That is part of the important conversation we will have over modernization.

There are folks who believe, as the NDP does, that the government ought to come back to the table as a funding partner in employment insurance in order to provide more training opportunities. Now, that is less about folks who are sick, and hopefully when they recover, as we hope they will, they will be able to return to the job they had before. However, for many people, when they lose their job, sometimes that job is not available anymore. Sometimes the in-

dustry has changed and they need retraining to be a good fit for another employer, possibly in a different industry.

● (1810)

People on employment insurance are not well supported, just like the many people who were on CERB or the CRB who saw their industries, like tourism, devastated by the pandemic, industries that are still struggling postpandemic. There were no training offers from government. It did not say it would train people off CERB to meet the employment demand of employers who are complaining they cannot find qualified people; rather, it wanted to starve them off the CERB. It cut it off and then expected them, when they had no income to pay their rents or buy their groceries, to go out and learn new jobs at the same time.

Guess what happened. It did not work. The government ended the CERB program with very little notice and a lot of support from the Conservatives. Did it help with the labour shortage? It did not, because it was never a plan; it was just a cruel assumption that somehow people were staying at home sitting on their hands, uninterested in working, when in fact a lot of them did not have jobs to go back to because they came out of industries like tourism and hospitality, which are still struggling to recover from the days of the pandemic.

Therefore, I appreciate a Conservative MP's bringing forward what I think is a decent proposal for one aspect of the employment insurance system, but if government really wants to do right by Canadian workers, it is going to take a hell of a lot more than this, even just with respect to employment insurance.

I hope that when the Conservatives are having conversations internally about this bill, they will start to talk about the larger employment insurance system and how it is not simply a payroll tax but an important insurance product that helps Canadians transition from industry to industry, job to job or, in an industry like mine, construction, when there is a slowdown in work. We are always working ourselves out of a job in construction. Eventually we finish the job. That is good. We want projects finished on schedule and on budget, but that sometimes means there is a pause between one project and the next one, and employment insurance has to be there for people so their families are not on the line while they are looking for that next project to build.

Let us have a far more fulsome discussion in this place about employment insurance than this bill represents on its own, even as we vote to make this bill law.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak to this bill. I really do appreciate the comments from the member for Elmwood—Transcona prior to me in regard to the manner in which Conservatives often refer to employment insurance as a payroll tax. It is not a payroll tax. It is a program that is funded by both the employer and the employee, and it is a program that is used as an insurance mechanism to take care of individuals when they reach a point in their working career when they need to access that employment insurance. It is a critical program, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this bill.

I would remind the House that this is not the first time this bill has come forward. This bill came forward in another form previously. I believe it was Bill C-265. Unfortunately, at the stage after debate on the bill in its previous form, it ended up not being able to proceed because it did not have the royal recommendation required in order to proceed.

Members might know that royal recommendation is required for any private member's bill in Private Members' Business that comes forward that is expending money on behalf of the government. One cannot do that within a private member's bill. It requires a royal recommendation from cabinet in order to proceed. The reality is that very few bills that come from Private Members' Business actually get that royal recommendation.

As a matter of fact, early in my time in this House, in 2016, I brought in a bill related to employment insurance as well, which required royal recommendation. It did not get that royal recommendation. I was not able to convince the government to do that, even as a member of the governing party. Luckily, I was able to allow it to continue to pass at various stages with the assistance of all the opposition parties and the majority of the backbench on our caucus, but the reality is that one will eventually get to a point where one cannot proceed any further.

I think it is important to do that. If it was not done, then every single bill that came forward would be a bill authorizing the government to spend money, and one cannot do that through Private Members' Business.

The only difference, in my understanding, between this bill and the previous version is that it has added two more weeks to it. The previous version talked about 50 weeks of employment insurance, and this one talks about 52 weeks.

I find it unfortunate that the sponsor of this bill, despite the fact that it is a well-intentioned, well-meaning bill that warrants serious consideration, is doing the same thing that was previously done. Ultimately, when tabling this bill, the sponsor must have known the outcome of it and how the Speaker ruled on it the first time.

I understand that there was also, if I recall correctly, an opposition day motion from the Bloc Québécois on the exact same issue. We have seen the issue come forward several times, and we have ended up in the exact same place every time.

Having said that, I think it does warrant real consideration. As we modernize our employment insurance system, we should be looking at opportunities where we can improve. I think it is worth

pointing out that we have, as a government, improved those EI benefits, for starters, on maternity leave. This is something I was targeting in my private member's bill.

It used to be that the only people in the skilled trades were men, but now we are seeing more women enter the trades. The reality is that if a woman is a welder, for example, as in the case that inspired my bill, and if she were to become pregnant, she would not have the ability to take leave and still get paid, still have that income.

