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# House of Commons Debates

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(Hansard)

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Wednesday, April 19, 2023

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1405)

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### ORAL HEALTH

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, April marks Oral Health Month, and from April 4 to 10 we celebrated National Dental Hygienists Week. As we celebrate this month, it is important to recognize the vital role that dental hygienists play in promoting good oral health and preventing dental diseases. By prioritizing these efforts, they can continue to ensure that patients are educated on proper dental care techniques and provide professional teeth cleaning and preventive treatments.

This year's theme is "Oral Health for Total Health". By prioritizing our oral health, we can take important steps toward improving our overall health. This month is an opportunity to recommit ourselves to good oral health habits, such as brushing, flossing and regular dental checkups. Our government will continue promoting oral health care as we expand access to the dental care program.

I want to take this time to send a shout-out to our dental hygienists for all the work they do. We owe them a lot for making sure that we have the best oral health possible. May they continue to help make our smiles shine bright.

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[*Translation*]

### LOTBINIÈRE RELAY FOR LIFE

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was very proud to agree, for the second year in a row, to be the honorary chair for the Canadian Cancer Society Relay for Life in Lotbinière, which will take place on June 10.

At Relay for Life events, which first began in 1999, participants of all ages gather and take turns walking around a track or path to symbolize the perseverance of those affected by cancer and to send them a message of hope. The event will take place at Terry Fox Park in Saint-Apollinaire from seven o'clock at night until seven o'clock the next morning.

The money collected goes toward supporting innovative research projects on all types of cancer, providing the largest support network to help people better manage life with cancer and shaping public health policies.

I invite all members to put together a team and come walk with me at the Lotbinière Relay for Life in support of this noble cause that is very dear to my heart.

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[*English*]

### PANCHEN LAMA

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Panchen Lama plays a critical role in Tibetan Buddhism as the person who recognizes the reincarnation of the next Dalai Lama. He also bears the distinction of being the youngest political prisoner in the world. Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was taken by the Chinese government at age six, and has never been seen since. That was 28 years ago. Despite demands from the international community, the PRC has continuously refused to reveal the whereabouts of the Panchen Lama.

Tenzin Thupten Rabgyal, the abbot of the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the official seat of the Panchen Lama, will be here in Ottawa this week to speak about the seizure of the Panchen Lama in 1995 and the subsequent seizure of over one million Tibetan children placed by the Chinese government into residential schools, where they are deprived of their language, their culture and their religion.

The human rights violations against Tibetan Buddhists in the PRC must stop. As we approach the 34th birthday of the Panchen Lama, I ask all parliamentarians to join with me in calling for his immediate release.

*Thu-chi che.*

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**CENTRE PROMO SANTÉ**

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate the Centre Promo Santé, an organization located in Ferme-Neuve. For nearly 20 years, its mission has been to promote fitness and physical activity through two programs that focus on risk factors and rehabilitation. Target groups can access the organization's equipment and professional services free of charge.

Thanks to the vision of Dr. Luc Laurin, the organization's president, the Centre Promo Santé is now affiliated with the Montreal Heart Institute's EPIC Centre and is participating in a research project aimed at preventing cognitive decline.

We know that keeping our community healthy means adopting healthy habits and surrounding ourselves with people who have experience in this area.

I want to thank the staff, volunteers and all the health specialists for their dedication to heart health.

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[English]

**PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH**

**Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week marks both National Volunteer Week, when we recognize the contributions of many volunteers across Canada, and also the awareness month for Parkinson's, a neurological disease that affects the lives of more than 100,000 Canadians.

In my riding of Hamilton Mountain, one woman embodies both these important causes. Kim Petrie, a wife and mother of three, was diagnosed with Parkinson's 11 years ago, when she was just 45 years old. Kim saw an opportunity in her diagnosis to raise both money and awareness for Parkinson's. She rallied her friends, her family and her contacts in the music industry and threw herself into planning "Let's Shake", an annual local fundraiser for Parkinson's disease that attracts hundreds of people, who show up to listen to great live music and support this worthy cause. To date, Kim's efforts have amazingly raised over \$300,000 for Parkinson's research.

I thank Kim for all she does for our community.

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**PENSION PROTECTION**

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today and announce the passing in the Senate of my second private member's bill, Bill C-228, on pension protection.

This bill will ensure that pensioners who have worked their whole lives for a company will receive the pension benefit they are due. This is accomplished by providing transparency to know which funds are insolvent, providing a mechanism to transfer funds to make them solvent and, in the case of bankruptcy, putting pensions in priority ahead of creditors.

There have been many members of all parties in the House and the Senate who have been trying to pass such a bill for two decades.

I want to thank all of my colleagues for their help with this. This is a great day for Canadian pensioners. No longer will we see companies go out of business and leave those who have worked hard their whole lives without any pension or with only part of a pension.

Thanks go to everyone in the House and the Senate who supported the bill. It is a great day for Canadian pensioners.

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• (1410)

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, "our world needs climate action on all fronts—everything, everywhere, all at once". This call for action from the UN Secretary-General António Guterres was shared less than a month ago. I want everyone in this House today to reflect on the fact that this is probably the last warning from the scientific community before we exceed the irreversible mark of 1.5°C in global temperature rise.

From hurricane Fiona, which devastated my home region of Atlantic Canada, to the ice storm that left millions out of power in Quebec; the fires that destroyed crops, forests and towns out west; the melting permafrost in the north, which is releasing massive amounts of methane that will lead to a catastrophic, rapid rise in the planet's temperature, we are no longer talking about a hypothetical future impact. It is taking place right before our eyes, in all of our communities.

On this Earth Day, I want us to keep the climate crisis as a top priority. I urge our government to continue to work toward increasing and fast-tracking our actions to achieve climate justice. I am challenging us to have the courage to do more to support measures, policies and actions that will lead us into a healthy, sustainable and livable tomorrow.

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**PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH**

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Parkinson's is a complex disease that affects over 100,000 Canadians, with 6,600 new cases diagnosed each year. My wife, Barbara, is one of those cases and one of these Canadians.

Parkinson's is one of a group of progressive neurological diseases that have no cure and affect both young and old. People with Parkinson's can show tremors or muscle stiffness or rigidity. They can have slow movement, soft speech, small handwriting, depression, loss of smell or changes in thinking ability. Parkinson's affects each person differently and can be very hard to diagnose.

*Statements by Members***HOUSING**

I would like to thank Parkinson Canada, Parkinson Society Southwestern Ontario and our local care partner support group for all the help they have given over the past year to my family. Parkinson's is more than one can see.

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month.

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[Translation]

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN LOUIS-SAINT-LAURENT**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, L'Ancienne-Lorette's figure skating club is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

As we celebrate this milestone, I would like to thank, and especially congratulate, the thousands of parents who volunteer for charitable activities to help our youth reach their full potential. I am thinking in particular of people who lead sports clubs such as skating, hockey, baseball, soccer, and even karate, which allow children to explore and live out their passions. I am also thinking of organizations like Cercles des Fermières du Québec, which teach young people the valuable traditions of arts and crafts, optimist clubs, which support and celebrate young people, and rotary clubs, which provide memorable international exchange experiences for teens.

We must not forget the Knights of Columbus, which has chapters in Loretteville, L'Ancienne-Lorette and Val-Bélair, to name just a few. They provide assistance to the most vulnerable members of our society. There is also a group of indigenous veterans who meet up every month under the leadership of Francine Beaudry. I love joining them for a chat. I also want to recognize Quebec City's biggest social group, the Club des aînés La belle époque, a seniors' group that is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

I have a long list of other organizations I would like to mention, but most of all I want to thank and congratulate all the volunteers who make Louis-Saint-Laurent the best riding in Canada.

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[English]

**SIKH HERITAGE MONTH**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the month of April is Sikh Heritage Month. In Canada, from coast to coast, members of the Sikh faith and others are celebrating Vaisakhi. Vaisakhi is such an important time of the year. It celebrates the creation of the Khalsa. The Khalsa is so important to all members of the Sikh community and others.

In 1999, we passed a resolution in the Manitoba legislature, which I was pleased to be the sponsor of, recognizing the importance of the Khalsa. At this time of year, the month of April, we appreciate Sikh Heritage Month and all the valuable contributions that this community does for us. It is a part of our Canadian heritage itself.

To each and every one of the members here today, I say happy Vaisakhi and do appreciate the Khalsa.

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, buying a house used to be a milestone moment, like getting one's driver's licence, starting one's career, getting married and becoming a parent, or becoming Speaker, but the Liberals' failure to cut red tape and get houses built has made housing unaffordable for most people.

In Ontario, the gap between house prices and incomes has become a chasm. Over eight years, the Liberals have seen house prices grow by 180% while incomes have grown only 38%. As inflation and the cost of living go up, an entire generation of young people is left behind, as is the ability to settle down and pursue their dreams.

The Prime Minister is sending a clear message to young Canadians: It does not matter how hard they work or what sacrifices they make; with the Liberals in charge, they will never own homes and never get to enjoy the same quality of life their parents and grandparents did. This is unacceptable.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the NDP really earned its keep in the coalition government. Conservative MPs put forward a common-sense motion to have a parliamentary committee investigate allegations of interference at the Trudeau Foundation. This is a foundation that received \$125 million in taxpayer money, and the government appoints much of the board. Beijing's influence in the Trudeau Foundation is an issue Canadians are talking about, yet the NDP refused to let people know the truth.

What happened? Well, its Liberal masters told the NDP to jump, and the subservient NDP asked, "How high?" The Liberals said, "Do not let Canadians know the truth." The NDP said, "Yes, sir!"

The NDP is not even pretending to be separate from the Prime Minister. It is happy to be his lapdog. Who is the NDP really protecting, the Trudeau Foundation or the Prime Minister, or is there something more sinister at play?

The NDP had a choice between standing for principles or selling its soul. Now Canadians know which choice the NDP made.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**ICE STORM**

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my sincerest gratitude to the outstanding firefighters, hydro crews, mayors, city workers, and countless dedicated volunteers who worked relentlessly during the recent ice storm that battered my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges and affected over a million Quebecers.

[English]

Throughout this challenging time, they put their lives on the line, working day and night to restore electricity, open community centres, provide warm meals, share generators and secure the basic needs for those who needed it the most. Their courage and commitment exemplify the best of the human spirit and reflect a strong sense of solidarity that defines our community.

[Translation]

Together, we made it through this storm thanks to their determination and incredible team work. To all the heroes who jumped into action, please accept my heartfelt thanks.

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[English]

**HAUDENOSAUNEE AUTHOR**

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Kristi White, a Haudenosaunee children's book author from Oneida Nation of the Thames, has written beautiful stories about a special boy, Jay, and his friend Gizmo. Like many indigenous people impacted by the legacy of residential schools and colonialism, Kristi's family is dedicated to culture revitalization.

Now she writes *The Adventures of Jay and Gizmo*, illustrated by Shari Campbell, to give the next generation of indigenous youth an opportunity to learn to read while connecting with indigenous language and culture. Whether Jay and Gizmo are learning about powwows, boys with braids or healthy relationships, indigenous children are finally seeing themselves in storybooks. Many of her characters are based on real-life people, such as her son River, the inspiration for the hoop dancer who teaches Jay about indigenous youth with autism.

Kristi and her family have travelled the country sharing their stories and teaching about diversity and inclusion. I hope all indigenous youth have the opportunity to read about the adventures of Jay and Gizmo, and I ask that we all support this inspirational author.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING**

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, more than six million Jewish people were murdered between 1933 and 1945, and more than two and a half million were transported in cattle cars to death camps for extermination. I acknowledge that it is a strong word, but it is appropriate.

Those people were systematically, unceremoniously and unemotionally killed for no other reason than that they were Jewish. The

Warsaw ghetto uprising began on April 19, 1943, but by May 16 of that same year, the revolt had been crushed, the ghetto lay in ruins, and the cattle cars were packed with prisoners. Our Jewish brothers and sisters, as well as their children, were crammed in like sardines and transported to extermination camps.

Eighty years ago, heroes rose up to protect their families and compatriots. Their courage leaves me speechless with admiration. Gas chambers, extermination, unsanitary conditions, famine, slavery, dehumanization: Humans are capable of the highest good, but also of the worst evil, and that is rather frightening.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

[English]

**LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are struggling. Food bank usage is skyrocketing. People are cancelling their vacations because they just cannot afford them.

However, the Prime Minister just took a \$160,000 trip to another friend's villa. This is just another example of the Prime Minister being out of touch with Canadians. This follows his trip to Tofino, where he went surfing on the first national truth and reconciliation day, and his trip when he spent \$6,000 a night on a room in London, England, with a butler.

This is not the reality for any Canadian. Canadians deserve a break. People are tired. They are trying to pick up shifts at work to ensure they can put food on the table. The family budget cannot keep up with the cost of the government. I do not disagree with taking family trips, but we must not expect hard-working Canadians to pay for them, especially at a time like this. Enough is enough.

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**ROOM OF REMEMBRANCE**

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, along the hallway that leads to the House of Commons, visitors will find the Room of Remembrance. This small room is home to the eight Books of Remembrance, books that contain the names of Canadians who gave their lives in military service. Every day at 11 a.m., the pages of the books are turned so that each name may be read at least once every year. This practice has gone uninterrupted since 1942, through fires and pandemics.

The room and its important place in preserving our national history were brought to my attention by one of our dedicated parliamentary protection officers, Constable Brad Belliveau, a veteran himself. He informed me that the books were the idea of Colonel Archer Fortescue Duguid, a veteran of the First World War. Colonel Duguid, a military man turned historian, proposed the books as an alternative to a traditional memorial.

I encourage all members of the House to visit the Room of Remembrance and honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

### LABOUR

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a failure to increase the cost of the bureaucracy by 50% with poorer services. It is a failure to have 150,000 workers go on strike in the biggest general strike in four decades. However, it is an especially incredible achievement of incompetence to do both of those things at the same time. Only the Prime Minister could pull that off. Now our veterans, immigrants, small businesses and taxpayers will be without services.

How will the Prime Minister fix the government he broke?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite in the Conservative Party, we deeply respect the work that unions do across the country to stand up for good middle-class jobs. That is why we have ensured that the work is done at the bargaining table. We know there is progress being made, but it is an important principle to respect the work of the bargaining table. That is what we are encouraging people to continue to do, because, yes, Canadians deserve the services and we need to continue to support the public service that delivers those services to Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives were in power, there was no general strike and running the government cost one-third less.

It is a failure to increase the cost of the bureaucracy by 50%. It is a failure to have 150,000 workers go on strike. Having both at the same time demonstrates the Prime Minister's incredible incompetence.

How will the Prime Minister fix the damage he has caused to our government and our taxpayers?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians continue to rely on the services provided by the federal government. That is why we are encouraging everyone to stay at the bargaining table. That is where we will get results.

We will always be there to ensure Canadians get the services they need. Unlike the Conservatives, we are also going to be there to defend union principles and the right to collective bargaining. We will continue to do the work at the bargaining table.

### Oral Questions

• (1425)

[*English*]

### ETHICS

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister all but confirmed yesterday that he was gifted 80,000 dollars' worth of free accommodations at the villa of a Trudeau Foundation donor. That is what anyone else would have had to pay to stay there over that nine-day vacation. He now has a big IOU to those Trudeau Foundation donors, who will obviously be expecting something in return for it.

Everyday Canadians pay for their own accommodations when they go on vacation. Will the Prime Minister agree to pay back that \$80,000 gift?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I went away with my family and my kids to stay with friends we have known for decades, in a place where I have stayed many times over the past decades, since I was one year old. Of course, in all these situations, we work with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that all the rules are followed, and that happened in this case.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nobody is raising qualms about the Prime Minister having a vacation. I know it is his favourite thing to do. I had a vacation at the same time. It was a Sunwing package, and I waited five hours at the airport. That being said, I paid for it myself. We are not asking for the Prime Minister to pay for the security, and we are not even asking him to pay for his private jet; we are simply asking him to pay the same price any other family who stayed at that resort would pay so that he does not owe anybody anything.

Will he pay back that \$80,000?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these are family friends. My father was godfather to one of their children. Their father was godfather to one of my brothers. These are family friends we have had for many decades, close to 50 years. Over those 50 years, I have been to that vacation spot many times with my family, including with my father when he was still alive.

Of course, we worked with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure all rules were followed, and we followed all the practices in regard to prime ministerial travel, including, unfortunately, having security along with us, which is a requirement for all prime ministers of any party.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we all agree the Prime Minister should have security. We have no problem with him having friends.

### Oral Questions

My friends might buy me a cup of coffee or a beer, but not an \$80,000 gifted vacation that obviously comes with an IOU. This came from wealthy Trudeau Foundation donors who live in Bermuda, a long way away for his friends. Now these people will have inordinate influence on him. The Prime Minister works for them rather than working for the Canadian people.

Will the Prime Minister get rid of this IOU and clear his conscience by paying for his own vacation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think Canadians are worried about the Leader of the Opposition's friends who buy him a cup of coffee.

Canadians are worried about his billionaire friends that he is using to attack local news for Canadians right across the country. His issues with the CBC have brought him to involve American tech giants to try to attack the local news, the local culture and the franco-phone news that Canadians rely on from coast to coast to coast.

Yes, we have our disagreements in this place, but when the Leader of the Opposition goes running to his billionaire tech giant friends to try to attack Canadian institutions, Canadians should be asking tough questions of this leader.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it has now been established that the Chinese regime is behind the million-dollar donation that a businessman, also Chinese, wanted to give to the Université de Montréal. Unfortunately, it is also clear that, when speaking with Le Devoir about it, the university official had some doubts. It is also clear that the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation solicited funds from the Chinese Communist Party for its own activities and for a statue of Trudeau senior. We are talking about \$250,000 out of the \$1 million.

Is it not also clear to the Prime Minister that he does not have the distance needed to impose his choices when it comes to an independent public inquiry?

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is attacking the wrong Trudeau, as it has done for many years now. The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation was the one who made those decisions. For the past decade, I myself have not had any direct or indirect involvement with the foundation and the decisions that it makes.

\* \* \*

### ETHICS

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, how do we define the right Trudeau? The Prime Minister claimed he knew nothing about how the Trudeau Foundation was being run. I find it hard to believe that he was unaware of the donation by the Green family. In fact, I am sure he knew about it. Even if he was unaware of it, he should have at least looked into it. If not, he is not doing his job. Why does he not tell us how much the

Green family donated to the Trudeau Foundation before he joined them on vacation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I say that I have had no direct or indirect involvement with the Trudeau Foundation for over a decade, that is because I have had none. No, I was not aware of the donation by the Green family. It does not surprise me because they are long-time friends who are interested in the same things we are, but I was unaware of it. I do not have the details. The opposition will have to accept that. I am telling the truth. I have not had any involvement with the Trudeau Foundation for a decade.

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[English]

### LABOUR

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats are extremely disappointed that the Liberal government did not arrive at a negotiated agreement with the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

These are the workers who delivered unprecedented help during the challenging times of the pandemic. They deserve our respect. They do not deserve groans from the Conservatives. They deserve respect. These workers work hard, and now the government has to step up. The government often talks a good game about collective bargaining but ends up doing very much the same as the Conservatives.

Will the Prime Minister commit to not bringing in back-to-work legislation and instead commit to negotiating a fair deal for these workers?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, government negotiators are, as we speak, at the table with the unions, bargaining in good faith toward getting to the right solution that will continue to deliver the services that Canadians rely on and that they were able to rely on through the pandemic from our extraordinary public service, but also making sure we are moving forward in responsible ways.

This is something that we have always stood for. We will continue to support unions and collective bargaining. This is the first day of labour disruptions. We continue to be very optimistic that we are going to be able to see this resolved where it needs to, at the bargaining table.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government talks a good game about workers' rights, but it often ends up doing very much the same as the Conservatives.

Public servants worked hard during the pandemic and they deserve respect.

Will the Prime Minister commit to not bringing in special back-to-work legislation, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as my NDP colleagues are well aware, we are actively involved in negotiations right now.



*Oral Questions*

Our negotiators are at the table with the unions. They are putting forward responsible proposals that recognize the hard work that the public service has done over these past few extremely difficult years. That will also guarantee that we can continue to provide Canadians with much-needed services in a responsible manner.

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[English]

**ETHICS**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we now know from intercepted phone calls that the Chinese consulate sought to influence this Prime Minister by making a \$140,000 donation to the Trudeau Foundation, that was arranged and signed off on by the Prime Minister's own brother. This was for the specific purpose of influencing the Prime Minister's decisions as Liberal leader and eventually as Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister really expect us to believe he has never discussed the Trudeau Foundation with his brother since that donation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said, I have had no engagement, direct or indirect, with the Trudeau Foundation in close to 10 years. That includes not knowing what donations are taken, what decisions they are making or what my brother is doing on the foundation. I made that decision 10 years ago to not engage with the foundation and that is what we have all been consistent with.

• (1435)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he has no direct or indirect involvement with the Trudeau Foundation. Really? The annual report for 2021-22 lists him as an inactive member and says that he has only withdrawn from the affairs of the foundation for the duration of his involvement in federal politics, meaning he can go back to that big pile of cash when he leaves office: cash that was contributed to the foundation by the regime in Beijing. Why does the Prime Minister keep making statements of falsehood about his involvement with his family foundation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe the Leader of the Opposition needs to look in a dictionary for the definition of “inactive”. It goes exactly to what I have said. I have had no involvement, direct or indirect, with the Trudeau Foundation for 10 years. I am completely inactive in that sense, because I am active delivering benefits for Canadians, delivering growth throughout the middle class, delivering dental benefits that the member voted against, delivering child benefits and delivering child care that have made a huge difference for Canadians. That is what I am active doing, and not any of that other stuff.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I did look up the word “inactive” and do they know what it does not include? It does not include getting the donors of the Trudeau Foundation to pay for their vacation. It does not include getting members of the Trudeau Foundation to be appointed as the election interference watchdog. It does not include appointing a rapporteur to look into that same interference who was an active member of the Trudeau Foundation, and it does it not include having a brother who facilitated the donation from a foreign dictator-

ship. How does the Prime Minister reconcile his inactive involvement with all of those activities?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, viewers watching at home may be surprised to see the extent to which the leader of the official opposition is choosing to focus on me, when they are worried about affordability, they are worried about growth, they are worried about health care, and when we are moving forward with a budget that would deliver a grocery rebate to Canadians, that would deliver health care, that would deliver dental care, that would deliver a plan for great jobs for the middle class for the coming years. That member and his party will be voting tonight against that budget that would help Canadians. Shame on them. We should be helping Canadians here; that is not what he is doing.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister is doing is helping himself to Trudeau Foundation donor money. He is helping himself by using the influence his office gives to indirectly generate donations to the Trudeau Foundation. Speaking of that, his brother was the one who orchestrated the donation from the Beijing dictatorship to the Trudeau Foundation. He personally attended the announcement of the donation, and it is his name that signed the agreement for the donation.

Has the Prime Minister discussed the Trudeau Foundation with his brother since that donation was received?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have already said “no” to that question. “No” is the answer, but at the same as he tries to focus on me and spinning all sorts of different conspiracy theories, we will continue to stay focused on Canadians and on delivering on our commitments in budget 2023 with affordability, including the grocery rebate, cracking down on hidden junk fees and predatory lending, and introducing auto-filing for taxes for low-income Canadians. We are there to support Canadians during this difficult time.

The Leader of the Opposition is going to be voting against that tonight. He will be voting against the support for Canadians we are going to continue to deliver, despite his attacks.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no attack. We are simply asking him to do what every other Canadian would normally do: The average Canadian pays for their own camping trip and pays for their own family vacation. He gets his vacations funded by Trudeau Foundation donors. We are not asking for him to pay for the security or even for the private jet. We are simply asking for him to pay back the \$80,000 gift he got from his wealthy friends in Bermuda, who are donors to the Trudeau Foundation.

Will he get this IOU out of his pocket and pay the money back?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition continues to focus on me, we will continue to focus on Canadians, including by moving forward on strengthening health care. We are in the process of signing historic deals with all the provinces to deliver more family doctors, to deliver better mental health care, to deliver better supports for our frontline workers and a reduction of backlogs, and to deliver better data collection right across the country, so we can make sure Canadians are getting the best possible health care from coast to coast to coast. On top of that, we are moving forward with a dental care plan that is going to deliver dental care for Canadians right across the country, and he voted against that.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister really expects us to believe that he has not discussed this donation that the dictatorship in Beijing directed to the Trudeau Foundation, even though it was his brother who signed off on the donation, orchestrated the transaction and signed the agreement to bring the money home.

If he really expects us to believe that, then I have a very simple question: Will he agree to have his brother come before a parliamentary committee to testify about foreign interference in our country?

• (1440)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe you, perhaps, can rule on this. There is a convention in Parliament that assumes and that accepts that members are telling the truth, so I do not know how many times I have to say “no” to his question he is asking. I do not know why it is so hard for people in the Conservative Party of Canada to accept that “no” means “no”, but we will continue to answer these questions in full truthfulness, and we will continue, despite the member’s mudslinging and his personal attacks, to focus on delivering things for Canada. The member opposite and everyone in this House has an opportunity to accelerate the grocery rebate. Will they accept the unanimous consent motion that would do that?

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says we have the wrong Trudeau. He is going to be thoroughly confused now, because I am adding a third one to the mix. Alexandre Trudeau allegedly signed a deal, one that was improper at best, with two major Chinese donors who used a company as a front for the transaction. This might interest the Minister of National Revenue.

Has the Prime Minister spoken with his brother, and is his brother directly or indirectly connected with the foundation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, I have had no engagement, direct or indirect, with the Trudeau Foundation in 10 years. That includes not speaking with my brother about the foundation’s operations.

I have plenty of responsibilities, including investing for Canada’s middle class and protecting Canada’s French language and culture from Conservatives who want to attack it.

While the Bloc continues to spin conspiracy theories, I will continue to deliver for Canadians every day, because that is what Quebecers and Canadians expect from our government.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knew nothing. He does not talk to his own brother. Does he talk to his office?

Back in 2016, his office asked the Trudeau Foundation for answers, but he does not talk to his office. The intelligence service has been telling him month after month about Chinese interference, but he does not listen. He does not listen to anyone or talk to anyone.

Does he only work as Prime Minister between vacations at his friends’ properties?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc Québécois surely remembers the widespread media coverage and questions concerning the Trudeau Foundation back in 2016.

The whole reason my office had to ask for answers to the questions we were getting from the media was because we were unaware of what was happening at the Trudeau Foundation and because I have had no direct or indirect involvement with the Trudeau Foundation for a decade.

The leader of the Bloc Québécois said so himself in his question.

[English]

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees that the Prime Minister is entitled to a vacation. Everyone agrees that the cost of security for any prime minister when he travels is a reality.

However, everyone also agrees that \$9,000 over nine nights at a superelite villa of a Trudeau foundation donor raises some questions. That is \$81,000. I will ask the Prime Minister the question again because he has not answered yet. Will he pay that money back?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I went with my family and my children to a place that I have been to probably dozens and dozens of times over the past decades because they are long-standing—

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Pay for it, freeloader.

• (1445)

**The Speaker:** I am going to interrupt. I am starting to hear some names being called back and forth again. I want to remind hon. members not to call each other names, just out of respect of the chamber, if nothing else.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see the extent to which the Conservative Party does not want to talk about budget 2023 and all the measures we are putting forward to support Canadians, whether it is the grocery rebate, the work we are doing to support small businesses by reducing credit card fees or moving forward on dental care support, which the Conservatives continue to oppose.

We will continue to focus on Canadians while they, for some reason, focus on me.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are focused on the Prime Minister's vacation, and I know that there are a lot of Canadians who believe that he should take a permanent vacation, but this is like a vacation auction: One donates to the foundation and one gets a holiday with a Prime Minister. It is pay to play.

He did not pay the \$81,000 back for his luxury villa because, if he did, he would have said so. What did those donors get for the gift that ordinary Canadians, who he works for, did not?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that family includes a godfather to one of my brothers, and my father was godfather to one of those children. We have been family friends for decades, and we will continue to be family friends for decades more.

As always, we worked with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure that all the rules were followed. That is what Canadians know and understand.

Canadians are probably puzzled as to why the Conservative Party continues to stand against dental care, against for low-income Canadians and against child care, which is saving Canadians hundreds of dollars a month at a time of need.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Prime Minister is not living the same reality as the majority of Canadians. We know that he is more afraid of his reign ending than of paying bills at the end of the month.

We also know that the friends he invited on vacation are extremely wealthy. As Prime Minister, he has an ethical and moral responsibility to pay for his personal expenses during his trips.

Can the Prime Minister confirm that he will pay for his accommodations in Jamaica?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important that Canadians have confidence in the work that we, as parliamentarians, all do with integrity and accountability.

That is why we have a Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner who oversees our work and advises us on how to continue to do it with integrity in order to maintain the trust of Canadians.

In this particular situation, specifically my vacation while staying with friends, we worked with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure that all the rules were followed, and they were.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's staff briefed him before his trip and told him to be careful of the optics.

We are talking about the optics of the Prime Minister vacationing during the holidays with multimillionaire friends while Canadians were suffering for lack of money. I can understand that his friends invited him, but he went on vacation at Prospect Estate, a rental property where people pay between \$1,100 U.S. and \$8,000 U.S. per day.

The Prime Minister vacationed at a rental property. Accommodation for other members of his team and entourage were also paid for. The problem is that from an ethical and moral point of view, the Prime minister must pay for his personal expenses. Will he pay back the \$80,000 he owes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was one year old the first time we went to visit these friends at their home. Over the decades, I have maintained my friendship with these people and continued visiting them. Sometimes, I went to their home, and sometimes they came to mine. We are true friends. I believe that even the Conservatives should understand the concept of a long-standing true friendship.

Obviously, as in every case, we worked with the Office of the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that all the rules were followed, and they were.

\* \* \*

**LABOUR**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I remember when I was elected in 2011. The Conservatives had just imposed special legislation against postal workers. It is crazy. Twelve years later, a Liberal government is threatening to do the same thing as the Conservatives.

The NDP is clear. We will always side with workers. Will the Prime Minister turn into a Conservative and impose special legislation or will he try to negotiate a good agreement for those who answered the call during the pandemic?

● (1450)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, despite the difficulty I had hearing the hon. member I think he was saying that we may have threatened to impose some sort of legislation. We are working in good faith at the negotiating table. For years, we have demonstrated our deep respect for the work of unions, this essential work they do to defend the middle class and good jobs, including within the public service.

We will continue to work in good faith at the negotiating table to ensure the continuity of service delivery for Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, PSAC workers who serve the people of London are on strike today demanding a fair deal from the government. These workers deserve respect.

People in London are looking carefully at what the government will do next. Will it do what it usually does and show its Conservative colours, or will it listen to workers' legitimate demands and commit to not introducing back-to-work legislation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I question the member opposite's mention of our Conservative colours. She knows full well that the very first thing we did when we were elected was to eliminate the Conservative anti-union legislation Bill C-525 and Bill C-377. The attacks the Conservatives laid on labour were legendary, and that is why we worked in partnership with organized labour across this country to deliver real services to Canadians.

That is why we continue to sit at the bargaining table in good faith to work with them to continue to deliver the quality of services that Canadians have always received from the public service and deserve to continue to receive.

\* \* \*

**NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Kings—Hants rely on getting quality news to inform them on what is happening at home and across Canada. The recent attacks by the Conservative opposition leader on Canada's media and journalists is resembling the same type of playbook of the extreme right-wing politics in the United States. By attacking Canada's public broadcaster, they are undermining an important way Canadians stay informed, particularly in francophone communities and in rural Canada.

Could the—

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

**The Speaker:** I am going to have to interrupt. I am having a hard time hearing the question.

Maybe the member can take the question not from the top, but from about halfway, please.

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Mr. Speaker, the fact that I am getting drowned out is a real illustration of where the Conservative Party of Canada is at right now.

Let me ask this: Could the Prime Minister comment on the government's approach to protecting local media and vibrant news outlets in this country, in opposition to what the opposition party is standing for right now?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Kings—Hants for his extraordinary hard work. I know that he and MPs from coast to coast have heard from constituents who understand the vital role that local news plays in their communities. That is why it is so disappointing to see the Conservative leader copy and paste right-wing

talking points from the States in his effort to shut down these local news outlets.

On this side of the House, we will always stand up for the important services that rural individuals, francophones and, indeed, families across the country rely on.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***ETHICS**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Trudeau Foundation bears the name of the current Prime Minister's father, and according to its annual report, two seats on the board are reserved for family members: the Prime Minister and his brother, Alexandre Trudeau.

The foundation is a family affair, since we have learned that the Prime Minister has chosen to spend at least \$160,000 of taxpayers' money visiting its donors.

He has said several times today that he has stayed there many times. How many times has he vacationed in that place since he became a member of Parliament?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are once again attempting to peddle conspiracy theories.

That fact is that we will always continue to respect the recommendations of the Ethics Commissioner when it comes to my trips and personal travel.

I can also reiterate that it has been 10 years since I have had any direct or indirect involvement with the Trudeau Foundation.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, getting answers from the Prime Minister, even to the simplest questions, is so difficult. We asked him how much he personally paid for his most recent vacation to Jamaica. The Prime Minister refused to answer.

I asked a very simple question following a statement that he made today. He said that he had stayed on this private estate in Jamaica dozens of times.

I am asking him to tell us, in honest straightforward terms, how many times he has vacationed in Jamaica since becoming an MP.

● (1455)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this was the only time I have gone to see these friends since I became Prime Minister.

From memory, I believe I only went once during the years I served as an MP, before becoming Prime Minister.

We are working with the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, as we must always do, to ensure that all the rules are followed, even when we go visit friends.

[English]

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one in five Canadians are skipping meals, and 1.5 million Canadians are using a food bank every month. Their rents or mortgage payments have doubled since the Prime Minister took office, and many of them do not know how they will be able to pay the bills at the end of each month.

While Canadians are struggling with the cost of living, the Prime Minister jets off on a Jamaican vacation for \$81,000 at a private villa, courtesy of a big-time Trudeau foundation donor. How much of that gift did the Prime Minister pay back out of his own pocket?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the Conservative Party really cared about Canadians and affordability, instead of personal attacks on me, they would move forward on supporting the budget we are putting forward tonight, which is delivering affordability supports, and mental, dental and health care supports to Canadians, as well as building great jobs in the growing green economy right across the country.

Indeed, Conservatives will have an even sooner opportunity to do that. Will they let pass the unanimous consent motion to accelerate delivery of the grocery rebate to 11 million Canadians across the country? I hope they support that motion now.

\* \* \*

#### LABOUR

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since 2015, the Prime Minister has spent \$21 billion more on the public service and \$22 billion on outside consultants, yet he was not capable of negotiating an agreement with the public service. It is Canadians who are suffering. It is Canadians who are not receiving their passports, Canadians' loved ones whose immigration processes will be elongated and Canadians who will not receive their tax refunds.

Will the Prime Minister take responsibility and apologize, not only to the public service, but also to Canadians, for failing to reach a negotiation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know all too well what the Conservative playbook would be on this: back-to-work legislation even before the picket lines were brought up. That is what they have done before. That is their go-to on this.

On this side of the House, we actually respect and work with unions as partners. We respect the right to collective bargaining. We have been at the table working constructively. They continue to be at the table, right now, in constructive conversations. We will continue to be there to make sure that Canadians get the services they need and that public servants continue to get the respect they deserve, but they do not get that from the Conservatives.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### ETHICS

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's Office has admitted that it sent ques-

#### Oral Questions

tions to the Trudeau Foundation, which is named after his father, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. This is the same foundation for which his brother, Alexandre Trudeau, received or solicited a donation of \$200,000, plus \$50,000 for a statue of his father, Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

By admitting that his office is in touch with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, is the Prime Minister not saying that he has had relatively direct involvement with the Trudeau Foundation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a lot of questions were being asked in 2016, questions that were being put to me in the House, about the Trudeau Foundation. That is why my office asked for answers to various questions, so that we could understand exactly what bearing they had on the foundation. As I have said, I have had no direct or indirect involvement with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation for 10 years. I fail to understand what part of this response the leader of the Bloc Québécois refuses to accept, but it is the truth, and it is what I have been saying for a long time.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

#### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is being grilled like burgers on the barbecue he was talking about earlier. Meanwhile, he is not doing his job, which was already not going well.

I have a solution to help him put an end to the torture. Why not let Parliament choose someone to lead an independent public inquiry that he will not have anything more to do with so that he can finally try to get back to doing his job?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the leader of the Bloc Québécois wants this government to continue to do its job, all he has to do is vote in favour of our budget this evening.

We are here to implement measures that will help Canadians with the cost of living. We are here to help small businesses with credit card costs. We are here to help Canadians with investments in the health care system and dental care. We are here to create good jobs for the middle class for the years to come with a green shift that will create good jobs and growth across the country.

The leader of the Bloc Québécois has a very simple choice. Will he support our budget, which meets Canadians' expectations?

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**CARBON PRICING**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all that matters is the results. The result is that after eight years under the Prime Minister, one in five Canadians is skipping meals and 1.5 million are eating at food banks every single month. Some people are eating out of garbage bins because of the Prime Minister's inflationary policies. His solution is to bring in a 41¢-per-litre carbon tax that will cost \$1,500 per household in net expenses after rebates on higher home bills, higher grocery bills and higher gas bills. We are voting against it.

Will the Prime Minister axe his tax if he really wants to help?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the leader opposite wants to talk about what we have done since 2015, so let us talk about that. We have lifted over 435,000 children out of poverty through the Canada child benefit, which his party campaigned against. We have created over 50,000 child care spaces to date and cut child care fees in half across the country, including six provinces and territories that are at \$10 a day, and he voted against it. We have helped over 230,000 kids access dental care so far, which his party voted against.

Every step of the way, we have been there for Canadians; he has been there for himself.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is from the guy who just stuffed his face with a free \$80,000 vacation. Sometimes you make it easy for me, Justin. If only it were a laughing matter that one in five Canadians are eating at food banks. Some of them are going to the CEO of those food banks and asking for help with medical assistance in dying. The Prime Minister's solution is to raise taxes on farmers and truckers who bring food to our grocery stores, which will inevitably lead to more hunger and famine.

If he has any common sense at all, will he finally axe his carbon tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everyone in Canada knows that we cannot have a plan for growing the economy if we do not have a plan to fight climate change. Everybody knows that except the Conservative Party of Canada.

We have moved forward by putting a broad price on pollution and bringing down our emissions over the past number of years. We have also put more money back in the pockets of Canadians, and Canadians know that as we fight climate change and support them through this challenging time, they will be able to have better jobs for themselves and their kids for the coming decades.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, and yet the Parliamentary Budget Officer he appointed has calculated that the cost of the carbon tax to the average family is \$1,500 more than these phony rebates they get back. This is not just a 41¢-a-litre tax on gas he wants to impose. In addition, it will raise the cost for farmers and truckers to bring food, so it is a food tax.

Is his solution to the fact that 1.5 million Canadians are starving and going to food banks to raise taxes on food?

● (1505)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our solution is to continue to invest in affordability for Canadians, including with a grocery rebate. We really hope the Conservatives will vote to accelerate this, even though they will probably vote against it tonight in the budget vote.

In regard to the price on pollution, the member knows that constituents in his riding, the average family of four, will be receiving over a thousand dollars in carbon price returns this year. That offsets the cost of the price on pollution they are facing. It is both a plan to fight climate change and to grow the economy while supporting Canadians, and we will continue with it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the national shipbuilding strategy is a program that allows us to create and maintain good jobs across the country.

Until now, the strategy relied on the Seaspan and Irving shipyards, but we have just learned that Canada now has a third official shipyard, the Davie shipyard in Lévis.

Would the Prime Minister expand on this announcement and its importance for Canada's economy?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle for her question and for the hard work she does.

We recently announced that the Davie shipyard in Lévis has become the third partner under the national shipbuilding strategy.

The deal represents \$21 billion in economic benefits and 4,500 jobs in the Quebec City region. Davie is already working on the design for six icebreakers and one polar icebreaker, to be built for the Canadian Coast Guard.

We will be there for the Davie shipyard and we will be there for the workers of Quebec, in a way the Conservative Party was never able to.

[English]

### CARBON PRICING

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, so if people just pay this 41¢-a-litre tax, the Prime Minister will send them something called a “carbon price return”. That is his latest term for it. It is almost like when one gets one of those emails asking for the password to one’s bank account, so that a carbon price return can be deposited into it.

Canadians know this tax is a scam. It has not reached any of the climate change targets, and yet it is going to be a net cost to every family of \$1,500. Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat or house themselves.

Will the Prime Minister axe his tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the member opposite choose to spend a little time in his riding of Carleton, because if he did, he would hear from family members and individuals in his riding who just last Friday received a climate action incentive cheque. This went to families right across his riding, right across Ontario, with one payment every three months that will total over \$1,000 for Ontario families of four. This will help them offset the price that we have put on pollution and continue to build good jobs and a better future for all Canadians. That is what we are doing. People know we have to fight climate change and support families.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have spent time in my riding, and what they are talking about is that they cannot afford to put gas in their car because the Prime Minister’s carbon tax is already 14¢ a litre, rising to 41¢ a litre.