● (1815)

If a woman is pregnant, she is not sick, but she might still have barriers to work. The employer that Melodie had was a very reputable company in my riding of Kingston and the Islands, but it was just not large enough to sustain a full-time employee who was off on leave. She looked for ways to use EI, but she was unsuccessful in doing that. At the time, I was able to convince the government through the issue. Even though it would not give royal recommendation, it did agree to extend the number of weeks so that if an individual was in the same circumstance as Melodie in my riding, EI benefits would apply long enough for her to get to full term with her pregnancy.

That is just one way that we have expanded the EI sickness benefits, extending it from 15 to 26 weeks, to fulfill our 2019 platform commitment. We know that this extension will benefit approximately 169,000 Canadians every year. It is part of our long-term plan for EI modernization, and I believe that together, we will continue to build an inclusive, flexible EI system that all Canadians will benefit from, particularly those who need to access it, for years to come.

I admire the resiliency of those who keep bringing this issue forward. It is unfortunate that the government will not be able to support it given the fact that it requires royal recommendation. I should not even phrase it like that. It is unfortunate that it will not even get to the place where we can have another vote on it. Since the precedent has been set for the exact same bill, the Speaker will most likely turn it down based on the requirement for royal recommendation. However, as I have previously indicated, royal recommendation is very seldom, if ever, given to private members' legislation. Nobody knows that better than I do. I brought forward a bill on EI specifically in the very early years of my time here, the first year in which royal recommendation was required. Given that fact, my bill was not able to continue down the necessary path.

I encourage members to continue to talk to the ministers responsible about this issue and see if we can move in a direction that helps to modernize EI. We know that the labour force is changing. I only gave one small example, that of more women working in trades and the different requirements they might have when it comes to taking time off as a result of becoming pregnant, in the example of my bill. We need to continue to modernize our employment insurance system, and input from all members is very important in that regard. Therefore, I encourage those who are passionate about this issue, as I am, to continue speaking about it.

*Private Members' Business*

● (1820)

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I wanted to speak to Bill C-215, sponsored by my colleague from Lévis—Lotbinière, because I have had experience with some really difficult situations involving the duration of EI sickness benefits. The people I know, as well as the people who came to my office, did not ask to have to deal with these terrible illnesses one day. I am mainly going to speak about cancer because that is what most of these people were dealing with.

These people never expected that one day, they might have to choose between focusing their full attention on healing and slowly dying while trying to heal because they could no longer afford their treatment. For some, the treatments are very long.

I was listening to the speech given by my colleague, who had a lot of empathy and compassion for people in such situations. Unfortunately, the government could have granted a royal recommendation and allowed this bill to be voted on so it could finally be passed after many years of trying. I will have the opportunity to speak to that in my speech.

The fight to help people with these serious illnesses get access to money from employment insurance has been going on for years. Most of these people contributed their entire lives to a system that is supposed to be there to protect them. Unfortunately, when the time comes for some people to be able to benefit from it, the system simply does not meet their expectations.

I wanted to commend my Bloc Québécois colleague from Salaberry—Suroît, because she has worked very hard on this file. She talked about Normand Chevalier, who was listening to her speech and may have been patient enough to listen to the other parliamentarians until my speech. I want to say hello to him. I can tell him that there are people working very hard on this issue, as my colleague from Lévis—Lotbinière has been doing ever since he had the opportunity to introduce this bill. There are people working very hard to change things. Unfortunately, as we have seen, things are not changing.

I am directly and indirectly involved in the Relay for Life. Every time I participate in a Relay for Life event, I am always amazed to see that a town as small as Plessisville has the largest Relay for Life in Canada. This shows how willing people are to support cancer patients and survivors.

It is heartbreaking to walk the Relay for Life route and see the thousands of little luminaries lit for people who have cancer or survived cancer, or for families and people who have lost a loved one to cancer. Everyone should come to Plessisville to see how big this event really is. Luminaries line the entire two-kilometre route, creating a mosaic of light, and each and every one of those luminaries is dedicated to someone. How many of these people had to make a difficult choice between treatments and work?

The answer is too many. I do not want to get into a fight over numbers. We do not need to argue about whether it is 23% or 30%. Either way, it is too much. Nobody knows how long treatment will take. Nobody knows how to cure each of these diseases. Nobody knows how each person is going to respond to treatment.

● (1825)

One thing is certain. These people are forced to choose between devoting themselves 100% to their recovery or devoting themselves 50% to their recovery and 50% to their work, because they have no income and they cannot go through such an ordeal without income. This can affect young people, but it often affects women or men, mothers or fathers. It can affect people who have a family to support, whether they are men or women. There are not many Quebecers or Canadians who can afford to go an entire year without earning a cent.