On page 3 of the report by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, whom he appointed, it says that the net cost to the average Ontario family above and beyond any rebate cheques they will get is \$1,820 a year. This is not an environmental plan. It is a tax scam.

Will he axe the tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer’s report concurs with our analysis, which points out that eight out of 10 families across the country in regions where the federal backstop is brought in do better with the climate action rebate than the carbon price costs them. This is something that is well established.

What is less clear is how the Conservative Party of Canada plans to grow the economy and create good jobs for the future when it refuses to accept climate change is real and that it also provides an opportunity to innovate and grow the economy.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, page 3 of the Parliamentary Budget Officer’s report shows that when they add the fiscal and economic costs, the net cost is \$1,820 per Ontario family above and beyond the rebates, with the vast majority paying more than they get back.

Apparently the environment minister did not get the memo. He let the cat out of the bag and admitted that Canadians would pay more in taxes than they got back in any benefits, proving that everything the Prime Minister has said on this tax has been false.

### Oral Questions

Why will the Prime Minister not admit what his environment minister has already said and say this is a scam?

• (1510)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it would do some good for the Leader of the Opposition to speak to some of his caucus members, whether from the Lower Mainland and the Fraser Valley in B.C. or whether from across the Prairies, places where they are dealing with flooding or more extreme wildfires.

To think that there is no cost associated with climate change—

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

**The Speaker:** It is getting loud again. I just want to make sure that the hon. member who asks the question gets to hear the answer. We do not want shouting or trying to interrupt anyone. I am going to ask everyone to just take a deep breath.

The right hon. Prime Minister, maybe start from the top so the hon. member can hear the answer.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, over the past years we have seen right across the country that the cost of inaction on fighting climate change is getting alarmingly high. This includes in many Conservative-held ridings that should be telling this to their leader. Whether in floods, wildfires or droughts, we are seeing the impacts of climate change that are going to get worse and worse.

That is why it is necessary to have a plan to fight climate change and grow the economy in sustainable ways that would give great jobs to Canadians for the coming decades. That is exactly what we have done with our approach on fighting climate change and in our latest budget.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week, Environment and Climate Change Canada released Canada’s national greenhouse gas inventory. This annual exercise summarizes Canada’s progress in the fight against climate change. There is a lot of good news in the report.

Can the Prime Minister inform the House about Canada’s record on reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard for the question. It is very important, especially in light of the questions the Conservatives just asked.

*Government Orders*

We are pleased to report that Canada's emissions are down from 2019 and 2005 levels, and we continue to grow our economy at the same time. This progress did not just come out of nowhere. Since 2015, we have taken historic action, and this includes putting a price on pollution—

**The Speaker:** I apologize, but it is nearly impossible to hear the answer. I must ask everyone to quiet down.

The right hon. Prime Minister may resume his response.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to report that Canada's emissions are down from 2019 and 2005 levels, and we continue to grow our economy at the same time. This progress did not just come out of nowhere. Since 2015, we have taken historic action, and this includes putting a price on pollution.

While Conservative politicians say that we have to choose between clean air and a strong economy, we are achieving both, and are on track to meet our 2030 climate targets.

\* \* \*

[English]

**LABOUR**

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of non-answers today. Workers deserve decent wages and good working conditions. The Liberal government claims it supports workers, but at the last moment, the Liberals act like Conservatives and do not have the workers' backs when they take a stand.

For the final and last time today, will the government commit to protecting workers' rights and not force workers back to work? Is the answer yes or no?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in full respect, in debate, in discussions and negotiations at the bargaining table, which is where that needs to happen. Our negotiators and the unions are hard at work finding a way to ensure that we continue to support and respect the extraordinary public servants who have worked so hard, including over these past difficult years of the pandemic, to deliver services for Canadians at the same time as we move forward in a way that is responsible for Canadian taxpayers.

This is the work we will do in good faith and positivity, just as we have always engaged with unions across the country.

\* \* \*

**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, most Canadians know that the federal carbon tax is a farce. It siphons 14.3¢ a litre from the pockets of consumers. It increases the cost of living. It contributes to inflation and it causes even higher food prices. Sadly, the carbon tax does little to fight climate change. Equally disturbing, there is—

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

• (1515)

**The Speaker:** I am going to interrupt and ask the hon. member to start again. I just could not hear the question.

**Mr. Kevin Vuong:** Mr. Speaker, most Canadians know that the federal carbon tax is a farce. It siphons 14.3¢ a litre from the pockets of consumers. It increases the cost of living. It contributes to inflation and it causes even higher food prices. Sadly, the carbon tax does little to fight climate change. Equally disturbing, there is tax cascading, where the government levies the GST on all the other gasoline taxes. It is taxing taxes.

If the Prime Minister wants to provide a meaningful, sustained rebate to financially struggling Canadians, why does he not lower his carbon tax cash cow and axe the tax on gasoline taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can only think of the poor residents of Spadina—Fort York, who elected a member who would promise to fight for the environment, fight—

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

Please continue.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I can only feel bad for the citizens of Spadina—Fort York, who elected someone they thought was going to stand up for them and deliver them supports while putting a price on pollution and returning more money to the pockets of hard-working Ontarians, and now he is just spewing Conservative talking points.

It is a real shame to see that, but on this side of the House, we will continue to stand and fight for Canadians and for the fight against climate change.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT**

(Bill C-46. On the Order: Government Orders:)

March 29, 2023—The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Finance of Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Income Tax Act.

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I would like to ask for unanimous consent to adopt the following motion.

I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order, or usual practice of the House, Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Income Tax Act, be deemed read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at the report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.



*Routine Proceedings*

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

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee of the whole, reported without amendment, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Today, in question period, while the Prime Minister was answering a question, I heard the Leader of the Opposition repeatedly call him a “freeloader”. Shortly after that, the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes repeated that insult.

When I was first elected to this place, I was really impressed by the rules of order that really encourage us to debate policy without resorting to personal slurs and attacks. It is disappointing for the many young people who are considering entering into politics, including many women, to watch members of the opposition, including the leader—

**The Speaker:** We are starting to get into debate right now, so I am going to ask the hon. member to sit down. I will take it under consideration.

• (1520)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I consulted the Cambridge Dictionary and a freeloader is “a person who uses money, food, a room in a house, etc. given by other—

**The Speaker:** As we are starting to get into debate, I am going to have to interrupt the member.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, as you can well imagine, it is always hard to hear everything from here, but it was clearly the case that the leader of the official opposition used the Prime Minister's first name in some of that tumult. Perhaps you can listen to the tape and determine if that occurred.

**The Speaker:** On the first point of order, I believe I addressed it when I heard it. I want to remind hon. members to use their language judiciously.

With respect to the other one, we will look into it to see exactly what happened, if the name was used by the hon. member, and we will come back to the House should we feel it necessary.

Again, I want to remind everyone that we are here for the good of the country, not to call each other names, and to debate, not to argue.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

The House resumed from April 18 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:21 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration concerning the extension of time to consider Bill S-245.

Call in the members.

• (1535)

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

(Division No. 296)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Aboulaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Chambers	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Fergus
Ferreri	Fillmore
Findlay	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland

*Private Members' Business*

Fry  
Gallant  
Garrison  
Gazan  
Genuis  
Gill  
Godin  
Gould  
Gray  
Guilbeault  
Hallan  
Hardie  
Hoback  
Housefather  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Ien  
Jeneroux  
Joly  
Julian  
Kelloway  
Khera  
Kmiec  
Kram  
Kusie  
Kwan  
Lalonde  
Lametti  
Lantsman  
Larouche  
Lauzon  
LeBlanc  
Lehoux  
Lewis (Essex)  
Liepert  
Lloyd  
Long  
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)  
MacDonald (Malpeque)  
Maguire  
Martel  
Mathysen  
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)  
McCauley (Edmonton West)  
McGuinty  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McLeod  
Melillo  
Mendicino  
Michaud  
Moore  
Morrice  
Motz  
Muys  
Ng  
Normandin  
Oliphant  
Patzner  
Perkins  
Plamondon  
Powlowski  
Redekopp  
Rempel Garner  
Roberts  
Rodriguez  
Romanado  
Ruff  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Savard-Tremblay  
Scheer  
Schmale  
Sgro

Gaheer  
Garon  
Gaudreau  
Généreux  
Gerretsen  
Gladu  
Goodridge  
Gourde  
Green  
Hajdu  
Hanley  
Hepfner  
Holland  
Hughes  
Hutchings  
Idlout  
Jaczek  
Johns  
Jowhari  
Kayabaga  
Kelly  
Kitchen  
Koutrakis  
Kurek  
Kusmierczyk  
Lake  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lapointe  
Lattanzio  
Lawrence  
Lebouthillier  
Lemire  
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
Lightbound  
Lobb  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Maloney  
Masse  
May (Cambridge)  
Mazier  
McDonald (Avalon)  
McKay  
McLean  
McPherson  
Mendés  
Miao  
Miller  
Morantz  
Morrissey  
Murray  
Nater  
Noormohamed  
O'Connell  
O'Toole  
Paul-Hus  
Petitpas Taylor  
Poilievre  
Rayes  
Reid  
Richards  
Robillard  
Rogers  
Rood  
Sahota  
Saks  
Sarai  
Scarpaleggia  
Schiefke  
Seeback  
Shanahan

Sheehan  
Shiple  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Singh  
Sorbara  
Sousa  
Ste-Marie  
St-Onge  
Stubbs  
Tassi  
Thériault  
Thomas  
Tochor  
Trudeau  
Turnbull  
Valdez  
van Koeverden  
Vandal  
Vecchio  
Vien  
Vignola  
Virani  
Vuong  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Wilkinson  
Williamson  
Zahid  
Zimmer

Shields  
Sidhu (Brampton East)  
Simard  
Small  
Soroka  
Steinley  
Stewart  
Strahl  
Sudds  
Taylor Roy  
Therrien  
Thompson  
Tolmie  
Trudel  
Uppal  
Van Bynen  
Van Popta  
Vandenbeld  
Vidal  
Vierson  
Villemure  
Vis  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Weiler  
Williams  
Yip  
Zarrillo  
Zuberi— 314

## NAYS

Nil

## PAIRED

## Members

Barsalou-Duval  
Dzerowicz  
Kramp-Neuman  
Morrison  
Pauzé  
Qualtrough

Bibeau  
Epp  
Martinez Ferrada  
O'Regan  
Perron  
Serré— 12

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

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**[*Translation*]**FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT**

The House resumed from April 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-239, An Act to amend An Act to authorize the making of certain fiscal payments to provinces, and to authorize the entry into tax collection agreements with provinces, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** 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 second reading stage of Bill C-239, under Private Members' Business.

● (1545)

[*English*]

(The House division on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 297)*

## YEAS

## Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Beaulieu	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Maguire	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrice	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Simard
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  
Williams  
Zimmer — 141

Webber  
Williamson

## NAYS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	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
Ehsassi	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski

*Routine Proceedings*

Robillard	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
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	Vandenbeld
Virani	Vuong
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 170

## PAIRED

## Members

Barsalou-Duval	Bibeau
Dzerowicz	Epp
Kramp-Neuman	Martinez Ferrada
Morrison	O'Regan
Pauzé	Perron
Qualtrough	Serré— 12

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

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

\* \* \*

## MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that messages have been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bills to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-205, an act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to another act (interim release and domestic violence recognizance orders); Bill S-210, an act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material; and Bill S-246, an act respecting Lebanese heritage month.

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**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 response to four petitions.

These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

\* \* \*

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to

present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from August 20 to August 26, 2022.

\* \* \*

● (1550)

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was just informed today by my clerk at PROC that I have to ask for concurrence in order for the reports for the extension of these four provinces to go through. I have not asked my colleagues in the other parties for concurrence as yet.

I will do my due diligence before coming back to the House, but I do hope to see the extensions requested once the process is followed.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## HAZARAS

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition on behalf of my constituents. In the past 130 years, the Hazara ethnic group has faced an ongoing genocide and systematic ethnic cleansing in Afghanistan. I have tabled petitions about this before on my constituents' behalf. They are also raising the fact that the Taliban regime is responsible for the ongoing massacre of Hazaras in Afghanistan. Gunmen have been directly involved in executions of Hazaras, forcing them to leave their homeland.

They are again calling on the Government of Canada to recognize the ongoing genocide and the persecution of Hazaras, as well as to prioritize Hazaras as part of the government's own target of 40,000 Afghans by the end of the year.

## FALUN GONG

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I once again rise to table a petition regarding the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. The petitioners wish to bring to the attention of the House the fact that the Chinese government has waged a nationwide persecution campaign against Falun Gong practitioners. This has resulted in arrests, with many being imprisoned for up to 20 years. The petitioners add that this includes torture and abuse. They also indicate the conclusion of investigators that tens of thousands of Falun Gong prisoners, who are prisoners of conscience, have been put to death. Moreover, the prisoners have had their organs involuntarily seized for sale at high prices.

The petitioners call on this Parliament to pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs. They also call on Parliament to amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

## ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present petitions on a theme that many of my constituents raise frequently, and that is the need for electoral reform. These petitioners are particularly looking for this Parliament and the government to establish a national citizens' assembly on electoral reform, requiring that the citizens' assembly complete its work within 12 months. The government should then adopt the recommended changes to our electoral system to end the perverse first-past-the-post voting system before the next federal election.

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petition e-4350, a petition to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. On February 6, 2023, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake was recorded in Turkey and Northern Syria. Over 50,000 are dead and hundreds of thousands injured or left without shelter in freezing conditions.

The 742 citizens and residents of Canada who have signed the petition call upon the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to establish a public policy to facilitate and expedite the granting of permanent resident status to children who were left homeless and who lost at least one parent because of the earthquake. It should also be granted to their accompanying surviving parent or another adult on whom they depend to meet their economic, emotional and social needs. They also call for a public policy to facilitate and expedite the sponsorship under the family class by Canadian citizens or permanent residents of any of their Syrian relatives who identify themselves as being directly affected by the earthquake.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a few petitions that I will table relatively quickly.

The first petition is in support of Bill C-257, which is an excellent private member's bill put forward by me. It seeks to prohibit discrimination on the basis of political activity or belief by adding reference to political belief or activity to the Canadian Human Rights Act. One effect of this is that people could bring human rights complaints against social media companies if they were facing political discrimination by those companies.

- (1555)

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with immigration from Hong Kong. In particular, a desire has been expressed to still allow those who have been convicted of political offences as part of political persecution in Hong Kong to come to Canada. However, petitioners note that, in practice, the exemptions given only apply in cases of convictions under the national security law. In many cases, there has been persecution of Hong Kong democracy activists through other means than the national security law.

Therefore, petitioners call on the Government of Canada to recognize the politicization of the judiciary in Hong Kong and to affirm its commitment to render all national security law charges and

*Routine Proceedings*

convictions irrelevant and invalid in the context of considering Canadian immigration. It also calls on the government to create a mechanism by which Hong Kong people with pro-democracy movement-related convictions may provide an explanation for such convictions. Based on the explanation, the government can then grant exemptions.

Finally, they call for the government to work with other allies to ensure that Hong Kong people are not barred from coming to Canada on the basis of criminal record-related provisions if they were convicted based on political purposes and are not otherwise criminals.

## JUSTICE

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition I am tabling highlights the ongoing detention of Huseyin Celil and asks the government to take a number of steps to secure the release of Mr. Celil. These steps include demanding the recognition of his citizenship, formally highlighting the priority of his release, appointing a special envoy to secure his release and seeking the assistance of the Biden administration.

## MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, next I am tabling a petition that raises significant concerns about recommendations in the Minister of National Defence's advisory panel on systemic racism and discrimination, which produced its final report last year. There are concerns that these recommendations, in fact, are paradoxically discriminatory in that they call for the exclusion of religious clergy from many mainstream denominations on the basis of the government apparently having objections to aspects of their doctrine.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the final petition I am tabling is from those who are strongly opposed to the legalization of child killing in Canada in the name of so-called medical assistance in dying. Petitioners are strongly opposed to proposals to legalize the killing of children by the medical system, and they call on the government to block any attempt to allow the killing of children in Canada.

## SENIORS

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is timely that I am tabling this petition today on behalf of British pensioners who have had their pensions basically frozen through the indexation on pensions by the government of the United Kingdom. These are pensioners who have retired in Canada.

*Routine Proceedings*

It is timely because the Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners is here having its first-ever frozen pension day on the Hill. Its members are calling on Canada to take action. We know these pensioners are losing tens of thousands of dollars over the course of their retirement.

With the current inflation crisis, many seniors are having trouble making ends meet. Canada is second only to Australia in its number of U.K. pensioners, with around 144,000 United Kingdom retirees. The indexation of the pensions is entirely dependent on specific agreements between countries, and Canada does not have an indexing agreement or a social security agreement with the U.K.

British pensioners living in places such as the U.S., Jamaica and the European Union receive a full U.K. state pension, which is updated annually. These countries have reciprocal social security agreements with the U.K. Even U.K. citizens who continued to pay into their pensions while living outside of the U.K. and who are now living in Canada do not have an indexed pension.

Pensions are deferred wages, and they must be able to support the people who rely on them. For some seniors, the lost income can mean retiring in poverty. The Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners has estimated that frozen British pensions cost the Canadian economy close to a billion dollars annually.

Therefore, they are calling on the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to negotiate an end to the cost of living index freeze by the government of the United Kingdom for recipients of the British state pension who live in Canada.

HOUSING

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to table a petition on behalf of over 1,200 people who recognize that, first and foremost, homes should be places for people to live and not commodities for institutional investors to trade.

They know that the commodification of housing, including the rapid rise of institutional investors like real estate investment trusts and their holdings, has substantially contributed to the unaffordability of housing and has worsened the housing crisis that we are in. They recognize that REITs comprise some of Canada's largest corporate landlords, which have long received special tax treatment from the federal government. They also note that REITs have grown from owning no rental suites at all in 1996 to nearly 200,000 in 2021.

As a result, along with other items, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to remove the tax exemption for real estate investment trusts and use the revenue that would be generated in doing so to invest in quality, affordable and dignified non-profit and co-operative housing.

● (1600)

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present petitions signed by Canadians from across the country. They are concerned about the comments from Louis Roy of the Quebec college of physicians. He recommended euthanasia for babies coming into the world with severe

deformities or serious syndromes to occur from birth to one year of age.

This proposed legalization of the killing of infants has deeply disturbed many Canadians, and they want to make sure that this place understands that infanticide is always wrong. Therefore, they are calling on the Government of Canada to block any attempt to bring this forward.

HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have to present is from Canadians from across the country who want to have the right to be protected from discrimination.

Canadians can and do face discrimination, and it is fundamental that Canada has the right to be politically active, which is in the best interest of Canadian democracy.

They want to ensure that public debate and the exchange of differing ideas continues, and they are asking for Bill C-257 to add protection against political discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Therefore, the undersigned are calling for the support of this bill to defend the rights of all Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the final petition I have to present today comes from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the increased risk of violence against women when they are pregnant. Currently, the injury or death of preborn children as victims of crime is not considered an aggravating circumstance in sentencing as proposed in the Criminal Code of Canada.

Canada has no abortion law. This legal void is so extreme that we do not even recognize preborn children as victims of crime. Justice requires that an attacker who abuses a pregnant woman and her preborn children be sentenced accordingly. The sentence should match the crime.

Therefore, the people who have signed the petition are calling on the House of Commons to legislate the abuse of a pregnant woman and the infliction of harm on her preborn child as an aggravating circumstance for sentencing proposed in the Criminal Code.

*Routine Proceedings***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. 1281, 1285, 1287 and 1288.

[Text]

Question No. 1281—**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:**

With regard to the legislative review of the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB): (a) what are the details of the engagement and communication plans for the review, including (i) how the public and stakeholders are being consulted, (ii) who has been consulted to date, (iii) who has not yet been consulted and what are the timelines for those consultations to be completed; (b) is any part of the review conducted by external contractors and, if so, by whom; (c) what is the scope of the review and does it include a review of the mandate of the CIB; and (d) what acute issues, if any, were considered when defining the scope of the review mentioned in (c)?

**Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), internal engagement within the federal government began with the launch of the review in June 2022. The external stakeholder engagement phase has been under way since November 8, 2022, starting with an event attended by federal, provincial and territorial ministers, deputy ministers and other officials. With regard to (i), Infrastructure Canada officials have been holding meetings and round tables with key stakeholders, and reviewing past submissions and committee information. All stakeholders, including members of the general public, are invited to provide written submissions by email. Information about the review, including its scope and the email address for submissions, is posted on the departmental website at <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/CIB-BIC/index-eng.html> and on the Consulting with Canadians site at <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/consultations/consultingcanadians.html>. The Canada Infrastructure Bank has also included information on the review on its website at <https://cib-bic.ca/en/about-us/reports-and-transparency/>. With regard to (ii), to date, Infrastructure Canada officials have consulted a broad range of stakeholders including financial sector members, developers, associations, municipal and provincial governments, and indigenous groups. With regard to (iii), Infrastructure Canada officials continue to meet with more stakeholders within each group and to seek written submissions until March 31, 2023.

With regard to part (a) (ii) and (iii), in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the principles set out in the Access to Information Act. Detailed information is being withheld on the grounds that it constitutes third-party information, operations of government and/or cabinet confidences.

With regard to (b), some analysis has been contracted externally to firms with infrastructure and infrastructure financing expertise, including KPMG, Deloitte, and Ernst and Young to complement internal analysis conducted by the department.

With regard to parts (c) and (d), the review of the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act will assess the following: whether the policy premises and context that underpinned the creation of the Canada Infrastructure Bank are still sound and pertinent, whether the Canada Infrastructure Bank’s legislated mandate and authorities to support its operations remain relevant in the context of an evolving policy and infrastructure landscape, and whether changes or clarifi-

cations are needed to position the Canada Infrastructure Bank going forward.

The scope of the review was determined by the legislative requirement contained in the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act itself, which is to review the provisions and operations of the act. The department also took into account input from past consultations with public and private stakeholders, evidence provided at parliamentary committees, as well as internal government consultations. The final report will be tabled in Parliament in June 2023.

Question No. 1285—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the federal government’s funding of Gymnastics Canada being frozen in July 2022: (a) what was the original reason the government froze this funding; and (b) despite allegations of abuse and maltreatment within the sport still being unsettled, has this funding been reinstated and, if so, (i) on what date, (ii) for what reason?

**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, with regard to part (a), as a result of safe sport issues in the sport of gymnastics, Sport Canada froze funding to Gymnastics Canada and imposed the condition that Gymnastics Canada become a program signatory to Abuse-Free Sport, including the services of the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner, to allow Canadian gymnasts to be able to access the independent safe sport mechanism and other support services offered.

With regard to part (b), funding to Gymnastics Canada was reinstated on November 14, 2022, as the organization had met the condition of becoming a program signatory to Abuse-Free Sport on October 18, 2022.

Question No. 1287—**Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and the government’s 50-30 Challenge: (a) how many organizations applied to be a 50-30 Challenge Ecosystem Partner; (b) how were the five successful candidates chosen as Ecosystem Partners; (c) how was the distribution of the \$28.5 million funding to the Ecosystem Partners determined; (d) how are the Ecosystem Partners expected to spend their funding and what accountability mechanisms are in place; (e) how many dollars have been spent on the 50-30 Challenge by the Ecosystem Partners as of March 1, 2023; (f) what projects and supports to the 50-30 Challenge have been made available to 50-30 Challenge participants to meet their diversity and inclusion goals; (g) what are the Ecosystem Partners expected to achieve; and (h) how will the government track the success rate of the 50-30 Challenge?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), there are 28 organizations that applied to be a 50-30 Challenge Ecosystem Partner.

With regard to part (b), successful candidates were chosen as Ecosystem Partners based on the quality of their proposal in terms of meeting the following requirements as outlined in the call for applications that can be found here: The 50 – 30 Challenge Ecosystem Funding Call for Applications: Application Guide ([canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)).

*Routine Proceedings*

Activities proposed must have a national reach, i.e., access to services, including in rural, remote and northern regions throughout Canada, with a range of support applicable to all challenge participants. Proposed projects must ensure that services and activities will be provided in both official languages. Proposed activities must benefit a minimum of three of the five equity-seeking groups. However, preference was given to applications who can support all five equity-seeking groups. Proposed projects are three years in length, to be completed by March 31, 2024. Proposed projects should offer a range of supports to assist challenge participants and provide eligible activities that contribute to meeting the 50 – 30 challenge program objectives. Proposed projects have a minimum budget of \$3 million but do not exceed \$10 million for the duration of the project. Proposed projects must deliver services and products in both official languages. Proposed projects must provide two years of past financials, either audited or review engagement. Activities must clearly meet the requirements and will achieve the goals of the 50-30 challenge. Proposed projects must provide a detailed activity work plan with key project milestones. Proposed project activities must effectively meet the objective of the 50-30 challenge and demonstrate how benefits will be achieved. The timing of project implementation, including risk mitigation tactics, must be feasible. There must be expertise in inclusive practices for diverse population groups, experience in effectively managing projects of a similar size and scope, and experience in financial administration and management of projects of similar size and scope. Proposed projects must demonstrate organizational capacity to provide outreach, third-party training, mentorship, best practices and guidance, as well as a sound governance model that reflects diversity practices. They must demonstrate strength of collaborations that will be leveraged to carry out their project, the extent to which the applicant and the proposal meet the funding eligibility criteria, and value for money that is clearly linked to project activities and outputs.

With regard to (c), the distribution of the \$28.5 million funding to the Ecosystem Partners was determined based on each recipient's proposed project cost.

With regard to (d), Ecosystem Partners are expected to support the 50-30 challenge participants as outlined in the call for applications which can be found here: The 50 – 30 Challenge Ecosystem Funding Call for Applications: Application Guide (canada.ca)

They should link challenge participants to best practices for hiring a diverse workforce and creating inclusive and equitable workplaces. They should provide guidance to challenge participants on the development of diversity and inclusion action plans. They should promote the What Works Toolkit and other supports to assist challenge participants in meeting the challenge objectives.

On a quarterly basis, Ecosystem Partners are required to submit a progress report that includes a description of the progress made on specific activities described in their contribution agreements, issues or risks encountered, communication and marketing material produced, and any other components outlined in their contribution agreements.

Ecosystem Partners are also required to submit a final report in conjunction with the request for final payment. The final report

must include a description of changes in project timelines, and demonstrate the success and the benefits resulting from the project.

With regard to (e), \$ 4,629,948 has been disbursed to 50-30 Challenge Ecosystem Partners as of March 1, 2023.

With regard to (f), Ecosystem Partners have started to offer services to the participants. These services are offered through the Ecosystem Partners' websites: Egale Canada, Global Compact Network Canada, Ted Rogers School of Management's Diversity Institute at <https://diconsulting.ca/>, Women's Economic Council, and Colleges and Institutes Canada.

With regard to (g), by promoting best practices related to diversity, providing guidance to challenge participants on their plans, and promoting tools and supports available to participants, the Ecosystem Partners are expected to support the achievement of the program's objectives. These objectives include increased awareness of the best practices and measures that fuel recruitment, retention and promotion of diverse employees and leaders; and assisting Canadian organizations to become more responsive to diversity by integrating diversity and inclusion practices into their management policies and practices. The contribution agreements with the Ecosystem Partners include specific performance indicators on which they must report quarterly to monitor the success of their activities.

With regard to (h), there are specific performance indicators set out to track progress towards the program's objectives, including indicators related to awareness and training activities, and on progress reported by challenge participants in achieving diversity. The Ecosystem Partners are required to submit quarterly progress reports, which include results on the performance indicators, and a final report demonstrating the success of the project.

**Question No. 1288—Ms. Louise Chabot:**

With regard to the amendments to the Canada Labour Code respecting fair treatment as regards wages, more specifically the changes concerning equal treatment provided by the Budget Implementation Act 2018, No. 2, S.C., c. 27, in sections 452 and 461 of Subdivision A of Division 15 of Part 4 of the Act: (a) has the department finished its consultations on the development of regulations; (b) can we have a summary of the report on these consultations; (c) has the department started drafting the regulations; and (d) has a date or timeline for the coming into force of this provision been set and, if so, what is this date?

**Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the labour program held initial regulatory consultations between June and August 2019 with federally regulated stakeholders, including employer and employee representatives.

Subsequently, on December 21, 2021, the labour program launched an online consultation to obtain further stakeholder input on the proposed regulations related to equal treatment and temporary help agency provisions. Stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on a discussion paper, Discussion Paper: Fall 2021 Labour Program External Consultations - Regulatory Initiatives under the Canada Labour Code. The consultation ended on February 21, 2022.



*The Budget*

With regard to part (b), a summary report was not prepared for these consultations. The labour program received nine submissions from employer and employee representatives operating in the federal jurisdiction, as well as community organizations.

In summary, some employers requested exemptions to some or all the provisions, while other employers with collective agreements requested that collective agreements take precedence over the provisions or unionized employees be exempt from the provisions.

Employee representatives stated that exemptions should not be given, as they would frustrate the legislative intent to ensure equal treatment for equal work. They also noted that workers who have temporary and/or part-time work arrangements are more likely to belong to vulnerable groups and therefore should benefit from the new standard. Most submissions expressed the need for greater clarity concerning certain terms set out in the legislation, such as “merit” and “substantially the same kind of work”. Several stakeholders argued that the term “seniority” should be defined as “date since hire or length of service” and not be based on the numbers of hours worked.

With regard to part (c), the labour program is advancing this regulatory initiative and is building the policy framework for the drafting of regulations. For the Labour Program Forward Regulatory Plan 2023-25, the proposed draft regulations are to be pre-published in Part I of the Canada Gazette later this year, currently planned for fall 2023.

With regard to part (d), a coming into force date has yet to be determined. Any update on the timing of the publication of regulations in Part II of the Canada Gazette will be published in the Labour Program Forward Regulatory Plan.

\* \* \*

[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, furthermore, if the government's responses to Question No. 1286 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1286—**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:**

With regard to government expenditures in the electoral districts of Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Manicouagan, Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, and Papineau, for fiscal years 2020-21 and 2021-22, broken down by electoral district: (a) what is the total amount for each fiscal year; (b) what is the detailed breakdown of the amounts in (a) by department, Crown corporation, agency or organization; and (c) what are the grants and contributions made, broken down by funding source?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand at this time.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that the interim Ethics Commissioner has resigned that role, effective today.

As a result, there are decisions that the office cannot proceed with, which are based upon functions that only the commissioner can undertake. After the politicization of that role by the Liberal government, the office remains paralyzed.

The official opposition invites the government to meaningfully consult with recognized parties on an appointee whose appointment avoids even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

• (1605)

**The Deputy Speaker:** That was not a point of order, but I will take it under advisement.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET**

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from April 18 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first, please note that I will be sharing my time with the member for Shefford.

*The Budget*

We got another budget. When I saw the budget, I remembered two things. First, when I was an economics professor at CEGEP and university, I had a tradition. When the budget was tabled, back when I was not in politics, I would take it and do an economic analysis of it. When I saw this budget, the first thing I thought was, thank God I will not have to analyze it in front of 70 students, because there is really not much to say about it, from an economic standpoint. It is devoid of inspiration. It is as if it was as easy for the Liberal government to find inspiration as to do a 5,000-piece puzzle while wearing boxing gloves.

The second thing I thought about was my leader, and what an extraordinary leader he is.

The members opposite are laughing because they know that I am right. I thank them for admitting it.

In 2021, the government kicked things off with the throne speech. It took some time before the House came back; it had other things to do, I guess, but it took a few months before the ball got rolling. The House reconvened. That morning, I was not fashionable, but we were finally back.

Then, there was the throne speech. I will never forget it. The leader stood up and said that the government before us was tired. Let us think about that. The government had just been elected, it gave a throne speech and it was already tired. When I saw the budget, I thought that it was the budget of a tired government.

There are two very striking things in this budget. The first is that the Liberals bought themselves a majority yet again. They had already done it once, but they arranged for their good friend the NDP to support them until death do they part. What do people say when they get married?

**An hon. member:** For better or for worse.

**Mr. Alain Therrien:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, the NDP is with the government for better or for worse. The government accepts the fact that the west has dirty oil and the NDP agrees. They shrug and they are happy, because they are buddies. To ensure that the NDP will stay with them, the government gave them a \$13-billion gift of dental insurance.

Is that bad? Not necessarily, but it depends on how.

I have been in politics for 10 years. I am old now, and I have seen a few bills in my time. I would say I have seen quite a few. I think the worst bill I ever saw in my life was the dental care bill, which was introduced last fall. It was a disaster. I could not believe my eyes. I told myself it was impossible. In the end, I just had to cover my eyes. To me, it made no sense, it was completely ridiculous, but the government was pandering to the NDP. It hurriedly came up with a lot of nonsense, like telling people they would get \$650 for going to the dentist, making an appointment or just driving by. Otherwise, they get nothing. It was totally preposterous.

Now, months later, the government has finally realized fraud is rampant. That was obvious. They could have just asked the opposition. We would have told them right from the start. This is cause for concern.

Now we come to the budget. It is stressful to hear the government say it is going to expand the scope of dental care. Not only does this trespass on the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, it penalizes Quebec and the provinces that offered more generous dental insurance. There was no compensation for that. The message was that if they already had dental insurance, too bad. They would have to pay anyway, for nothing.

At least the bill is not tabled yet. Do we dare hope that the Liberals will respect the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces when they draft it?

• (1610)

When they put their glasses on and settle down to write that bill, I hope they will respect the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. The Liberals are centralizers. They like to stretch out their tentacles and lay claim to taxes. They like to spend. The New Democrats are Liberals in a hurry. They get up at night to strategize about centralization. They call each other to talk about their dream of a world without provinces. That is their aim. If the two parties get together to cook up dental insurance, I hope they do not forget that the provinces and Quebec exist. That is my hope.

That is my first point, that this dental insurance looks more like majority insurance. My second point is that there are priorities. If we go outside and walk around and chat with people, there are some things we cannot miss. They are so obvious that it seems odd they did not see them. There is nothing in the budget, or very little, and what is there is done wrong. These priorities are not included in the budget, despite what we had hoped.

Health care is a priority for Quebec. We can already hear them saying that maybe the Quebec government is not so good at managing health care, and so on, and yet, all the provinces are having problems with health care. Has it not occurred to the government that perhaps the real problem lies somewhere above the level of Quebec and all the provincial governments? Does it take an honorary degree to understand that the problem might be elsewhere and that the provinces and Quebec all have the same problem?

It is called the federal government.

Everyone was practically climbing over each other to tell the federal government to increase health transfers to the provinces and Quebec. We said we wanted 35%, for starters. In the end, the federal government told Quebec and the provinces that it would give only one-sixth of the amount we were asking for. In the case of Quebec, instead of getting \$6 billion, we were told that we would get \$1 billion, and there was no guarantee that there would be enough growth to meet even that commitment.

That means that the transfers increased from 22% to 24%. People were clapping and knocking their glasses off in their excitement. One person was even doing cartwheels in the living room while eating broccoli. Everyone needs to calm down. When this government took office, transfers were already at 24% of total health care funding. The government lowered them to 22% and then raised them back up to 24%. What a victory. Great job.

*The Budget*

What we are seeing now is that the Liberals are offering only one-sixth of what was requested, even though they say in the budget that the health care system is dysfunctional. They figured that out all by themselves and yet they are only giving Quebec and the provinces one-sixth of what they asked for. That does not make any sense.

Speaking of priorities, housing is definitely one of them. That is a no-brainer. We hear about it almost every day on the news. There is also the labour shortage. The government is saying that we need to find a solution to the labour shortage, but did we hear any solutions out of the mouths of anyone on that side of the House when they talked about the budget? No, we have not.

There is one solution that is pretty simple. The government could tell certain people, like seniors aged 65 to 75, that they could be entitled to exemptions and tax incentives if they returned to work. That is the carrot policy, or the incentive policy, as my colleague said. However, that is not being proposed. What are the Liberals doing? They are making seniors poorer. That is not a carrot-and-stick policy, it is a stick-and-bludgeon policy. They are making seniors poorer.

The first time I asked a minister about what was happening with seniors, he said that if they do not have enough money, then they should go back to work. I wondered if he had skipped breakfast that morning, because he could not possibly have meant what he said. He did, however, because we heard him repeat the same thing later. In any case, my colleague from Shefford will speak at length about seniors and the fact that this issue is missing from the budget.

We might talk about the policy on aerospace, Quebec's primary source of exports. Quebec is one of the only places in the world where it is possible to build a plane from start to finish. There are three places in the world where this is possible, and Quebec is one of them.

• (1615)

I will say in closing that a government is supposed to have a vision to present in the budget. The government is tired and worn out. It no longer has a vision. I wonder what it is still doing here.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong on so many counts. This budget is indeed a reflection of the priorities that Canadians have expressed to the government in many different ways.

I would highlight what the member said about the dental legislation we brought in last year being the worst piece of legislation he has ever seen as a parliamentarian. That particular program, which the member sees as useless legislation, has benefited 250,000 children in Canada.

Many of the initiatives, whether we are talking about the grocery rebate or the expansion of the dental program for seniors, would directly benefit from the budget.

Why is the Bloc being so narrow-minded and following such a separatist agenda that it does not see the good that is being presented in this budget? For the sake of doing what is right, the Bloc

should vote in favour of the budget so Canadians from coast to coast to coast would receive the badly needed benefits this budget would provide.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Therrien:** Mr. Speaker, did I say anything about independence? We are a part of Canada while awaiting independence, and we have a situation where there are problems caused in part by the government's inaction. There comes a time when we must ask ourselves if the Liberals are going to wake up.

We are not talking about independence. We are talking about a government that should be focused on the issues that are important to Quebecers. That is why we are here. If the government wants to know what Quebecers want and need, it should listen to the Bloc Québécois. What Quebecers want, as I said, are health transfers and measures to address the labour shortage. It is time to sink or swim, and the Liberals have done absolutely nothing. That is all. All we were asking for was for them to listen to Quebecers and work to meet their needs. That is all.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they could also listen to the Conservative Party and the members from Quebec who are there to represent Quebecers too.

I would like to ask my colleague a question. He spoke at length about the Liberals' will and centralist tendencies throughout the years. We know that the Liberals want to manage and control everything from Ottawa and leave very little to the provinces.

There is something else the Liberals are currently doing, which is putting Canadians further into debt. I know that my colleague dreams of independence for Quebec. Does he believe that his dream is realistic, given the share of the debt Quebec is being burdened with by the Liberals?

**Mr. Alain Therrien:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my worthy colleague for his question. He makes me dream of independence.

We are talking about the public debt. It is simply unbelievable that there is a fiscal imbalance in Canada. The money is in Ottawa and the needs are in the provinces and in Quebec. There is a consensus on that.

Although the government has the financial means, which, in a way, it has taken from the provinces, it is incapable of balancing the budget. That is very worrisome. No one wins with such a huge debt. It is unbelievable because the fiscal imbalance favours the government, and yet, it still manages to go into debt.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am so disappointed by this budget, because there are at least four new subsidies for oil and gas companies. What does the member from La Prairie think about the fact that, in the midst of a climate crisis, there are new subsidies for oil and gas companies?

*The Budget*

● (1620)

**Mr. Alain Therrien:** Mr. Speaker, I did not address this issue. I think that the member will agree with us. Sustainable development and the green economy are very important to the Bloc Québécois. There is little in the budget in that regard; worse, oil companies are being subsidized, when we should be decreasing oil production to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

One does not need to be a math whiz to understand that the less oil we produce, the less pollution and the lower greenhouse gas emissions there will be. However, when the oil industry is being subsidized as the Liberals are doing and continue to do in this budget, it goes against what the general public wants. They want to ensure a better future for the next generation. I fully agree with the member.

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is never easy to rise after my colleague from La Prairie. I listened intently to his speech.

As the critic for seniors, I could not turn down the opportunity to talk about their situation in the House and, more importantly, to respond to a budget that cares nothing about them. I could not turn down the opportunity to set the record straight. The Bloc Québécois proposed a number of measures and made clear requests to the Minister of Finance.

I will focus on three points here. First, the budget does not provide for an adequate increase in health transfers. Second, it says nothing about EI reform. Finally, while the government continues to claim it has been generous to seniors, there are no new specific and ongoing measures for seniors in this budget.

I would like to start by pointing out that the government is not increasing the health transfers to any significant degree. The jurisdictional interference also continues. This issue is important, and it is a major public concern, especially among seniors' groups. FADOQ representatives even turned out for a conference I recently organized on the financial situation of seniors. They came to call attention to the urgent need for the federal government to make its contribution and increase health transfers to 35%, with no strings attached. They clearly understood that this jurisdiction belongs to Quebec, not the federal government.

Moving on to the second part of my presentation, the budget makes no provision for any major EI reform before 2030, despite the government's promises. The government also refuses to write off the EI fund's pandemic-related debt. As a result, premiums will have to increase and benefits will have to decrease for the fund to achieve a \$24-billion surplus by 2030. How great it would have been to have a little money left over to reform federal services.

As the status of women critic, I consider this to be a major reform from a feminist perspective. We know that 60% of workers are not eligible for employment insurance, and that is concerning. It is primarily women who work in unstable jobs, who do not work full time because they have to do invisible work at home with their families and who have difficulty accumulating the hours required to be eligible for EI.