That is why I think the right thing to do would have been for all parliamentarians to finally pass Bill C-215. The government had promised on several occasions to agree to this request, which came in particular from two people whom I would like to salute today.

Marie-Hélène Dubé started a petition that was presented here in the House. It was signed by over 600,000 people and calls on parliamentarians to set aside their differences and partisanship and finally recognize the needs of people with cancer who have to undergo treatment so that they can focus on getting well. Ms. Dubé has helped draft many bills. She herself has had cancer several times and she has never given up, but I think that she is a bit discouraged that parliamentarians have not yet found a solution. I have never spoken to her, but I saw her in the media. I looked at her website. I saw everything she has been doing to try to convince parliamentarians.

There is always a parliamentarian who is ready to take up the torch. When one party is unable to introduce the bill because of the way the lottery draw for private members' bills goes, someone else takes up the torch. This time, it was my colleague from Lévis—Lotbinière. He and the member for Salaberry—Suroît both worked very hard on this bill. I want to recognize the work of Ms. Dubé, who has not given up, even though she may be a bit discouraged. Today, I read her most recent post on the website 15weeks.ca. I will read it even though it is not that recent.

We are currently on the 14th bill to amend the act to increase benefits to more than 50 weeks, after 13 years of vigorous campaigning. If you can believe it, this campaign that I have been waging by myself since 2009 has been going on so long that I have qualified for my first FADOQ card. That's crazy! I was 38 years old when I gathered the first of the 619,000 signatures... I am honestly so exhausted, but I could never abandon you.

My colleagues are applauding her and I think she deserves it.

How far will we have to go? How long will we have to wait? There have been committee studies and unanimous motions adopted in the House, where all parliamentarians said they agree with the principle of 50 weeks. However, no government has made a move to change things. It is not a matter of money, because we can make it happen by using the EI fund. It is not a matter of politics, because everyone knows someone, like a family member or a friend of a friend, who has had to go through a difficult situation because of EI benefits.



I know there is not much time left, about 15 minutes, but perhaps someone on the government side will hear this final appeal from Ms. Dubé, from my colleagues and from all those who have championed this bill and its previous versions. I hope that the bill will finally receive a royal recommendation so that these people can focus on their recovery. It will send a message of hope to their loved ones. Let us send hope to all those who have had this disease and survived and to the many others who will one day have to deal with this terrible disease.

● (1830)

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I too will speak to Bill C-215, which is being debated today in the House.

Bill C-215 seeks to make a change to employment insurance. I am getting tired of having debates on employment insurance. I wonder why we are talking about employment insurance in the Canadian federal Parliament.

In 1867, when Canada was founded, there was a division of powers set up. The federal government took care of the money, the army, international border contacts and customs, but all the social affairs fell under the responsibility of the provinces. The reason employment insurance is a federal jurisdiction is that someone pulled a fast one in 1940. The economic crisis in 1929 was still having ill effects, the Second World War had just started and, in the meantime, there was a Liberal premier in Quebec, Mr. Godbout, who did not necessarily want independence for Quebec and let it drop. That is why the federal government is responsible for employment insurance today.

I would like to use an analogy about the federal government. I have a five-year-old son. Sometimes when a few children are playing together, we often see one of them go over to a friend who is playing with toys and snatch the toy away from them. He will go over to another friend who is playing with a toy and snatch that away. He will want all the toys that his friends are playing with. He will take them all, he will not be able to hold on to any more toys, but he will still try to take some more. That is classic behaviour. Eventually, the toys will quite simply gather dust. He will no longer play or be interested in them.

That is more or less how the federal government operates. It tries to take on all the responsibilities, keeps taking a few more here and there, but then neglects them. That is happening with EI.

Employment insurance is not working. The federal government is not working, and I believe that there is no desire to see it working. That is sad.

That is not just for employment insurance; there have been problems with passports and the Phoenix pay system. The problems keep piling up. This sort of thing is always happening with the federal government, but that does not stop it from wanting even more responsibility. It tries to tell us how we should be running our hospitals. It decides to launch all kinds of programs that it should not be launching. Meanwhile, the EI system is not working. The government is not carrying out the reform that people have been calling for for years.

### *Private Members' Business*

That is unfortunate, because every time there is an election the Liberals promise to reform the EI system. They hold consultations and then more consultations and in the end they do nothing to reform the system.

As a result, right now, only about half of unemployed workers are covered. That means that one out of every two people who lose their job is not covered by EI even though it is an insurance plan and they should be eligible. The federal government was even siphoning money off the fund, which ran surpluses for years. From 1996 to 2009, \$60 billion were siphoned off the EI fund. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives put unemployed workers' money directly into their pockets and left workers in the lurch.

Today we are talking about Bill C-215, which seeks to amend employment insurance, more specifically sick leave. Sick leave is another thing that is not working. A person who gets sick gets only 15 weeks and that is it. It is a season, nothing more. They can spend the summer recovering, but if they are not better at the end of the summer, then they do not get any more money.

It is sad because if someone loses their job and is the one person in two who is covered, they can usually get quite a few weeks of benefits, maybe even up to 50 weeks. I do not remember exactly how many weeks are available these days, but it is somewhere around there. A person can go about a year with that. However, if that person gets cancer and has to stop working, they are entitled to only 15 weeks. That is an inequity that does not work. The purpose of Bill C-215 is to correct this inequity. This is not the first crack at this.

My colleague, the member for Salaberry—Suroît, introduced a bill in the House during the last Parliament to fix this. In her case, it was not about getting to 52 weeks, it was about going from 15 weeks to 50 weeks. If it were 52 weeks, that would be even better. We could applaud that. We support this initiative, obviously.

● (1835)

However, this shows how hard she worked at the time. Her bill was even known as the *Émilie Sansfaçon* act. *Émilie Sansfaçon* was a woman who was on sick leave. It is called a leave of absence, but really, it is a forced resignation due to illness. She was on EI for too short a time and eventually passed away. She did not live to see Bill C-265, introduced by my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît, pass.

It is sad, because her father, who supported the Bloc Québécois, later ran for the Bloc Québécois and hoped that this bill would eventually pass. My colleague from Salaberry—Suroît worked hard. The bill passed first and second reading, was sent to committee and returned to the House for third reading. It went through all the stages. What was missing? Royal assent was missing. It just needed the government to say yes, nothing else.

*Private Members' Business*

That did not happen, which is sad. The Senate could have helped, too. It is sad, especially when we look at all the people who have supported this over the years. My colleague from Salaberry—Suroît, who introduced the bill, was not the first to come up with this idea. Yves Lessard, a Bloc Québécois member for the Belœil region, had already introduced a similar bill. Paul Crête, a Bloc Québécois member for the Bas-du-Fleuve region, had also already tabled a bill on this subject. Robert Carrier, a Bloc Québécois member for the Laval region, had already introduced a bill on this subject. Jean-François Fortin, a member of Parliament from eastern Quebec, had also introduced a bill on this subject.

The Bloc Québécois has repeatedly called for this problem to be fixed, for sick leave to be given to people who fall ill and for them to be supported during this difficult time. It is not a luxury for them to be able to eat, pay their rent and receive 50% of their pay, if not less, because it is 50% of the eligible amount. All we have been asking for is support to get them through a difficult time. By not giving them the money they need to heal, the government is adding to the stress they are under. It is sad.

I spoke about the members of the Bloc Québécois who worked on this, namely MPs Lessard, Crête, Carrier and Fortin, but there were also members from other parties. I must admit that we are not the only ones who had this idea. I could talk about the NDP MP Dawn Black, who introduced a bill three times to remedy the problem with sickness benefits and to provide more support for these workers. There was Fin Donnelly, a member who introduced a bill to resolve the issue four times. The next person that I name should certainly help the government understand that it needs to support this bill. Denis Coderre, a Liberal Party MP, once introduced a bill to resolve the issue with sickness benefits.

It is fascinating to see that members from all political parties have introduced bills year after year. This has been going on for what must be over 20 years now, maybe even 30. This is a problem that members are trying to solve. Unfortunately, they are not succeeding, either because their bills do not receive royal assent or because the party in power decides not to support them.

What we have now is a bill introduced by the member for Lévis—Lotbinière. It is important to highlight that it is his bill. We are at a point where this is coming from a Conservative member. We have reached a point where the Conservatives are also saying that the problem must be fixed. When everyone says that the problem must be fixed, there is no reason why it should not be fixed. It would be truly sad if the Liberals did not want to fix it. That would make the Liberals look more right wing than the Conservatives, more heartless than the Conservatives. I find that hard to believe. I hope that is not what happens.

Deep down, no one wants to leave sick people in the lurch. No one thinks it is okay for sick people to be in a position where they cannot afford to buy food, pay for groceries, be able to take the transportation they need, put gas—or electricity, I hope soon—in their car, so they can get where they need to go to receive care. It is sad. I hope that once the debate on Bill C-215 is over, things will not end there. I hope we will finally find a solution and manage to do something positive for these people.

• (1840)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière has five minutes for his right of reply.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Madam Speaker, now the die is cast. After a year and a half of work, we are the end of the process with my Bill C-215.