I would like to point out that on Tuesday, April 4, groups in Quebec, including AFEAS, campaigned for a national invisible work

day that would be held every year on the first Tuesday in April. This kind of day is needed to encourage real reflection on this issue, which also affects family caregivers and volunteers. How can we do more to recognize what these people do? My thoughts go out to them and I thank them, especially those who are being honoured this week as part of National Volunteer Week. I salute them.

I am now coming to my third point, and I will devote the rest of my speech to the lack of measures for seniors and their precarious financial situation. I actually held a conference on that issue back home in Granby on February 21, with seniors' groups from all over Quebec. I want to talk about some of the issues that were raised during that day of reflection.

First, I want to point out that while wages are rising, old age security is not increasing as much or as quickly. Currently, if someone is 75 years old and receives nothing but old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, their annual income is \$20,574.24. Given today's inflation, who can really live on that? That level of income puts them below the official federal poverty line, as determined by the market basket measure, or MBM. In response to this statistic, the symposium participants that day said that the federal government needs to increase old age security benefits.

Add inflation to that, and old age security is not enough to live on; it is not a replacement for working income. As for income replacement in retirement through public pension plans, right now, a person earning the average wage in Quebec will have an income replacement rate of only 41%. The Quebec pension plan replaces about 25% of the average wage.

As for old age security, it barely replaces 15% of the average wage. Sadly, since wages are rising faster than the consumer price index—by about one percentage point per year—this federal program will in future contribute less in terms of replacing working income in retirement. The federal government must do better.

Finally, we must also revise the indexation method for old age security. The Association québécoise de défense des droits des aînés, or AQDR, agrees, and does not believe that it is adequate. Furthermore, the AQDR also believes that old age security is not increasing fast enough to replace employment income, which is rising faster than public plan replacement rates. Everyone is talking about wage increases right now.

● (1625)

Seniors are finding it very difficult to save, especially older women who, over the course of their lives, have greater difficulty setting aside money and saving to retire in dignity.

*The Budget*

The old age security pension, or OAS, and the guaranteed income supplement, or GIS, are insufficient to meet the needs of seniors. Let us not forget that, in July 2022, the annual income of an individual under the age of 75 receiving only their pension and the GIS would fall below the official poverty line in Canada, based on the market basket measure, or MBM. That is significant in an inflationary context.

This index, which is calculated by Statistics Canada, seeks to establish the cost of a basket of goods for a modest basic standard of living. We are not talking about trips down south or luxury items; we are talking about basic needs.

In 2022, MBM thresholds were between \$20,796 and \$22,382 for singles, depending on the region in which they lived. The solution, therefore, is simple: Income levels for all seniors aged 65 and older need to be increased.

That day, we also talked about the implementation of a tax credit for experienced workers in the context of the labour shortage, a tax credit for working seniors who want to stay on the job or for seniors who decide to go back to work.

That day, we also talked about health transfer increases. I just wanted to point that out. The federal government needs to significantly increase health transfers so that the Quebec and provincial governments can make major investments in their health care systems.

Another item that was discussed that day and that should be noted is the fact that inflation is seriously eroding seniors' purchasing power. It would have been a good idea for the Liberal government to at least support those who cannot afford to be patient.

FADOQ expected Ottawa to walk the talk when it came to increasing the guaranteed income supplement. Let us not forget that those who receive the GIS are some of the most disadvantaged members of our society. FADOQ believes that the government could have taken these additional measures. Another example would be to make the Canada caregiver credit refundable.

Given the ongoing labour shortage, the FADOQ network also suggested that a tax credit to encourage seniors to keep working would be a great idea. The timing is perfect. Even though it was another thing the federal government had promised, this tax credit was not announced in the last budget.

To continue on the theme of the budget, the grocery rebate is actually a one-time payment through the GST tax credit. Although it is a decent measure, the Bloc Québécois hoped that low-income families and individuals would get better government support during this inflation crisis. For 2023, the amount remains a one-time payment. It does nothing to solve the longer-term problem.

My last point is that, despite everything, the long-term financial outlook remains the same. The ratio of the federal public debt relative to the GDP will continue its downward trend. Ottawa plans to completely pay off its debt within 30 to 40 years. The federal budget confirms the Parliamentary Budget Officer's long-term forecasts. Beyond the short term, the federal financial situation will keep improving. Over the long term, the financial situation of the provinces and Quebec will keep deteriorating. The money is in Ot-

tawa, but the needs, in areas like health and education, are in Quebec.

In the short term, we must also deal with the global economic downturn, high interest rates worldwide and inflation that is still too high.

In conclusion, I could also have spoken about the lack of support for the next generation of farmers and the greenwashing that the budget also contains. It maintains the fossil fuel subsidies, subsidizing oil companies, as my colleague from La Prairie mentioned. The budget talks about hydrogen, meaning dirty hydrogen, about carbon capture and about small nuclear reactors, even though experts have condemned these measures. As I said, it is greenwashing. These are not measures that will help us seriously kick-start the shift we need to make to fight climate change.

In short, the spending in this budget is unwise and insufficient for those who are truly in need.

That is why, in closing, I will proudly say that I will soon be introducing a bill to abolish the injustice created by the 10% increase in old age security only for those 75 and over. We must ensure that all seniors, when they turn 65, can receive this little additional boost, but especially a boost in the long term and not a one-time cheque or, as the government has done all too often, a little pre-election cheque that looks good. With this bill, we want to increase the threshold to the point where seniors can work without their GIS being clawed back. This is about common sense and dignity for seniors. Even the economic sector is calling for this. Let us all work together.

There are also the demands from the National Assembly. We must meet people's needs. We must work together to improve the current situation, which, as we know, is not easy for everyone, especially the seniors who really need to be listened to and heard a little more.

• (1630)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the accuracy of information is important when a member speaks. For example, the member talks about the old age supplement, the OAS, and gives the impression that it is not being increased. However, it is actually increased multiple times a year depending on rates of inflation.

The member says that we are not supporting seniors. However, if we take a look at the dental plan, the expansion is, in good part, for seniors. We could talk about the rebate the member made reference to. Seniors will benefit from that particular rebate, not to mention the climate action rebate. What about the \$198 billion going toward public health over the next 10 years, a commitment of generational support for health care? One has to be pretty naive to believe that would not help seniors.

*The Budget*

How can the member stand in her place and give the false impression that this budget is not supporting seniors when, in fact, it is supporting seniors? I believe she knows that.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Mr. Speaker, when I mentioned the importance of setting the record straight, I was referring to the type of comments the member just made.

I would tell the member to refer to the press release from FADOQ. Yes, FADOQ acknowledges the one-time grocery rebate. Who could be against apple pie? Everyone is in favour of apple pie. FADOQ says that it is indeed a good measure.

However, FADOQ goes on to say that the Liberal government could have done more, that it could have increased the guaranteed income supplement, that it broke its promise to bring in a tax credit for experienced workers, and that it could have taken this opportunity to increase old age security by 10%. I listen to seniors who say that there were not enough measures in this budget.

As for dental care, that is Quebec's responsibility. The National Assembly of Quebec is calling for Quebec to get the money to run the dental program itself. That is what the National Assembly of Quebec is asking for. As far as the environment is concerned, how can we really talk about public health when the government keeps funding the oil companies that emit greenhouse gases? That is greenwashing, as the member said.

There is greenwashing, but the member is also playing fast and loose with information on seniors. A one-time cheque does not help seniors in the long term.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech. I have a great deal of respect for her.

I know that she works hard to help people. I know her riding of Shefford well. For years, I drove through Shefford almost every day, certainly every week, to get from the Eastern Townships to Montreal. I know the needs of her riding well. I also know how well my colleague represents the people in her riding.

Thanks to the NDP's efforts, we are now seeing hundreds of children in the riding of Shefford, in Granby and elsewhere, who have already benefited from the dental program that the NDP forced the government to put in place. As we know, the next phase of this dental care program will benefit people with disabilities and seniors. Families and young people will be able to benefit from it.

I just want to ask a question of my colleague, for whom, once again, I have great respect.

Does she think it is a good thing that people in her riding who did not have access to dental care before now have access to the dental program?

• (1635)

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I have been hearing from the people of Shefford, especially from community groups. They are wondering about the details of this much-touted dental care program. They are finding

that there is a lack of information. I am also getting questions about how it will fit in with what is already in place in Quebec.

In short, I am seeing a lot of question marks and possible complications ahead. Let us keep things simple. We already have a dental care program in Quebec. The government needs to respond to the Quebec National Assembly's request and give Quebec the money it is due so it can continue to improve its projects and its health care system.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Outremont.

As a member of Parliament representing, in my opinion, maybe the best riding in all of Canada, Mississauga East—Cooksville, a riding with a thriving economic presence, a great region that people call home, where they work and where they raise their families, I am honoured to address the House on matters of great significance to my constituents, and to all Canadians for that matter.

Today's debate on budget 2023 and our government's fiscal plan is of great importance to the 800,000 residents of Mississauga and the 16,000 businesses in Mississauga. It is always an honour and a privilege to discuss issues that affect them and our communities. Budget 2023 is the government's plan to build a stronger, more sustainable and more secure Canadian economy, an economy that works for everyone.

The past couple of weeks gave me a wonderful opportunity to meet with residents and businesses in my riding to talk about budget 2023. The proposed budget aims to make life more affordable for Canadians when they need it most. This includes delivering a grocery rebate that would offer up to \$467 extra for eligible families of four, so they can keep putting good food on the table and paying their bills. We would also be increasing assistance for students, cracking down on hidden junk fees and predatory lenders, and lowering credit card transaction fees for small businesses.

Together with provinces and territories, the budget proposes historic investments in health care, with conditions attached to ensure the delivery of improved services, such as more family doctors, better wages for support workers and mental health supports. This would ensure that Canadians get the care they need and deserve. To address dental care affordability concerns, we would be expanding dental coverage to millions of Canadians. Furthermore, the budget aims to grow the clean economy, fight climate change and deliver great jobs and great careers for now and for generations to come.

*The Budget*

It is unfortunate that Conservative members opposite continue to stand in the way of all the progress we are trying to deliver and the supports for people who need them right now. They want to make reckless cuts, and the member for Carleton, the leader of the Conservatives, also encouraged people to invest their life savings in volatile cryptocurrencies, like Bitcoin, to opt out of inflation. I want to use parliamentary language as much as I can, so I will just say that the leader of the Conservatives is being reckless and irresponsible by giving out terrible advice. I feel sorry for Canadians who listened to that leader and lost much of their savings. The leader of the Conservatives should stand up and apologize to Canadians for his reckless messages for Canadians to invest in that cryptocurrency scheme.

We, as Liberals, will stay focused on supporting Canadians. My riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville is home to the largest population of Polish Canadians and one of the largest Ukrainian Canadian communities, my wife being one of those Ukrainian Canadians. My residents understand how Putin and his Russian cronies have driven up inflation in Canada and around the world. I wish that the official opposition and the leader of the Conservatives, the member for Carleton, would also understand that, like my constituents do.

Canada's economy has indeed made a remarkable recovery, well past what was imaginable. Inflation has fallen for eight months in a row, and the Bank of Canada predicts it will drop to just 2.6% by the end of this year. More Canadians of working age are employed than ever before. With 830,000 more Canadians working today than before the pandemic, 126% of the jobs lost to COVID have been recovered as of February. In February, the average wage for Canadians actually went up by 5.4%, and since 2015, the federal government has made significant investments to support Canadians and make life more affordable.

• (1640)

Inflation-relief payments are helping about 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians. With our enhanced Canada workers benefit, families could receive up to \$2,461 this year, and a single Canadian without children could receive up to \$1,428. Our Canada dental benefit has provided direct tax payments of up to \$1,300 per child, over two years, to eligible families to cover dental expenses for their children under 12. As of early April, we have already helped about 260,000 children with this benefit.

With our one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit, a tax-free payment of \$500, we have helped low-income people who are struggling with the cost of rent. For our seniors who are 75 and older, a 10% increase in old age security payments is providing over \$800 in new supports to full pensioners in the first year. Our tax-free Canada child benefit supports about 3.5 million Canadian families annually, with up to \$6,997 per child under the age of six and \$5,900 per child aged six to 17. It has helped 3.5 million families and lifted 500,000 children out of poverty.

Under many of these initiatives, our government has lifted over a million people out of poverty in Canada.

In Ontario, we celebrated the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Canada-wide early learning and child care agreement. This agreement will deliver, on average, \$10-a-day child care for On-

tario families by the end of March 2026. It is already saving thousands of dollars for families in my riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville, across Ontario and right across Canada. In addition, important benefits like the Canada child benefit, the Canada pension plan, OAS and the guaranteed income supplement are all keeping pace with inflation.

While we continue to talk about all the positive outcomes of our government's fiscal prudence through the most difficult few years, not only here but across the globe, we also know there is still much more work to be done, so what are we doing? We are cracking down on hidden junk fees such as higher telecom roaming charges, event and concert fees, excessive baggage fees and unjustified shipping and freight fees. We are also cracking down on predatory lending by proposing to lower the criminal rate of interest. For small businesses, we are lowering credit card transaction fees while protecting reward points for Canadians offered by Canada's large banks. Our proposed automatic tax filing for low-income Canadians will ensure they can easily file their tax returns in order to receive the benefits they are entitled to. Young Canadians will also be able to save for their first home. We launched the new tax-free home savings account on April 1. This is all good news.

With our new Canada dental care plan, our federal government is moving forward with transformational investments to provide dental care to all Canadians who need it. We are moving now to help families and seniors, with a dental plan for families with a family income of \$90,000 or less, with no copays, and for individuals with \$70,000 or less. Their coverage would begin by the end of 2023.

With budget 2023, we are growing a green economy. We are ensuring a clean Canadian economy that can deliver prosperity for the middle class and make more jobs and more vibrant communities right across our country. In my riding, Ukrainian Canadian families remind me every day that we cannot take our freedom and democracy for granted. Our country is filled with great opportunities. Our government has all these families, seniors, youth and businesses in mind, with timely supports. This is a great budget and I hope all members of the House will support it.

• (1645)

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we usually hear from only two or three members over there when we are debating legislation, so it is nice to have a different voice.

*The Budget*

I wonder what the member's constituents have to say about a promise the government made when the Liberals won in 2015. They distinguished themselves from both the Conservatives and the NDP by promising to run deficits. There is a general consensus against running deficits and to not return to the days when Canada nearly had to be bailed out by the IMF as a result of the Prime Minister's father's time in office.

The member promised that the Liberals would run modest, \$10-billion deficits to build unprecedented infrastructure, and then run balanced budgets. Every part of that promise was a lie and was broken. The promise that the party made was untrue, and I wonder how he squares up with his own constituents over the broken promises that got the government elected.

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity from the Conservative member to really highlight the true colours of Conservatives. What they are talking about is that the Conservatives want to cut and cut. They want to cut programs. We talk about affordability, about supporting seniors, youth and business. We talk about investments in Canada and investments in Canadians. The results show it. We have more jobs and low unemployment, and Canadians are doing well. The member and his party voted against it. He votes for cryptocurrency for the Conservatives.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on his enthusiasm and his faith in his budget.

To me, the speech we just heard is too rosy and overly optimistic. I may be wearing rose-coloured glasses, but that does not stop me from seeing things as they are.

Seniors are getting poorer. Seasonal workers have to deal with the spring gap, or maybe a black hole. There are things the Bloc Québécois has been calling for a long time. The environment is not about the environment, it is just greenwashing. What did my colleague not understand about the demands the Bloc Québécois has been making for a while now?

Let us support our seniors and propose ideas to encourage them to go back to work, if that is what they want. If they are unable to do so, then they need a basic income to get through the year. They are living below the poverty line. The same goes for seasonal workers.

I do not understand my colleague, who seems to be saying that everything is just fine. I do not think things are fine. In any case, in my riding, things are not fine at all. Some people are going hungry. Others do not know if they will have enough credit to manage. It is very worrisome. This is nothing new. The government has been pushing us into increasing poverty for some time now. It is odd to say "increasing" when it comes to poverty, but it is what it is.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on my perspective.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member and the others, because it gives me the opportunity again to speak about our record. The Bloc members did not put in their platform, and nor did the Conservatives, the New Democrats and others, how they

were going to help seniors with a 10% increase to the OAS as well as the GIS. However, the Liberals did, and we delivered for seniors. We increased the OAS. Since 1973, the OAS had never been increased by as much as we increased it. It would be good to see if the member would take some direction from the Liberals and be able to do more for seniors, because that is what we are doing. Since 2015, we have been here to support seniors, the OAS and the GIS. The Conservatives wanted to increase the age of retirement; we lowered the age of retirement to help seniors here in Canada.

● (1650)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Members might want to keep the questions and answers short and get a few more people in.

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as a former city councillor, I was the first one in the province of Ontario to take on payday loans. I heard the hon. member mention the predatory practice of payday loan. At that point in time, it was a provincial Liberal government that was paying lip service to any kind of meaningful reform, yet in this budget, the remedies the Liberals have for payday loans are once again lip service.

The Liberals would go to the industry and ask it to lower the rates, while the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby has Bill C-213, a bill that is ready to go. It is a real, meaningful bill that would include amending the Criminal Code to lower the maximum legal interest rate from 60% to 30% and that would include the calculation of the interest rate within the overall charges for these payday loans.

Why is it that, when the Liberal government has the power and the opportunity and the willing partners in the NDP to make true reforms to the predatory usury and the loan sharking that are payday loans, it refuses to do it? Is it because the past association president was Stan Keyes, the former Liberal?

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member, and his colleague next to him, because I know that, in my community and in communities right across our country, predatory lenders are out there taking advantage of people who find themselves in dire straits. I am glad this budget will be addressing the issue of predatory lending, so we can bring down those abysmal charges and interest rates, which these companies are driving onto people.

I am with the member for Hamilton Centre and the member from B.C., and I support them on this.

**Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I got involved in politics so we could put in place better programs for young people. In this budget, we have talked a lot about dental care, removing interest rates on student loans and investing in young people through child care.



*The Budget*

Why is it, from the member's perspective, so important for us to invest in the next generation in this budget?

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Mr. Speaker, it is so important. Over the last two weeks, we were in our constituencies, knocking on doors and speaking to families that have had the opportunity to avail themselves of our dental program, which is right now for kids under age 12, but will be expanded to seniors and to kids up to age 18. It makes a tremendous difference for those families, along with many of the supports that we have put in place, which are allowing youth to have a vision for their careers and their futures.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

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 Kitchener Centre, Housing; the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon, Democratic Institutions; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Persons with Disabilities.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House during a debate, particularly when we are discussing the economy and our budget.

[*English*]

It is truly an honour to rise in the House to speak more specifically about budget 2023. It is a budget that will help the most vulnerable in our country make ends meet and help put food on the table. It is a budget that will improve tax fairness; strengthen and, dare I say, save our health care system; accelerate our fight against climate change; and ensure that Canada is a leader in the economy of the future.

The economy is at a turning point right now, and turning points are often times of instability. Indeed, the economic instability around the world comes as a result of not only shifts in the foundations of our global economy itself, but also massive and significant geopolitical changes. The reality is that the economies of countries around the world are still recovering from the pandemic. The reality is that the war waged by Russia on Ukraine continues. The reality is that our closest allies are seeking to shift their dependence from dictatorships and autocracies to stable, reliable democracies, such as ours here in Canada.

The world's leading economies are moving faster and faster to reshape their own economies and build the net-zero industries of tomorrow. One thing is clear: Canada has to skate to where the puck is going. As president Biden said in this very House only a few weeks ago, our two countries are intertwined and inseparable, and our government's budget is one that will secure Canada's place in that North American market. It is a race to create the clean, green global economy of tomorrow. As a country, we need to not only keep pace and stay in the game, but also be leaders in that race, because the green economy and the clean economy of the future represent real money and real opportunities for Canadians.

Indeed, the International Energy Agency estimates that the global clean technology manufacturing market will triple by 2030,

which is \$650 billion a year. On top of that, the average earnings of workers in this sector, in 2021, were over \$90,000, well above the Canadian economy-wide average, which is at about \$70,000. Everyone in every province in this country will benefit.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

Our budget addresses the demands of Canadians, and especially Quebecers' demands to invest in the green economy of tomorrow. Almost a year and a half ago, I presented in the House a petition started by people in my riding that was supported in Quebec by the organization For Our Kids. Grandparents and parents like me, who care about fighting climate change, called on me, their MP, to accelerate the just, green transition that we want for our children and grandchildren. Budget 2023 responds to their calls.

I am also thinking of Equiterre, which has stated that it supports this budget's federal assistance for the decarbonization of our electricity grids. In addition, tax credits for green energy address a key demand of the Green Budget Coalition, which counts Equiterre as a member.

The measures included in our budget are crucial to support the just, green transition of our economy. I also want to highlight the incredible work done by our local organizations, our organizations on the ground, which work every day to protect our local environment and leave a greener world for our children.

I am thinking of Regeneration Canada, in the Mile End neighbourhood, whose mission is to promote soil regeneration in order to mitigate climate change, restore biodiversity, improve water cycles and support a healthy food system.

I could also mention Soverdi, another organization in my riding, one that implements greening strategies in urban settings to improve the quality of life in our neighbourhoods and the health of Montrealers. It recently celebrated the milestone of 100,000 trees planted in the last 10 years, which is just incredible.

Everyone here in the House knows that Quebec leads the way in Canada in terms of clean energy generation, and our budget ensures that Quebec benefits from this position, for the benefit of all Canadians. Our budget proposes a tax credit for clean energy investments, which includes hydroelectricity and battery production, two areas where Quebec is truly a leader. As Quebec's finance minister said, it is extremely interesting for us in Quebec.

*The Budget*

• (1700)

[English]

I would like to speak for a moment to a few specific measures in this budget. For example, our new investments in clean electricity, the driving force of a clean economy, would build a national electricity grid that would connect Canadians from coast to coast to coast, an electricity grid that would provide cleaner, more affordable electricity to every Canadian. We are proposing, in the 2023 budget, to introduce a 15% refundable tax credit for eligible investments in clean electricity projects.

Our budget also proposes to create a refundable tax credit of 30% of the cost of investments in new machinery and equipment used to manufacture and process key clean technologies and to extract, process or recycle critical minerals. We are also announcing the details of the clean hydrogen investment tax credit, with support that would range from 15% to 40% of eligible project costs.

Canada is already a prime destination for foreign investment. Volkswagen has just announced that its PowerCo subsidiary will build its first overseas super factory for electric vehicle batteries in St. Thomas, Ontario. There is also Umicore, which is investing in a first-of-its-kind electric vehicle battery plant here in Canada, strengthening our battery value chain. There is also the new Stellantis battery plant in Windsor.

[Translation]

I could also point to Ford's decision to build a new factory in Bécancour, the sixth player in the battery industry to settle in Bécancour, and the list goes on.

[English]

As I have said before, including just this week alongside opposition colleagues in interview panels, our Liberal government has, as its main and principal priority, the economy. It is the economy. It is jobs. It is the welfare of Canadians and their pocketbooks.

Our plan is to make Canada a leader in the clean energy economy of tomorrow. It is one that is good for workers, good for business and good for the environment. While the Liberal government is focused on the economy, the Conservative leader is focused on Twitter, his Twitter.

In fact, while our government is focused on helping Canadians with the rising cost of living and global inflation, Conservatives are busy importing Trumpian politics to Canada. While our government is doing everything to fast-track the grocery rebate and help vulnerable Canadians, the Conservative leader is busy colluding with Elon Musk to make fun of and discredit Canadian institutions.

[Translation]

While the economy is our government's top priority, the Conservatives seem to think that the best way to help Canadians is to ask for Elon Musk's help to try to advance their plan to slash funding for the CBC.

In fact, I note that my Conservative colleagues from Quebec do not really seem to want to talk about their leader's attacks on the CBC. It would not be the first time that we see MPs in the House

say one thing in English and another in French. I call upon my Conservative colleagues. I invite them to do better.

[English]

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about Ukraine, but this budget has absolutely nothing in it for Ukraine. It has nothing in it for the Canadian Armed Forces, and it has nothing to ensure that Ukraine would be victorious over its Russian aggressors. I do not know how she could stand in this place to talk about all that the Liberals are doing for Ukraine. As someone of Ukrainian heritage, I found it was incredibly disappointing and insulting that there was not anything there, other than loans, at a time when the country is getting invaded.

I want to talk about the Washington Post article that just came out this afternoon. It came from documents through the Discord messaging app, which said that the Prime Minister had absolutely no intent of ever meeting our NATO targets. According to the article, the report that was released, and it comes from the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said, "Widespread defense shortfalls hinder Canadian capabilities," the document says, "while straining partner relationships and alliance contributions."

Why is the member supporting a government that continues to undermine our bilateral relationship with the United States and our collective security?

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about our support for Ukraine. It was not something I detailed in my speech, but I am happy to talk about it.

This government has put over \$5 billion forward to support Ukrainians in their fight against Russia. We have been recognized by President Zelenskyy as being among the countries that are leading in support for Ukraine. We have been thanked on many occasions as a prime leader in the discussions at the G7 and G20 ensuring support from around the world for Ukraine. Also, our Leopards have arrived in Ukraine.

However, I would point out that the member opposite actually voted to lift sanctions on Russia for fertilizer. It is not the time to lift sanctions on Russia. It is the time to get tough on Russia, and it is an embarrassment that the Conservatives want to weaken our sanctions regime.

• (1705)

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the environmental portion of her government's budget. I think it is a bit of a shame that, in this era of fighting climate change, we are putting all industries on the same footing, even the heavy polluters. That has been proven.

*The Budget*

I question the idea of offering more public funds to companies that make millions, if not billions, of dollars in profits per year, to help them develop new technologies that have not yet been proven effective. I am thinking about carbon capture and storage in particular.

All that money could have been directed elsewhere. They could have invested more in renewable energy, green energy. I spoke to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change about it, and he said that if we help one, we have no choice but to help them all. I am still having a hard time with that. We know that some companies are heavy polluters and that we should not encourage them to produce more. Instead, we should encourage them to produce less, so that they produce fewer greenhouse gases.

I would like to hear my colleague's opinion about giving equal footing to industries that are receiving public funds, even if they make billions of dollars in profits.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my colleague's work to make gains in our fight against climate change. She talks about investing in green, clean energy. That is exactly what we are doing in this budget.

In fact, I was surprised to learn that the Bloc Québécois was going to vote against this budget, given that it is a budget that truly responds to Quebecers' demands to accelerate the country's green transition.

I would like to point out to my colleague that, according to the latest figures, our emissions are down almost 10% from the 2005 level, which is our reference year. We must continue. We need to accelerate these gains. That is why we have invested heavily in the green transition in this budget.

[English]

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak to budget 2023. I will be sharing my time with the great hon. member for Simcoe North.

Perhaps more than any other budget in recent memory, Canadians were looking to this federal government to send some strong signals on responsible governance, prudent spending, fiscal responsibility and a path through these high inflationary times. Unfortunately, however, the reality is that we did not see any of this in the budget. It should therefore come as no surprise that I, along with my Conservative colleagues, will not be supporting this budget as it stands.

Of course, we know that NDP members will support the Liberal government, because they always have and always will, ever since their coalition government began. However, the NDP's blank cheque approach to dealing with the Liberals' incompetence is only making matters worse. This makes them a part of the problem and leaves the Conservatives as the only national party to stand up for Canadians.

The single largest selling point in this budget that I see is the token \$225 payment to lower-income Canadians to supposedly help with the rising cost of groceries. This shows that the Liberals are clearly out of touch with the realities that Canadians are facing as they do their weekly grocery shopping.

I was at the Calgary Co-op grocery centre in Brentwood last week. I shop there. I have been shopping there for probably 40 years, and I am getting to know the people. A shopping excursion for me takes an hour to an hour and a half. It is an hour to an hour and a half of talking to people in the aisles and shopping. The people I see at the shopping centre look drained, not only of their hard-earned money but of their mental resources as well. They are dealing with how they are going to put food on the table.

I went to the produce section, and it is shocking. The cost of lettuce is up 35% in just this past year. Fresh vegetables, for the vegans out there, are up 15%. Flour, for people who want to bake bread because they cannot afford to buy their bread, is up 23%. Cooking oil, for people who can afford to buy chicken or hamburger, is up 23%. Butter, to butter the bread we cannot afford, is up 19%. Pasta, for Italian lovers out there who enjoy Italian food, had a 19% increase. Canned veggies, again for the vegans, had a 17% increase. Bread, if one can afford it, was up 18%, and even potatoes were up 16% this past year.

This \$225 payment literally equates to, if one does the math, about \$4.32 per week. It is a pittance of support for struggling Canadians.

However, do not worry, because as the Liberals and the NDP say, everything is just fine and inflation is coming down. Sure, it may be coming down for non-essential items like televisions or high-tech gadgets. However, it certainly is not coming down for the bare essentials, the necessities that Canadians need to feed and house their families.

In no way can the government claim that food security is not an issue in Canada when 60% more Canadians are expected to need food banks this year. The problem is even more acute in certain communities around this country and certainly up in the north. This lack of food affordability will have long-term effects and will add to the stress of many households in this country. This stress will drive up the rates of domestic violence, it will impact the educational outcomes of many of our children and it will have a lasting impact on our most vulnerable, in particular our fixed-income seniors and veterans.

However, it is not only food affordability. There are many other things going wrong here in Canada, and the Liberals and the NDP seem to be blind to it all.

For example, in the last eight years, we have seen a country where there are marijuana pot shops at every turn, at every corner, yet parents are desperately driving around town searching for children's formula and children's medication.

Overdose deaths are at a shocking level and are rising, yet the Liberals' response is to make it easier to get access to deadly drugs.

*The Budget*

• (1710)

Canadians need mental health support more than ever, but the Liberal government refuses to activate the 988 emergency line that my colleague, the member for Cariboo—Prince George, has been advocating for for years to no avail.

The government is hiring thousands more public servants. In the past two years alone, the public service has grown by 31,000 full-time employees, yet somehow wait times are worse than when we had fewer employees. The government is spending more and we are getting less. That is the story of the Liberal-NDP government.

Canada needs immigration more than ever to fill our labour shortages, but the immigration backlog gets longer by the day. In July 2021, the backlog was an astounding 1.5 million applications. The government promised to prioritize the problem and hire more people, but the result is that the backlog has increased even further. It now stands at 2.15 million applications. It is another example of paying more and getting less.

Housing prices have doubled. We all know that. However, the government thinks the problem is solved with a \$500 housing payment.

Violent crime is up, illegal gun crime is up, drug crime is up and the number of police officers killed on duty is going up at an alarming rate. However, all the government has in response is that it gives its thoughts and prayers to families.

If I truly felt the government's 2023 budget really hit the mark, I would say so. I have in the past praised parts of Liberal budgets, but this budget is such a letdown for Canadians. There is no plan for housing affordability. There is no plan for reducing crime. There is no plan for controlling inflation. There is no plan for true food security. There is no plan for today and no plan for tomorrow.

Canadians need a government that remains focused on the most important things. Instead, we have a Liberal-NDP government that is more concerned with photo ops and penny payment schemes, instead of dealing with root causes. Canadians need a government that supports all businesses and encourages economic growth in every sector in this country, in particular our oil and gas sector, which the government has decimated.

Our national debt has also doubled under the Prime Minister. It is a massive debt burden that will haunt current and future generations of Canadians for decades to come. It will impact our ability to support our most precious social programs and will put our critical services at risk.

It has been a few weeks since the Liberal-NDP government delivered its budget. I hope it will take the feedback of Canadians seriously. The budget could not have been more widely denounced if it had tried. It needs to know the budget is not what Canadians wanted or needed.

What Canadians want is a fiscally responsible government that respects their hard-earned tax dollars. Canadians want a government focused on responsible, prudent spending that is within our spending capacity. Canadians want a government that tackles inflation, instead of recklessly spending to fuel that inflation. Canadians want a government that focuses on delivering the most basic ser-

vices it currently has, instead of creating new, wasteful and ineffective programs. Canadians want a government that does not saddle future generations with crippling debt.

Canadians will get this kind of government in the next election when they elect a new Conservative government.

• (1715)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I had to give my head a shake because the member, a Conservative, talked about how it has been so difficult for poor Canadians and middle-class Canadians.

I have to go back and mention the 10 dismal years of the Harper decade, when in this House we saw the Conservatives slashing health care, forcing seniors to work longer, depriving them of their pensions and systematically making it tough for working people to survive. We saw this routinely when workers were exercising their collective right to negotiate and would occasionally go on strike. The Conservative government, during the dismal Harper decade, forced those workers back to work.

I see all that. I see the fact that Canadians are struggling. What the NDP has offered is dental care, while pushing for pharmacare and pushing for real supports for Canadians.

Was the member asleep during the 10 dismal years when Harper ripped apart the social fabric of this country? He took away health care and all of the other programs that Canadians depended on. Was he asleep during that entire decade?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before I go to the answer, I just want to remind members that I really want to get them in on questions and comments. I need shorter questions and shorter answers so that everybody can participate in this debate.

The hon. member for Calgary Confederation.

**Mr. Len Webber:** Mr. Speaker, right now, it is our oil industry that pays for the hon. member's dental plan. It is our oil industry that has supported this country for decades.

I have a Statistics Canada report here that says oil and gas companies have almost half a trillion dollars in assets in Canada. That is \$452 billion in investments here in Canada, yet the government is decimating that industry. Who does the member think is going to pay for all of this? It is going to be the revenue coming into our coffers from the oil and gas industry. We need to support Alberta's oil and gas industry.

### *The Budget*

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the speech by my colleague, particularly the opening when he indicated that he was very open to agreeing with and saluting certain specific measures.

He mentioned in his speech that he is very dedicated to curbing crime and violence in this country. Does he agree with our proposal to use existing funds, not new money, to take further action to tackle drug trafficking and stem the flow of drugs coming into our country, particularly from across borders?

● (1720)

**Mr. Len Webber:** Mr. Speaker, absolutely we need to curb the problem of illegal drugs coming into this country. We need to do whatever we can and spend whatever we can, but who will pay for it? It is the taxpayers who pay for this. They also pay for the dental plan and everything the government is offering in its budget.

How do we pay for all this? It is with a strong oil and gas industry in Alberta, an industry that provides us billions of dollars. In 2021 alone, this single industry generated \$105 billion for our GDP while supporting almost 400,000 jobs, and the government is decimating it. If we continue to increase our debt in this country, we are in a lot of trouble.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know how I will top the remarks and wonderful intervention by the member for Calgary Confederation.

We are in trouble as a country. It is very serious. We are a country in decline, but listening to the government, it is as if Canadians have never had it so good. The Liberals say things like that we have the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the developed world, or that we have the best growth in the G7. What they do not say is that our living standards are in serious decline. Our living standards have been in decline since the 1980s. In fact, in a research report released just yesterday, the Institute for Research and Public Policy highlights an urgent need. The report says, “In 1981, Canadians enjoyed a \$3,000 higher per capita standard of living than the major Western economies (adjusted for inflation and currency fluctuations). Forty years later, Canada was \$5,000 below that same average. If the trajectory continues, the gap will be nearly \$18,000 by 2060.”

We care about per capita because that is how we measure standard of living. We often hear people talk about the economic pie, which can grow, but if people's slices still stay the same, they are not better off. The government is achieving economic growth solely on the basis of volume alone. What do I mean by that? We are growing the pie, but the size of everybody's piece of the pie is staying the same. Our population is growing. We are only growing demand. That is the only thing that is happening and will continue to happen.

Last year in the budget, the government was transparent about this issue. It highlighted a chart that showed Canada toward the bottom of the OECD in peer countries from GDP per capita growth. All of a sudden, this year, that chart disappeared. I wonder why. It is because the story is so awful.

I have to read a quote from 2015 for my colleagues:

The OECD has cut its 2015 GDP forecast for Canada to a dismal 1.5%. By way of excuse, the minister today claimed, “We are doing better than most developed countries.” That is simply not true. The OECD puts us behind Australia, Germany, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, the U.K., the U.S. and yes, even Spain.

This is no global problem, as the government likes to pretend to excuse its shoddy management. This is a made-in-Canada runaway to recession.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that. Maybe the Deputy Prime Minister should go back to her 2015 self and take some lessons.

This is the context in which we have to think about this budget. It was not even one year ago when members on this side stood up and asked the government what it would do if inflation does not come down and we see economic uncertainty. What was the answer from the government? It was that these hon. members are “economically illiterate”. Guess what? Unfortunately, the worst is happening. Inflation is still high and unemployment is going to go up. We are walking into a recession because the government's spending is out of control.

The government's own projections state that unemployment is going to go up by 1.3%. That is 275,000 to 300,000 Canadians who, the government is projecting, will lose their jobs before the end of the year. I do not think they really care at all what inflation is in the U.K. or in the U.S., or that we somehow have a little bit better growth than some of our peer countries. We can argue about whether the causes of inflation are domestic or international. They are both, but more recently, really smart people are saying that we have too much demand in Canada. Our own central bank governor says that inflation is caused by too much domestic demand. Stephen Poloz recently said that the size of the deficit last year caused interest rates to go higher.

● (1725)

What does this mean for Canadian families? Derek Holt at Scotiabank suggests that one full percentage point of central bank increases is related to government overspending. What does that mean for the average Canadian? If the average mortgage is \$360,000, they are paying \$3,600 extra per year in interest because the government has been overspending and increasing demand, meaning interest rates have to go up to cool inflation. If someone happens to be a new homeowner or is trying to get an \$800,000 mortgage, that is \$8,000 extra a year they have to pay.

The bank is working very hard to bring inflation down, and we should be supporting it. Instead, the government is making its job harder. It is putting on additional taxes that have been determined to be inflationary.

*The Budget*

We have had food inflation in double digits for more than a year, and the government has never bothered to even ask how the carbon tax affects food prices in Canada. Food has to be produced, and farmers are paying the carbon tax. One farmer in a nearby community showed me a bill with \$13,000 in carbon tax alone in one month for natural gas. Also, the government thinks farmers have so much money that it put HST on top of the \$13,000. It is absolutely incredible.

The Liberals are not willing to admit this massive problem. They can only stand up and point to few things, saying that we are so much better off than the rest of the world. The only thing they have done to help people over the last year has been the GST rebate to help low-income Canadians. There is one in the budget and one in the fall, and the Conservatives supported and support both of them. We would like to see that go forward.

All of this spending has consequences. We are spending almost as much, this year coming up, on interest on the debt as we are giving to the provinces to spend on health care. How incredible is that? Just a couple of years ago, when the Deputy Prime Minister was asked about interest rates increasing and how much that would cost, the response was, "These are investments in our future, and they will yield great dividends. In today's low interest rate environment, not only can we afford these investments, it would be short-sighted of us not to make them."

The Liberals ignored inflation when it came and said it was transitory. Now they are ignoring economic uncertainty and a recession. They are calling it a shallow recession that is going to be short. Maybe they are also saying it is going to be transitory.

They were asked about economic uncertainty, and they called us economically illiterate. They said the debt-to-GDP ratio was going to keep declining, but they have broken that promise too. Now Canadians are paying the price for their prediction. The plan is not working, inflation is high, economic growth is slowing and the impacts on Canadians are real. I will give just a couple of examples of what is happening.

People are not getting great service in many circumstances. I heard from a young woman who is a PSW at a retirement home in Midland caring for our vulnerable. She is trying to get her PR card. She is also a nurse, but she cannot change jobs while she is waiting for her PR card. She has been waiting two years, which is an incredible injustice. We are preventing a young nurse from getting in to the system.

Then there is Gary, a pilot who is retired. He builds planes. All he needs is his medical approved by the transportation department so he could fly his plane and enjoy his retirement years. That is not happening either.

If members thought it was all doom and gloom, I want to end on a positive note. Last week I was in Ms. Thompson's grade 11 law class. Mr. McEcheran is a student of Lakehead who is observing that class and helping out. These students asked the most amazing questions. It gives me a lot of great hope for the future of the country. They asked about crime, homelessness and land conservation. I was very energized by this conversation. I think the country is in

great hands when we have student leaders like them engaged in civics discussions.

I could not answer many of those questions and could not point to things in the budget to address their concerns. I hope next year we will have a better shot.

● (1730)

**Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while I listened to the member's speech, I was thinking a lot about many of the benefits we put forward to help young people in this country, specifically children and youth, when it comes to the dental program, interest relief on student debt, the child benefit and child care in general. These are huge programs that help young people.

If the member was in charge, what would he do differently, specifically when we are talking about children and youth?

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, that is a great question.

First, on child care, as far as I understand there is not one child care provider in my riding who is offering \$10-a-day day care.

Second, let us talk about what we would do differently. Do members know what the biggest waste of \$500 million a year is? It is interest-free loans for students. Why? It is because it costs \$500 million a year and we could give that money to low-income students so they can obtain an education. In fact, the government took grants for low-income students from \$6,000 to \$3,200 and claimed it was an increase. That is definitely not something we would have done. We could have given that \$500 million to low-income students to obtain an education.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I am always fascinated to see how populist and simplistic the Conservative rhetoric is. He makes it sound as though cancelling the carbon tax would completely resolve the problem of inflation.