I want to thank everyone who contributed from near or far at every stage of the bill and who participated in the deliberations on this important issue of ensuring the financial security of people living with a serious illness requiring a period of convalescence that goes beyond the 26 weeks being offered.

I would have liked to see in yesterday's budget an openness by the Liberal government to help seriously ill workers who are asking for EI benefits for a period that goes beyond the 26 weeks that were hard-won in December.

That being said, we have made progress in the debate on this social security issue that is important to all Canadians. I greatly resent the requirement to obtain royal recommendation from the government, one that has blocked the wishes and a majority vote of the House in favour of Bill C-215. My thoughts are with all those who have a serious illness who will not get this financial help that would have given them a little more room to breathe.

Every year we lose special people to cancer. I would be remiss if I did not mention my friend and neighbour Roger Flamand, who has cancer. Roger is fighting for his life right now, surrounded by his wife Lorraine, his daughters Annie and Marie-Josée and his entire family.

With courage and resilience, Roger is going through a difficult time, and his qualities as a fair, helpful and generous man are serving him well during this trial. Family, friends and neighbours, above all neighbours, are supporting him day after day. Our thoughts and prayers are with him as he continues his personal journey with respect and compassion.

I would like to personally address the man who was the very best neighbour for 50 years. I remember the warm summer nights when Roger and my father Armand had long conversations. What a beautiful and close friendship they had. It was really heartwarming to see them.

When my father passed away, Roger often told me that he considered Armand, my father, to be like a second father. This evening, I can tell him that my father considered him to be one of his sons. Roger's presence will always be a source of comfort and solace. On behalf of Chantal, my children and myself, I thank him for being a part of our lives. We love him dearly.

With that, I will conclude the debate.

• (1845)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The following is a statement from the Speaker on Bill C-215:

It is my duty to inform members that the notice requirement in respect of a royal recommendation has not been met. Pursuant to Standing Order 79(2), the question on the motion for third reading of the bill will not be put. Accordingly, the order for third reading is discharged and the item is dropped from the Order Paper.

(Order discharged and item dropped from Order Paper)

[English]

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

If you seek it, you may find unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House call on the government to provide a royal recommendation for the bill.

**An hon. member:** No.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### FINANCE

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise at this hour to bring forward a question I asked the Prime Minister on February 1 of this year.

The budget was tabled yesterday, so when I referenced it in my question, it was in the drafting stage. I had thought that one might, in drafting the budget, look to the previous promises made by the governing party to see if they did not create a framework or guidance to assist the Prime Minister and his Minister of Finance in drafting the budget.

I suggested that, for instance, if times are tight and we want to contain spending, it would be a good idea to cancel spending money on fossil fuel infrastructure. The government had suggested, in previous election campaigns, that it was a priority to meet climate targets and follow the advice of scientists. I also asked the Prime Minister if it was not a good time to stop spending money on the Trans Mountain pipeline. Between the time I asked the question and today, it has risen in its estimated cost to over \$30 billion.

Its original price tag, back when I intervened at the National Energy Board and it was a private sector project being run by Kinder Morgan, was approximately \$5 billion, so that is a six-fold growth in the price and a remarkable \$12-billion increase since this time last year. That is really quite astonishing.

I also asked if it would not be a good idea to save money by cancelling buying the F-35 fighter jets, which remain controversial in the United States, where Pentagon critics are wondering if they are good value for money because the F-35 is still plagued with problems.

I asked whether, going forward, we should not deliver on the promises the government has made, such as funding the disability benefit, following up on promises for pharmacare, and delivering on an independent Canada water agency and the promises to live up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. My closing question

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to the Prime Minister was whether he would use the budget to deliver on his promises.

Now, we know the answer, and it is a partial yes. I will start with the good news. At long last, the budget does commit to, along a specific timeline, the Canada water agency. I will congratulate my friend, the hon. parliamentary secretary, who is here tonight to respond. The Canada water agency is something he cares a great deal about. It is now to be based in Winnipeg.

There is more funding for fresh water than we have seen in some time, although not as much as was promised in the Liberal platform, but let us say that is a partial delivery on a promise. I hope my question helped. Who knows if it did? The Canada water agency is an important promise. It will be independent, and it will see legislation brought forward. Again, the clock is ticking on that. I hope when they say “soon”, they mean “really soon”, and not “two years soon” like the last ones.

The Trans Mountain pipeline is not mentioned in the budget. We know the price and the cost of that are falling on Canadian taxpayers because it is now a Crown corporation. We know the debt load from buying it definitely falls on the government. The various promises to not spend money on it really ring hollow, as construction continues against the interests of sovereign first nations, such as the Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Squamish and WSÁNEĆ nations, which absolutely protest its existence. We know it is a climate killer.