I think that the Conservatives are simplifying things too much and that they are proposing solutions that are far too simplistic. At the same time, the more the government spends with the help of the NDP, the more it fuels inflation. I sometimes feel as though the Liberals are just hoping that this is all going to sort itself out and that they will not have to do anything. That is the case in the budget. What balance is there?

I am thinking, in particular, of much more practical measures that could be put in place to deal with the labour shortage, for example. That would help the economy. We made specific proposals in that regard.

*The Budget*

I am always fascinated by the Conservatives' rhetoric on lavish spending and by their economic plan, which is far too simplistic. That was more of a comment than a question. I do not think that we are going to solve anything by suggesting that the government cancel the carbon tax.

[English]

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc has put forward some interesting solutions. We work very well together at committee with the member of that party.

I do not find anything simplistic or disingenuous about reducing the carbon tax on an energy bill. I have people emailing my office and sending energy bills that have \$50 or \$60 of carbon tax per month. They are on a fixed income. It is not unreasonable to recommend, at least temporarily, to remove that charge from people's energy bills.

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know the Conservatives often put down the New Democratic Party for offering much-needed programs to Canadians, like dental care. However, I would have to agree with my colleague from the Bloc that their analysis is quite simplistic. We know where the answer lies, and it is something the Conservatives are never willing to do: go after the ultrawealthy and tax the corporate elite. The Conservatives always talk about placing the onus on the taxpayer, but when it comes to the real problem in the room, which is the greedy corporate elite, I wonder if my colleague is willing to join the NDP in our call to tax the ultrarich and go after the corporate elite to pay for the programs Canadians need.

• (1735)

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, we should make sure all Canadians, corporate or individual, pay the taxes they owe, no question. We should make sure that people pay the taxes they owe before we think about increasing taxes on everyone else.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what a way this is to conclude the debate on such an important measure the government has brought forward. I thought maybe I would reflect on what members should be aware of before we actually vote.

This budget is in fact a reflection of what has been done in consultations, working with Canadians from—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge has a point of order.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Madam Speaker, I thought we should get a ruling from you. I think this is at least the third time the member has spoken to the budget. Perhaps another member would like a turn. Members can only speak at each stage—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I can confirm this member is speaking for the first time on the main motion.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the good news for the member is he was able to cut my speech a bit shorter.

The Conservatives do not like it when I stand up to speak because they get a sense of reality, which is that the more Canadians find out what the Conservative Party members are truly up to, the more they are in deep trouble in the next election.

Within this budget is a true reflection of what Canadians expect of the government: to demonstrate it has been listening and there is leadership from Ottawa. This budget delivers.

For important issues such as inflation, we have things such as the grocery rebate. We have the expansion of the dental plan program. We have things such as the doubling of the tax credit for tradespeople so they can acquire their tools. There are so many aspects of this budget that are there to support Canadians. It truly is a reflection of what Canadians want to see in a national budget.

This is an opportunity to emphasize that as a government working with Canadians we have seen the creation of thousands of jobs. In fact, close to two million jobs have been created through this government since we have been in government. This is well past the prepandemic number.

When it comes to dealing with issues such as inflation, we are on the right track and are seeing our inflation numbers going down. Hopefully we will be able to see that downward movement on inflation rates continue. If we compare Canada to any other country, and in particular our peer countries, whether in Europe or just south of us, we will find Canada is doing exceptionally well. We continue to work day in, day out in order to deliver the type of programs expected of us.

No matter how focused the Conservative Party of Canada is on personal attacks or personal assassinations of members on the government benches, we will continue to remain focused on Canadians first and foremost, no matter what region of the country one lives in. This is a government that truly cares. The budgetary and legislative measures we brought forward will continue to have the backs of Canadians as we recognize the value of our middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. We are going to develop an economy that works for all Canadians, no matter where they live.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It being 5:40 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the ways and means Motion No. 10.

• (1740)

[Translation]

The question is on the motion.

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

[English]

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** We request a recorded division.

*The Budget*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
Call in the members.

• (1820)

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

(Division No. 298)

## YEAS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	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
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	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino

Miao	Miller
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
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	Vandenbeld
Virani	Vuong
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 172

## NAYS

## Members

Aboutaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Beaulieu	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Martel	May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrice



Motz  
Nater  
O'Toole  
Paul-Hus  
Plamondon  
Rayes  
Reid  
Richards  
Rood  
Savard-Tremblay  
Schmale  
Shields  
Simard  
Soroka  
Ste-Marie  
Strahl  
Thériault  
Thomas  
Tolmie  
Uppal  
Vecchio  
Vien  
Vignola  
Vis  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Williamson

Muys  
Normandin  
Patzner  
Perkins  
Poilievre  
Redekopp  
Rempel Garner  
Roberts  
Ruff  
Scheer  
Seeback  
Shipley  
Small  
Steinley  
Stewart  
Stubbs  
Therrien  
Tochor  
Trudel  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Viersen  
Villemure  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Williams  
Zimmer — 142

**PAIRED**

Members

Barsalou-Duval  
Dzerowicz  
Kramp-Neuman  
Morrison  
Pauzé  
Qualtrough

Bibeau  
Epp  
Martinez Ferrada  
O'Regan  
Perron  
Serré — 12

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

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

BILLS C-318 AND C-319

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoynes, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to respond to your statement of March 30, respecting the 15 new items of Private Members' Business added to the order of precedence on March 10, 2023.

In particular, I am rising to raise two arguments respecting the financial prerogative of the Crown and whether two Private Members' Business bills infringe upon the Crown's prerogative in this regard.

Without commenting on the merits of Bill C-318, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code regarding adoptive and intended parents, sponsored by the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster, and Bill C-319, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act regarding amount of full pension, sponsored by the member for Calgary Shepard, I submit that both of these bills require royal recommendation.

Bill C-318 seeks to add a new type of special benefit for adoptive parents and parents of children conceived through surrogacy through the Employment Insurance Act, as well as making corresponding changes to the Canada Labour Code. Since the bill would add a new type of benefit under the Employment Insurance Act, it would need to be accompanied by a royal recommendation. These

*Private Members' Business*

new benefits are not currently contemplated in the Employment Insurance Act and would authorize a new and distinct charge on the consolidated revenue fund for purposes and in a manner not authorized by any statute. I therefore submit that, absent of royal recommendation, the bill should not be put to a third reading vote.

● (1825)

[Translation]

Bill C-319 proposes to increase the amount of the full pension for Canadians aged 65 to 74 by 10%. This increase is not provided for under the Old Age Security Act, and the charge against the consolidated revenue fund for this purpose is not authorized by that act or any other. I therefore maintain that, without a royal recommendation attached to the bill, Bill C-319 should not be put to a vote at third reading.

[English]

**The Speaker:** We appreciate the hon. member's getting up and informing us about that.

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE FARMERS ACT**

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC)** moved that Bill C-280, an act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (deemed trust – perishable fruits and vegetables), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, we are really excited tonight for fresh fruit and vegetable farmers across Canada. It is an honour to finally have the opportunity to speak to the financial protection for fresh fruit and vegetable farmers act, Bill C-280. This bill proposes to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act to support Canada's fresh produce farmers and sellers through the establishment of a deemed trust.

My community of York—Simcoe is home to the Holland Marsh, known as the “soup and salad bowl” of Canada. It produces more carrots, celeries, onions, lettuces and greens than any other single region in this country. We would love to see members at Carrot Fest this summer. Every time I look out over the rich, dark soil in the low-lying fields of the Holland Marsh and survey the endless rows of green vegetables growing there I see opportunity, the opportunity to have Canada become even more competitive as an agricultural leader in global fruit and vegetable exports; the opportunity to ensure fresh, sustainable Canadian produce is more accessible and more affordable than foreign imports for every Canadian family; and the opportunity to support the innovation and grit of our hard-working farmers right across Canada.

*Private Members' Business*

Sadly, in the marsh, and across the country, in the fields and greenhouses in places like Leamington, Kentville, Morrell, Brookfield and elsewhere, this opportunity is being limited by the considerable risks associated with the growing, harvesting, packing, marketing and distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables, risks that routinely threaten their farms and livelihoods. Overhead and capital costs are significant. The margins in the sector are thin, normally between 3% and 5%. The return farmers receive from their product is often delayed until it is sold and payment is only collected long after they have passed on their product for sale, far along the supply chain or well after consumers have eaten it.

The worsening recession, inflationary pressures, increased prices, tax hikes and the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have only increased the vulnerability of the produce sector. This is underlined in the lack of critical financial protections available to Canadian produce-growers for the losses they suffer as a result of an insolvent buyer. While the existing mechanisms within the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act may be suitable for the wider agriculture industry and other sectors, they do not provide a workable mechanism for when fresh produce buyers become insolvent. Currently, the act allows suppliers to recover their product after bankruptcy, but has no provisions to protect them in the event their produce has been resold, is no longer identifiable or is no longer in the same state. Given the perishable nature of fresh fruits and vegetables, how quickly they spoil and how many products are highly processed and mingled with other ingredients to make food, it is very uncommon that produce can be repossessed during these bankruptcy proceedings.

There also exists a “super priority” provision for farmers in the act, which is supposed to allow them to get paid ahead of other creditors during bankruptcy proceedings. However, to access this, the product must have been delivered within 15 days of bankruptcy or the appointment of a receiver, which fails to account for the payment schedule of 30 days or more that typically exists within the produce industry.

In practice, these deficiencies in Canada's bankruptcy laws means that Canadian produce farmers are faced with significant, and sometimes insurmountable, losses in the event of a purchaser bankruptcy. They have to line up along with all of the other creditors to seek payment. Otherwise, they must simply walk away from the outstanding debt owed to them. This can lead to further bankruptcies and sunk costs across the entire sector and can jeopardize our domestic food security.

• (1830)

Sadly, the lack of financial protection for the produce industry has real world consequences. In January of this year, 2023, Lakeside Produce Incorporated, a large-scale commercial greenhouse based out of Leamington, Ontario, filed for bankruptcy. This was a family-owned company that grew cucumbers, peppers and specialty tomatoes for 75 years, with extensive operations that included conventional and organic greenhouses, warehouses, packhouses and distribution centres right across North America.

At the time of its bankruptcy, it owed \$188 million to suppliers across the produce sector, including other greenhouses, and logistics, packaging and brokerage firms. There are 17 produce compa-

nies across Canada among Lakeside's creditors, which account for \$1.7 million in unsecured claims. The owner of one of these companies, a farmer also based in Leamington, wrote to me regarding this bill.

He said, “the inadequate protection for suppliers of fresh fruits and vegetables...most recently resulted in my farming operations sustaining a loss of \$907,840 due to the bankruptcy of Lakeside Produce. I have devoted my entire life to the [produce] business but I, nor anyone else who is part of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry, can continue to afford these risks.”

In addition to the Canadian creditors, there are 45 companies based outside Canada, primarily in Mexico and the United States, that are owed another \$4.9 million. The highly integrated nature of the fresh produce industry means that these losses will impact Canadian growers even further.

The lack of financial protection available to fresh fruit and vegetable farmers in Canada also affects their competitiveness and capacity to trade with the United States. Currently, produce growers cannot access food protections that exist in the United States without incurring significant financial costs.

This was not always the case. Previously, Canada was the only country in the world that had preferential access to the dispute resolution mechanisms within the United States' Perishable Agriculture Commodities Act. It is known in the industry as PACA. However, the United States revoked this access in October 2014 due to a lack of a reciprocal mechanism in Canada. Now, Canadian sellers must post a significant bond worth double the value of their shipment just to initiate a claim through PACA. This severely disadvantages Canadian produce businesses, given the high volume of produce sold to buyers in the United States.

The need is clear. We need to protect Canada's food security. We need to support the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable industries against the impact of bankruptcies. We need to work toward restoring preferential access for Canadians to the United States' dispute resolution mechanism.

To do this, Bill C-280 proposes to address the deficiencies in existing sections of Canada's bankruptcy and creditor laws by establishing a limited deemed trust to provide financial protection for Canadian produce farmers. These are the changes Canadian produce farmers require. They have been vocal in their support of establishing a deemed trust through Bill C-280.

Bill C-280 is endorsed by hundreds of farms, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada and many other national, provincial, regional, and industry-specific organizations.

• (1835)

This matters. From farm gate to dinner plate, the fruit and vegetable industry is a major contributor to Canada's GDP and creates thousands of jobs from coast to coast, right across this great country.

The financial protection established by Bill C-280 would reduce losses in the sector and lead to increased economic activity in Canada of \$200 million to \$235 million per year, increased value added in the Canadian economy of \$104 million to \$122 million per year, increased employment by more than 1,200 full-time jobs, and increased wages for Canadian workers by \$59 million to \$69 million per year.

Bill C-280 would also lead to a reduction in costs for Canadian consumers, which is just what we need right now, by as much as 5% to 15%. This would save Canadian families between \$300 million and \$900 million on their annual fresh fruit and vegetable purchases, improving their overall health. After eating so many carrots in Bradford, these eyes are still 20/20. It is unbelievable.

Unfortunately, the position of the Liberal government has been that the Bankruptcy Act, with its existing mechanisms, works just fine for its produce sellers. However, this is clearly not true. A cucumber, last I checked, is not the same as a sheaf of wheat. It makes no sense to treat these products and these sellers the same. Bankruptcies in the produce sector are substantially higher than other agriculture industries. They happen twice as often as they do for those in livestock, and over 10 times as often as they do in the highly regulated grain and poultry sectors.

After all, the produce industry is as unique as the fruits and vegetables they grow. It is very complex, with numerous producers and sellers involved, and with considerable integration within Canada and with our neighbours to the south, the United States. This unique sector requires a unique solution to the issues they face. Bill C-280 is the solution, a solution that would give Canadian produce farmers the certainty they deserve.

When I look out over the green, growing vegetables in the rich soil of the Holland Marsh, I see opportunity. I hope members of Parliament in the House see the incredible opportunity today, the opportunity to support Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable farmers, to stand up for Canadian consumers and to protect our country's food security. With Bill C-280, we could ensure that fresh produce farmers are paid for the food that they grow. Let us get behind them.

• (1840)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when I think of vegetables and fruits, I think of Peak of the Market in the province of Manitoba.

Manitoba produces the best vegetables, I would argue, in the world. Some might question that, but it is the yellow potatoes,

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white potatoes, red potatoes and so much more, along with the carrots, cabbage and turnips. There are so many things. Peak of the Market seems to know what it is doing. It brings everything together and puts that stamp of it being made in Manitoba or being from the Prairies.

I appreciate what the member says. I love the farmers. These people who are producing, helping us and feeding the world, are doing an incredible job. Has the member had any discussions with organizations, such as Peak of the Market, to get their sense of what he is proposing today?

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, I know the member loves the fresh fruit and produce business.

As I mentioned in my speech, we have support right across Canada from all producers. This is one thing, and I know the member for Winnipeg North prides himself on this as well, where we were getting out and talking to constituents. I would love to have him come out to Bradford and see that rich, dark soil, and come out to cut celery with me one day.

This is much needed. I encourage members to get out to talk to the farmers and to listen to what they are saying.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech in which he talked about the future of farming.

This week, the Bloc Québécois has made a point of calling for more help for the agricultural industry, particularly for young farmers. It is important to recognize that, right now, farmers are not doing well from a mental health perspective. One in 10 agricultural businesses are at risk of closing in the next year because of all the problems.

How will the member's bill meet the needs of all sorts of farmers, particularly vegetable growers? How will the bill help them to get through this period of inflation, which is so difficult for them and for young farmers in particular?

[*English*]

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, that relates to a quick story. When COVID first started, I had a farmer reach out to me in Bradford. He said to me, "Scot, I don't think I'm going to plant in my field this year."

I asked him, "Ken, why aren't you?"

He said, "I'm so worried about getting paid. The stress is for my family. I cannot plant my field, sit at home and pay the \$20,000 in taxes because, if I plant my fields, it's going to cost me in excess of a million dollars. If I don't get paid, I'm going to lose this family farm that has been in the family for four generations." These are the kinds of stresses they have. Then he said, "I'm not even looking to the government for any money. I'm just looking for insurance that I am going to get paid."

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**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to indicate that we in the NDP support this proposal. In fact, it has been part of our last three federal election platforms to recognize that this support is critical for farmers and farming families to put our farmers on a level playing field with those to the south of us.

Obviously I want to acknowledge as well the impacts of climate change, which are rendering agriculture to be much more unpredictable in our country. Whether it is in western Canada or eastern Canada, it reinforces the need to support farmers during this time.

I am wondering if the member could speak to how important it is to move on this legislation as soon as possible.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, it is so important.

We should be number one in the world in Canada with agriculture. I have always said that a General Motors plant can be moved but a farm cannot be. We have the most arable land in the whole world. That has to come into the vision for Canada. That is one thing I talked about missing in the budget. Where is the vision?

We should be number one in the world with agriculture. We should be teaching people throughout the world how to grow food and have fresh water. We need to keep pushing for agriculture.

• (1845)

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to discuss the important matters raised by Bill C-280, which would amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, or BIA, and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, to provide the claims of the sellers with a deemed trust.

This means that their claims would be paid first, in full, ahead of the claims of all other creditors if the buyer was subject to a bankruptcy or receivership and that the claims of the sellers would have to be paid in full as part of the buyers' restructuring plan of arrangement.

By way of background, it is important to note that the deemed trust proposal is a long-standing industry request. I would note that it has been studied extensively by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada for more than 15 years.

[*Translation*]

This means that there is ample evidence to help us assess this proposed exception to the usual order of claims in insolvency proceedings.

To begin with, I was pleased to see that the fresh fruit and vegetable sector, also known as the edible horticulture sector, is a thriving and growing sector that makes a significant contribution to the Canadian economy and food security. According to Statistics Canada, farm cash receipts from the edible horticulture sector have increased by 23% over the past five years, and the value of exports of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables have increased by 61%.

This is also a diversified sector, consisting of both small and large, domestic and foreign players. The sector is divided into different types of businesses along the supply chain, including produc-

ers and farmers, on the one hand, and resellers, wholesalers, brokers, and traders, as well as supermarkets, on the other. The size of these businesses varies considerably. For example, there are approximately 700 fresh fruit and vegetable wholesalers of varying sizes in Canada, ranging from small companies with sales of \$30,000 to larger companies with sales of over \$5 million per year. The distribution sector is dominated by a few large companies, including Canada's major food retailers.

According to the 2021 census of agriculture, there are approximately 14,000 farms that produce fruits and vegetables. Most fresh fruit and vegetable farms are small, and the data from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada shows that about 40%, or about 5,600 farms, have an annual income of less than \$25,000. In contrast, about 12%, or about 1,600 farms, generate over a million dollars in revenues and contribute to about 80% of the sector's total revenues.

[*English*]

The fresh produce supply chains also extend throughout North America and include larger American agribusiness, including farmers and sellers who export into Canada. All these players would be covered by the bill's deemed trust, in contrast to current protection in insolvency legislation, which focuses on domestic producers such as the farmers, fishers and aquaculturists.

When studying the bill, we will likely want to look at the following aspects: which parts of the sector are in need of this type of protection and whether it should be extended to all players equally. For instance, since Canada's main retail chains are also wholesalers, it would potentially mean that, if a Loblaws or Sobeys franchisee was to become insolvent, the chain could benefit from the deemed trust proposed by Bill C-280.

It would also seem possible that big American or Canadian agribusinesses, which may have the largest unpaid fresh produce invoices, could become the primary beneficiaries of the proposed deemed trust by collecting from an insolvent buyer first, thus depriving non-fresh produce creditors of recovery at a greater rate.

At a time where inflation in grocery prices is top of mind for the House, and for all Canadians, we may want to consider whether this type of actor should benefit from extraordinary protection under the insolvency legislation.

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Another question that will likely be worthy of further examination relates to the type of soft products that have been scoped in this bill. This bill excludes and subordinates other farmers that produce milk, egg and meat, and the fisheries, all of which are highly perishable and subject to their own market challenges. On the other hand, the definitions included in Bill C-280 could potentially include frozen produce, which may not be much more perishable than other products that can be recovered from an insolvent entity within 30 days of delivery under our current laws.

The unfortunate reality is that insolvencies always create difficult situations for all stakeholders. That is why it is important to examine these issues carefully. We should keep in mind the other proposals that have been made in the past to prioritize certain claims, including with regard to employee health and disability benefits, because we would be effectively determining who gets paid first.

Granting privilege may also lead other groups to ask for similar treatment. It goes without saying that the more creditors who benefit from a priority in insolvency, the less that priority is worth, and the whole concept of treating similar creditors equally could unravel.