There were various ways we could have reduced fossil fuel subsidies, but in the budget the government expands them, as we are now seeing dirty fossil fuel used to create hydrogen, so it is no longer green hydrogen. We also have seen, and this is the worst part of the budget for me, a commitment to open the Arctic offshore to oil and gas development.

I will close there.

● (1850)

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, indeed it is a pleasure to participate in tonight's debate and talk about budget 2023, a made-in-Canada plan for a strong middle class, an affordable economy and a healthy future.

I am going to respond to a few of the promises the government made that are referenced in the member's original question. One of those was regarding funding for a Canada water agency.

We know how essential healthy lakes and rivers are to Canadians, communities and businesses across the country and we know the threat that climate change and pollution pose to our fresh water. This is why, in budget 2023, we are moving forward to establish a new Canada water agency, which will be headquartered in my home community of Winnipeg.

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I really want to thank the hon. member, leader of the Green Party, for her steadfast support of the concept of a stand-alone departmental agency, independent of Environment and Climate Change Canada, reporting directly to the minister. This will be a legislated Canada water agency, and that legislation will, I hope, be introduced soon. Meanwhile, the Canada water agency will be operable in a form that will be effective until it formally becomes that stand-alone agency.

This is in addition to proposing major investments to strengthen our freshwater action plan. For example, we will invest \$650 million over 10 years to monitor, assess and do restoration work on the Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg, Lake of the Woods, the St. Lawrence River, the Fraser River, the Saint John River, the Mackenzie River and Lake Simcoe. These are water bodies from coast to coast to coast, and these investments will support better coordination of efforts to manage and protect fresh water across Canada.

Again, I want to thank the hon. member for her support of our freshwater investments. I agree with her that we need to go further and faster. Indeed, there are future budgets where I certainly hope those investments will be considered.

The hon. member also asked about seeing progress on advancing reconciliation. Since 2015, the federal government has worked with indigenous partners to advance reconciliation and make significant distinction-based investments to respond to the unique histories, interests and priorities of first nations, Inuit and Métis communities. Through budget 2023, the government continues to advance reconciliation by supporting healthy communities and investing in self-determined solutions. For example, budget 2023 proposes investments to improve safe and affordable housing, which is critical to improving health and social incomes, and to ensuring a better future for indigenous people and their communities.

I will end there and continue my remarks after the next question.

• (1855)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, it is good to be able to recognize progress on a key commitment, the Canada water agency, but nothing is more pressing, particularly in light of the intergovernmental panel on climate change's last report, which says that we are absolutely running out of time. There is no wiggle room and there is no time for procrastination.

I have to say that I was deeply shocked to find, on page 117 of this budget in case others are looking for where they might find it, a commitment to Arctic offshore oil and gas. This runs counter to everything we know, just like opening up Bay du Nord for offshore drilling. Opening up our Arctic for more oil and gas in the region, the part of this world most changed by the climate crisis, to start thinking we should be drilling for oil and gas there, is an abomination.

We know that what we have to do is to cut emissions. The only way to cut emissions is to be bold and stop being cowardly.

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Madam Speaker, budget 2023 will make targeted and responsible investments to build a stronger and greener economic future for all Canadians. In the end, these will make Canada a better place to live, work and thrive for everyone.

I am proud of the fact that budget 2023 will mean better public health care, progress toward truth and reconciliation, new opportunities for Canadian workers and, as I think the hon. member wishes, as do I, building a stronger, cleaner, greener and more sustainable 21st century economy.

CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the climate crisis is more urgent than ever, with deadly heat waves, summers of smoke and wildfires, extreme flooding and hurricanes. These events are happening now, and they are only getting more frequent and more severe. While the Liberals say they believe in climate change, they are unwilling to take the action needed at the scale and with the urgency that matches the crisis we are in.

In this week's budget, New Democrats were able to successfully push the government to invest billions into clean energy, sustainable jobs and green infrastructure, but I was very disappointed that there was no concrete action on eliminating fossil fuel subsidies in Canada. We have heard promise after promise, but instead the government is headed in the opposite direction, with more handouts to profitable oil and gas companies, ostensibly to provide them with financial help to reduce their emissions. Why would the government not regulate this? Why not make them reduce their emissions and pay for it themselves?

U.S. President Biden's budget eliminates billions of dollars in fossil fuel subsidies, and he has talked about how these companies are making "more money than God". In contrast, the Liberals think the Canadian taxpayer should be helping out these rich oil and gas CEOs.

A report earlier this month by Canada's spy agency, CSIS, warned that the climate crisis poses a profound national security risk. This confirms what scientists have been saying for decades. It also confirms what many indigenous communities have been warning us about: the melting of Arctic ice and permafrost, rising sea levels for coastal communities. These changes will threaten the Inuit, Métis and first nations ways of being and ways of life, many of which have been in place since time immemorial.

Droughts, flooding and extreme weather in Canada and around the world will mean decreasing food supplies, which means increasing costs for groceries. CSIS highlights the likely increase in violent extremism because of the climate crisis, as well as migration we have never experienced before, with millions of climate refugees, people who will be displaced due to climate disasters and famine, or simply fleeing areas that are too hot to live in.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Our world is changing rapidly and people are scared. They are scared for themselves, for their children and for their grandchildren.

The world's top climate scientists have made it crystal clear that we must reduce our emissions now. Given the urgency, scale and gravity of the crisis we are in, why would the government continue to hand out billions of dollars to the profitable oil and gas industry? These companies are making record profits. They made more money last year than they have ever made before. Why would the government not force these companies, which are fuelling the climate crisis, to pay to clean up their own pollution?

• (1900)

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I always appreciate the hon. member's questions and enjoy working with her on the environment committee of Parliament.

To start, the Government of Canada is taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas sector. We are not giving it a free pass, as is implied in the question. We have committed to cap and cut oil and gas emissions at a pace and scale necessary to achieve Canada's 2030 and 2050 climate targets. We are doing this in a way that allows the sector to compete in a global economy that is transitioning to net zero, and of course, keeps good, green jobs growing here in Canada. This policy will send a clear, long-term signal to invest in clean technology, low-emissions energy assets and supporting infrastructure while avoiding investments in oil and gas production that do not incorporate best-in-class technologies and infrastructure.

We are working closely with industries, provinces, territories, indigenous partners and civil society to design this approach. Putting a price on carbon pollution creates a financial incentive throughout the economy to reduce emissions and invest in clean innovation. Heavy industries across Canada, including oil and gas activities, are subject to carbon pricing under the federal output-based pricing system, or OBPS for short, or equivalent provincial systems.

We are taking action to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector. Current federal regulations require the oil and gas sector to reduce methane emissions by 40% to 45% below 2012 levels by 2025. In 2021, Canada joined the Global Methane Pledge, which aims to reduce global methane emissions by 30% below 2020 levels by 2030. As part of this pledge, Canada committed to develop regulations to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by at least 75% below 2012 levels by 2030.

Implicit in some of the member's questions is that the government is not doing enough. I would emphasize for the hon. member, and I know she has heard this from me before, that I think we would agree on this side of the House that we need to do more. However, we are working very hard to cap oil and gas sector emissions; we are implementing a clean fuel standard; we are investing in carbon capture and storage, which is going to be very important, as pointed out by the IPCC; and indeed, we should be phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by 2023. That is this year, and it is two years in advance of the G7 target that was set some years ago.

• (1905)

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member. I enjoy working with him on the environment committee in Parliament.

The member brought up the oil and gas emissions cap, and I want to briefly touch on that.

We know that the Liberals have been dragging their feet on this, and that the oil and gas companies have been aggressively lobbying for delays, loopholes and more subsidies. Therefore, we need a strong oil and gas emissions cap if we have any hope of reducing our emissions.

However, the member did not answer my question, and so I will give him another opportunity. Why not force these rich oil and gas companies, which are making more money than God, to pay to reduce their own emissions?

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. member on a couple of things. One is that the energy sector is making record profits. I also agree with her that emissions must come down, and we have very aggressive targets for 2030 and 2050. This is why we have invested \$9.1 billion in our emissions reduction plan.

It is time that the oil and gas sector puts the shoulder to the wheel and works with us to create the economy of the future and the good, green jobs of tomorrow, as well as ensuring a livable planet for our kids and grandkids.

## CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to be here tonight to talk about the Canada Post surcharge that was brought into play, as we know, to reflect the increase in diesel costs across Canada, but as we have seen gas prices increase, it has become so unaffordable for families.

Over the Christmas holiday season, we saw that surcharge grow to 39.5%. Families right now are struggling to make ends meet. They are seeing skyrocketing grocery store prices, skyrocketing prices at the pumps, skyrocketing fees at the banks, skyrocketing telecom fees. What did Canada Post do? It imposed this incredible surcharge that is having a huge impact on small businesses that are struggling to make ends meet. Many of them trying to get out of the debt load that they are carrying from the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I find it really frustrating. We have seen greedflation, and big oil and gas companies, especially, have record profits at the pump. Here we have consumers getting dinged by a Crown corporation with a 39.5% surcharge and, at the same time, the same companies that are charging these astronomical fees for oil and gas are having record profits. There is a huge disconnect by the government.

We know that governments around the world have charged an excess profit tax and have given it back to their citizens. Even in Britain, the Conservatives are imposing an excess profit tax on big oil and gas. We know how important it is for governments not only to intervene when we see big oil and gas and Crown corporations like Canada Post taking advantage of consumers but also to ensure that the money goes back to support citizens.

There is another thing I am equally concerned about. Many rural and suburban Canada Post mail carriers who are filling up their tanks and delivering mail get a certain amount of money to buy that gas. It is a set amount, and they did not get an increase despite the fact that we saw this surcharge escalate to 39.5%. It is like Canada Post imposes this surcharge based on the diesel prices of the day but then it does not apply that same principle to the very important postal workers who we rely on to transport our mail in incredibly difficult conditions.

We also see Canada Post failing to exercise and implement important asks of Canadians to bring in postal banking to create more profits within the corporation. Imagine the surcharge for people living in Nunavut or in the northern communities who are already paying an astronomical amount of money for medicine and groceries that some of them are counting on Canada Post to deliver. This also affects small businesses in rural Canada. This is completely unaffordable and unacceptable.

We are calling on the government to make sure that it invests in Canada Post, supports postal workers and creates fairness there. The government also needs to impose an excess profit tax on the greedflation that is taking place right now with big oil and gas to ensure that we provide relief to Canadians, whether it be returned to them through the doubling of the GST in the future or in supporting Canada Post so it does not have to charge this levy.

● (1910)

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's concern for Canadians dealing with the rising cost of living.

It is true that throughout the world, people are living in times of economic uncertainty. Inflation is driving up the price of necessities like groceries and rent and Canadians have been feeling it greatly. I certainly agree with the hon. member.

Canada Post was there for us as the needs of Canadians changed dramatically in recent years, connecting this country from coast to coast to coast. We know that Canadians continue to rely on the essential service that Canada Post provides us.

The inflationary pressures are happening across the board, including at Canada Post, where the cost of its operations has risen. It should be noted that this Crown corporation is funded by the sales of its products and services. This government has consistently

worked with Canada Post to ensure that Canadians get the services they need. Those actions include searching for opportunities to improve the financial sustainability of its operations, which are so vital to us all.

While Canada Post operates at arm's length from government, as the Minister of Public Service and Procurement stated in this House, we are monitoring this issue of fuel surcharges closely. Canada Post manages the largest transportation network in Canada and fuel surcharges are applied year-round, which is a standard industry practice for parcel shippers.

I can say that fuel surcharges are being reviewed every week and are lowered and raised based on the average price of diesel across the country.

We know that Canada Post greatly values its relationship with all Canadians and the investments that are being made in its operations and client service are all in the name of meeting its mandate to serve every address in Canada while remaining financially self-sustaining.

When it comes to dealing with higher costs of living, the Government of Canada is working hard to make life more affordable for Canadians. That is what the budget was all about.

For example, our government is supporting about 3.5 million families annually, through the tax-free Canada child benefit. We have increased old age security benefits for seniors over 75 by 10%.

We have reduced the cost of regulated child care by 50% on average across the country. We are also strengthening the Canada pension plan and enhancing the Canada workers benefit for our lowest paid and often most essential.

Let me conclude by saying that we are building on these supports in our latest budget, for example, through the newly proposed grocery rebate that I know the hon. member will support. Budget 2023 will deliver targeted inflation relief for 11 million Canadians and families who need it most.

Our government will continue to be there for Canadian families.

● (1915)

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Madam Speaker, again, it is absolutely unacceptable that oil and gas companies are having record profits at the same time that consumers are not only paying at the pump but are getting charged fuel surcharges that are at 39.5% by Canada Post.

It is having a huge impact on Canadians and we know that there is this unfairness for rural and suburban mail carriers who are also filling their own vehicles out of pocket. They get a fixed vehicle allowance per kilometre. Last year, they did not anticipate the high increases in fuel prices. This is a huge financial burden on them to be able to do their job. It is absolutely unfair that Canada Post is not giving them better support.

Those very workers that we rely on in Canada to deliver mail from coast to coast to coast should be getting an increase so that they can afford the fuel, so that they can do their job.

They love their job. They serve our community—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Madam Speaker, this government will continue to support the middle class and people who need support when they need it most.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Canada Post has been keeping us connected during the pandemic and this government will continue to work with the corporation to ensure that it remains self-sustaining while serving every address in Canada.

Although there is economic uncertainty around the world, the Government of Canada will continue to be there for people with measures to improve their cost of living and put more money back in their pockets when they need it.

This will help us build an economy that works for all Canadians.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:17 p.m.)

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