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

I think it is really important that we keep measures in place that target the most important problems the sector is facing. Statistics from the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy indicate that losses due to the insolvency of the fresh produce industry have been relatively low. The data shows that losses by the fresh produce industry due to insolvency are likely less than 1% of sales for most years and the estimates vary from 0.8% to 0.21% of sales over the past few years.

This is in contrast to the much more significant losses that the industry suffers because of partial payments, delayed payments or other disputes with solvent players against which the deemed trust would not protect the industry. For example, ongoing improvement of trade practices in the sector will contribute to reducing losses in the sector due to food loss and damage, because an estimated 13% of fruits and vegetables grown in Canada are not harvested or are thrown out for reasons unrelated to payment protection. That is according to the 2019 report by Environment and Climate Change Canada.

[*English*]

To conclude, the Canadian government strongly supports Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable growers. This can be seen in the superpriority protecting them under current insolvency legislation, as well as the action taken to date through other legislation, policies and programs that will continue to benefit the industry. The bill at hand proposes special unlimited treatment under insolvency legislation awarded to the sector's entire supply chain, including large foreign corporations. It will be important to really dig in and look at this initiative in detail to make sure that we understand how this intersects with other policies and questions in this very critical sector. I look forward to continuing this conversation on these important matters.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the bill before us would amend two federal laws, the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act to provide that the perishable fruits and vegetables sold by a supplier to a purchaser, as well as the proceeds of sale of those fruits and vegetables, are to be held in trust by the purchaser for the supplier.

What this bill would actually do is provide special protection to suppliers of fruits and vegetables if a client were to go bankrupt. At present, the regime that applies in the event of a buyer bankruptcy allows a supplier to take back the goods sold to the buyer. In the case of fruits and vegetables, the problem is very simple. In the time it takes for the administrative measures to be completed, there is a high risk that the fruits and vegetables will no longer be fresh and their value reduced to zero. Suppliers would see the goods they worked so hard to produce be thrown away without having any recourse.

• (1855)

We can all agree that the provisions in the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act are poorly adapted to the reality of our agricultural producers and to the structure of agri-food supply chains.

Bill C-280, which is co-sponsored by my esteemed colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé, seeks to establish a trust mechanism in the event that a purchaser becomes bankrupt. The trust mechanism ensures that the purchaser is the guarantor of the value of the shipment, without owning it, in the event of a default due to the application of one of the two acts. This bill will be extremely helpful to our producers and agri-food suppliers who do business with our neighbours to the south.

Prior to 2014, Canadian fruit and vegetable suppliers were protected by a U.S. law when doing business in the United States. When an American company defaulted or went bankrupt, our companies were protected by the U.S. regime. That is no longer the case, and the alternative process developed between the two countries is cumbersome, especially for our smaller businesses.

As of 2014, the United States decided to withdraw protections for Quebec and Canadian suppliers in the event that their American buyers become insolvent or file for bankruptcy. The American government made that decision, which penalizes and undermines our Canadian farmers, business owners and suppliers, because of the lack of an equivalent mechanism in the Canadian regulatory framework.

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Right now, without that protection, Quebec and Canadian produce suppliers must go through a special process to take legal action under that law in the United States. According to the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, suppliers are required to post a bond worth double the value of the shipment to initiate a claim. Most suppliers do not have that kind of cash flow and big buyers are well aware of that. Our suppliers are therefore forced to negotiate the buyer down to try to get a minimum amount of compensation rather than lose everything.

According to the testimony heard by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food when examining this issue, the United States and the United States Department of Agriculture have been very clear. They will be looking for a deemed trust before they agree to have a conversation on whether they will give us back the treatment we had previously. A public servant also confirmed that “the trade of fresh produce between Canada and the U.S. has continued to rise over the last four years, by 55% for fresh fruits and 26% for fresh vegetables, showing that the U.S. remains an important market for [Quebec and] Canadian fresh produce.”

Clearly, reinstating protection for our farmers who do business in the United States is not all that far-fetched. In fact, I would argue that it is necessary and urgent. I also want to remind the Prime Minister that he committed to fixing this problem not two weeks, two months or even two years ago. In 2014, when he had only just been elected to lead his party, he committed to fixing this problem if he took office, as he did in the 2015 federal election.

Spoiler alert: His party has been running the federal government for almost 10 years. Why has it taken this long to get something done in support of our agricultural sector? This bill has the support of every party in the House. What is more, the bill is an environmental and social measure.

I do not know why it has taken so long. That said, when it comes to Liberal standards, we have seen worse than taking 10 years to deliver on a promise.

In closing, I would like to remind my colleagues in the House that I have the honour and privilege of representing the people of the Lower St. Lawrence, a rural and proudly agricultural region.

• (1900)

In my region, we have 2,000 farms that produce annual revenues of more than \$600 million, a major contribution to the gross domestic product of the region, Quebec and Canada. Dairy farming alone represents nearly half of all agri-food operations in the Lower St. Lawrence region, but our passionate farmers work in countless other sectors, such as maple syrup production in Témiscouata, hog farming, cattle farming, and grain and potato farming. There are also produce growers who grow fruits and vegetables on our fertile land.

During my many visits and meetings with produce growers, I noticed that the representatives from the farming industry firmly and unanimously support this bill. That is why my esteemed colleagues in the Bloc Québécois will support our colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé, the agriculture, agri-food and supply management critic, so that Bill C-280, the bill he co-sponsored, may come into

force as soon as possible. I invite all my esteemed colleagues on both sides of the House to do the same.

For the sake of regions such as the Lower St. Lawrence, where farming has been an integral part of our daily lives for centuries, and for the sake of helping the farmers who put food on our tables remain competitive and financially healthy, we must move forward with Bill C-280.

[English]

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, before I begin, I would like to express my solidarity with the striking members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, who have been working without a contract for two years. New Democrats have always championed the rights of workers, and it is our moral duty to support the hard-working public servants who tirelessly serve our communities and our country.

PSAC, which represents over 155,000 striking members, is engaged in a critical struggle against an unfair federal government. This is the largest strike against a single employer in Canada's history. The Liberals, and the Conservatives before them, have utterly failed to address the concerns of workers in the public sector. Under the Liberals, we have witnessed a sustained assault on workers' rights by way of back-to-work legislation, as well as a disregard for the welfare of workers in the public service.

In solidarity with the Public Service Alliance of Canada, we demand that the Prime Minister and the federal government address the key issues raised by PSAC members, which include decent wages that prevent workers from falling further behind; a more inclusive federal public service; remote work enshrined in collective agreements; a right to disconnect after hours; an increase in indigenous language benefits; and good, secure jobs. The government needs to recognize the steeply rising cost of living and the impact of inflation on families. It should then call for a fair pay raise to reflect these realities.

We, therefore, call upon the Liberals to work to ensure that the federal government engages in good-faith negotiations with members of PSAC. We must seize this opportunity to create lasting change for our public sector workers and for all Canadians who believe in fairness, justice and the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Our message to the Prime Minister and the government is clear: It is time to come to the bargaining table with a genuine commitment to fairness and justice for workers in the public sector.

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I rise today to discuss and debate Bill C-280, an act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act. We in the NDP are proud to support this bill as it would give protections to long-struggling farmers whose crops we depend on. The NDP has a long record of advocating for farmers. In fact, it was small farmers in the Prairies, alongside union members, who moved to fight to protect people from the excesses of the market. They stood with Canadians feeling the brunt of the Great Depression and founded the CCF, which was the precursor to the NDP. That commitment to standing with rural and northern Canadians continues to this day.

People in my part of the country know those who are and are not our friends. We remember what happened when the Conservatives were in power and what was done to communities like the ones I represent. They sold off the Canadian Wheat Board. I raise this today because we are talking about the need for collective solutions to support farmers, farm families and farm communities. That is exactly what the Canadian Wheat Board was all about.

The single desk allowed for Canadian grain farmers to have security when it came to predicting their crops, marketing their crops and trading some of the best grain in the world. It ensured that the hard work of farmers was being recognized and valued through our trade relationships. Unfortunately, a number of years ago, Stephen Harper and his Conservative government went against the wishes of so many farmers in western Canada and dismantled the Wheat Board.

Since that time, we have seen big corporations in agribusiness, big grain corporations, make significant profits. Farmers continued to work hard. Some were not able to withstand the loss of the Wheat Board. Many farmers I speak to have regained some ground, but many speak very clearly about how losing the single-desk Canadian Wheat Board was a major loss.

In fact, the loss has reverberated in communities across my region. I have the honour of representing Churchill, and we know that the Port of Churchill was one of the most regularly used ports to export grains to certain parts of the world. It was and is obviously used seasonally, but it has not recovered since the loss of the Wheat Board. The rail line leading to the port has also lost a lot of ground since we lost the Wheat Board. This bill today recognizes that there need to be collective solutions to support farmers and farm families.

● (1905)

I also want to recognize the impacts of climate change on farming. We know that freak climate events are wreaking havoc across our country, and increasingly around the world. While many who are not involved in farming also face various challenges, we know that, for farmers, these kinds of weather events mean the loss of their livelihood and security, and they have already had devastating impacts on entire agricultural regions in our country.

As the economic situation of many Canadians becomes more and more difficult, unfortunately the government's actions are only compounding the situation. If we go to any rural or northern community in our region or elsewhere, we will hear the same thing: The growing season is shorter and weather is more unpredictable. Yet, following a long tradition of previous Liberal and Conserva-

tive governments, the current government sits idly by destroying our planet one oil subsidy at a time. It lacks the courage even to use the term "just transition", much less to put into practice the need to remake our economy into one where everyone thrives. Instead, it is farmers, northerners and indigenous communities who are the first to pay the price for government inaction. This needs to change.

We have seen the breakdown of supply chains across the globe, and farmers are paying the price. COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, climate change and other factors have exposed the weaknesses in our supply chains. It is more difficult than it has ever been to transport food, especially fresh fruit and vegetables, from farm to store to table. At the same time, farmers' debts are growing. Furthermore, farmers do not currently have the right to regain products claimed under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act if they have not been resold or are no longer identifiable in the same state. Food that is spoiled, for example, is not considered to be in the same state, and farmers just lose the product. This is kicking someone when they are down, and it is unacceptable.

Farmers have been clear. They expect the types of changes needed to put them on a level playing field with our closest trading partner, the Americans. They expect a statutory deemed trust for payment protection from losses due to buyers defaulting on payment obligations, and so do we. That is why these sorts of calls have been part of our last three NDP federal platforms in 2015, 2019 and 2021. We have been very clear. We have called for a payment protection plan for produce growers. We have called to restore protection for growers selling to American consumers. The reality is that Liberals need to stop dragging their feet on this. Meetings will not cut it. Farmers have been waiting during seven years of Liberal inaction, and this needs to end. Farmers saw with horror how the Conservatives let a raft of honest farmers lose their financial protection, and the Liberals have sat back and refused to restore it.

These types of common-sense policies will reduce the number of farm bankruptcies, encourage timely transport of produce from farmland to fridge and provide a measure of stability in an already volatile food price inflation market. We thank the member for bringing forward the bill and encourage all members of the House to support it.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1910)

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, before I begin my remarks on this bill, which was brought forward by my colleague from York—Simcoe, I want to say that I appreciate having the support of all the opposition parties on this very important private member's bill. However, in response to my NDP colleague, I am also extremely proud to have been part of a government that eliminated the Wheat Board and gave Canadian farmers marketing freedom and never-before-seen success. That is something farmers are extremely proud of.

Again, I want to thank my colleague from York—Simcoe. Certainly, I think all of us in the House appreciate his passion for his riding, or what he would call the “soup and salad bowl” of the country.

I had the opportunity to tour the Holland Marsh with my colleague last fall, and I had the chance to get down, get my hands dirty and harvest celery and carrots. This is something that does not really happen very often in southern Alberta in the foothills. That was an opportunity to see first-hand the dedication and commitment of those farm families to grow and produce the finest-quality fresh fruit and produce anywhere in the world. It just shows why this legislation, this private member's bill, is so important. It aims to create a limited statutory deemed trust to provide critical financial protection and assurance to our producers of these perishable fruits and vegetables in the event that a purchaser becomes bankrupt or goes into receivership.

I want to mention that the Liberals could bring forward this legislation any time. Interestingly, their 2015 election platform committed to follow through on exactly what my colleague has brought forward today. It is another promise made and another promise broken; it has been almost nine years, and they have yet to follow through on that election commitment.

Again it falls upon the Conservatives to do what the Liberals have failed to do and stand up for Canadian farmers. This legislation would ensure that produce sellers have priority access to an insolvent buyer's cash, inventory and accounts related to the sale of fresh produce.

The current rules severely limit the ability for produce growers and sellers to collect payment when their buyers declare bankruptcy. This is unique, as my colleague from York—Simcoe said, because if a distributor or a vendor went bankrupt, many times those products could be returned to the producer. Electronics, a bicycle or whatever the commodity or product was, it could be returned.

Obviously, with fresh fruit and vegetables, it is a very different situation. Either the product is consumed, or it rots in the warehouse, leaving the producer nothing. They cannot resell it because it has expired and rotted. They cannot collect the product back from the bankrupt retailer.

First, I want to give a bit of background on where we stand. The United States Perishable Agriculture Commodities Act, which many of us have heard referred to as PACA, provides protection to producers of perishable products in the case of a buyer's bankruptcy or insolvency. More specifically, it protects fresh fruit and vegetable growers.

The PACA provisions require buyers to maintain a statutory trust on fruit and vegetables received and not yet paid for. The reason for this is as follows: In the case of a business failure or bankruptcy, the debtor's true assets are not available for general distribution to other creditors until valid claims of trust from producers have been satisfied. This is to protect those fresh fruit and vegetable growers. PACA provided Canadian producers with the same rights as their American suppliers.

While Canadian firms had been the only non-U.S. entities benefiting from these same protections when operating in the United States, the lack of a comparable system here in Canada was a trade irritant to the United States. Not surprisingly, in late 2014, the United States revoked Canada's preferential access to PACA's payment dispute resolution mechanism. This was due to Canada's lack of a similar protection here in Canada, and it was stated that the preferential access would not be reinstated until a similar piece of legislation was passed in Parliament.

Again, it brings us back to the Liberal Party's 2015 election promise to do such a thing, which it has not done. As a result of that, fruit and vegetable growers here in Canada have been waiting more than eight years for the Liberals to act on the campaign promise. However, once again, the Liberals have not followed through on that commitment. With their track record when it comes to Canadian agriculture, this is not surprising.

• (1915)

From what we have heard here tonight, certainly this legislation is long overdue, but it seems that when those things come up the Liberals go out of their way to create trade irritants with the United States rather than solving these issues. We have certainly heard that with PACA tonight, front-of-package labelling, animal vaccines and removing critical pest management products from Canadian farmers that are impacting our American colleagues.

We also heard, just in committee today, from the Food Processors of Canada, that higher interest rates, higher input costs and the carbon tax are putting our producers and our processors in a very precarious financial position, putting even more urgency on this type of legislation, which would provide protection and cost certainty for our processors.

Throughout the years, as a long-term sitting member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, I know that this type of legislation has been supported unanimously by all the members of the committee. It has been a recommendation in numerous studies that we have done at the agriculture and agri-food committee, and yet the government has yet to act on that. Clearly, this is not a priority for the Minister of Agriculture, for the Minister of Innovation, for the Minister of International Trade or certainly for the Prime Minister. Time and again, the Liberals have targeted farmers with higher carbon taxes, burdensome red tape, removal of valuable pest management tools, and fertilizer tariffs. Liberal mismanagement on important trade files has put these critical international markets at risk.



We also heard from the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada that 44% of fresh fruit and vegetable producers are selling their products at a loss, so there is no question that these bankruptcies and insolvencies can and will happen. In fact, we know they have already happened. Therefore, it is no surprise, when a survey goes out to Canadian farmers asking them if they feel that the current Liberal government is doing a good job supporting agriculture, that only 2% of the farmers surveyed say that they think the Liberals are doing a good job. It is from decisions or inaction on these types of critical pieces of legislation that this frustration and anxiety arise.

When we talk about why this legislation is needed, it only takes one bankruptcy to have a devastating impact throughout the industry, and certainly a ripple effect throughout all of our small rural communities that rely on these family farms. Certainly if we talk to my colleague from York—Simcoe and many of the members of Parliament around his riding, we will hear that the economics of the small communities in those rural areas rely on these industries.

I am sure the government will try to argue that there has been no demonstrated reason why this legislation is needed, but that is simply not true. We already had the Lakeside Produce company in Leamington, Ontario, file for bankruptcy earlier this year. There were 17 Canadian produce companies listed among Lakeside's creditors, totalling more than \$1.6 million in unsecured claims. We can imagine the impact that has on the small family farms that are out those dollars and those products. Another 45 produce companies outside Canada, mainly in Mexico and the United States, are owed another \$4.85 million. Not only could Canadian companies be in these circumstances, but this is a highly integrated industry and the ripple effects are significant. In addition to Lakeside Produce, in October 2021 a New Brunswick produce retailer declared bankruptcy, with more than \$3 million owing to its creditors, including farmers and wholesale produce retailers.

It is absolutely critical that we give our fresh fruit and produce farm families this assurance, this economic safety net and certainly this protection so they can go about their business knowing that a bankruptcy will not put their own farm at risk. Also, as Canadians, we need this protection to ensure that our food security is protected.

I would encourage all members of this House to support this private member's bill and support Canadian farmers.

• (1920)

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the good people of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, in Nova Scotia. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to discuss Bill C-280 with my esteemed colleagues here in the House today.

We will undoubtedly hear more about the merits of this bill from our colleagues. For my part, I will focus on offering an overview on the changes it would bring to our insolvency regime, in particular where it would place fresh produce sellers in relation to other creditors, including farmers of other types of perishable products, employees, pensioners and potentially smaller and more local suppliers.

To fully grasp Bill C-280, we must start by considering how our insolvency laws currently work. There are two main insolvency

### *Private Members' Business*

laws in Canada: the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, the CCAA. These laws address both business and personal insolvencies.

Business insolvency solutions include both restructuring and liquidation options to distressed businesses to mitigate impacts and make the best of a bad situation. If restructuring is not feasible and a liquidation is required, the BIA ensures the orderly liquidation of assets and distribution of proceeds to creditors. At the top of the list are deemed trusts and superpriority creditors, which currently include limited amounts for farmers, fishers and unpaid suppliers, including the fresh produce suppliers that are meant to benefit from this bill. It also includes amounts owed to employees for unpaid wages. Next are secured creditors, followed by preferred creditors and unsecured creditors, which would include most unpaid suppliers, such as landlords and construction and repair businesses.

First, as I briefly mentioned, there is already a limited superpriority for Canadian farmers, fishers and aquaculturists, which entitles them to payment ahead of other creditors for amounts owing on products delivered within 15 days of bankruptcy. The superpriority available to farmers under this provision applies to the bankrupt buyer's inventory or the proceeds of the sale of the inventory. Unlike Bill C-280, the existing superpriority applies to all Canadian farmers, including producers of other perishable agricultural commodities such as milk and eggs.

Second, any unpaid suppliers of goods, including fresh produce sellers, can seek to recover unsold, identifiable goods from a bankrupt purchaser within 30 days of delivery. Canada's insolvency laws balance debtors' and creditors' interests, enabling businesses, including those in agriculture and agri-food, to access credit, invest, create jobs and treat creditors equitably.

Typically, changes to priority payments in insolvency are only made in exceptional circumstances. My colleagues may, for example, remember Bill C-228, which elevated the claims in insolvency for amounts owing to pensioners, who in some unfortunate cases have seen reductions in their pensions and retirement benefits due to the insolvency of their employers.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Bill C-280 creates a deemed trust for the claims of fresh produce sellers. A deemed trust is an extraordinary legal tool that, when used, makes the proceeds of a sale the property of the seller and not the buyer. Even if the seller is not yet paid, in an insolvency the deemed trust would let sellers recover amounts ahead of all creditors and outside of the insolvency process. This is a much stronger legal tool than is currently enjoyed by any other private commercial creditor group in insolvency.

First, the deemed trust would apply to the entire fresh produce supply chain. This means marketers, intermediaries and wholesalers of fresh produce who are engaging in everyday business transactions, just like every other supplier or wholesaler of other goods to the bankrupt purchaser. I note that this could also include multinational grocery corporations that wholesale fresh produce to their affiliates and large American sellers selling into Canada.

Second, it would apply to all the assets of the company, not just the inventory.

Third, whereas the existing protections for farmers apply only to produce from Canadian farms, American and other international fresh produce farmers and suppliers participating in a Canadian insolvency would benefit under Bill C-280.

• (1925)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

### HOUSING

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, last Saturday night, I was with over 800 people at the Working Centre's annual mayors' dinner. It is an incredible organization in my community that has been on the front lines of responding to poverty, unemployment, the housing crisis and more.

It was at that event that we got to hear of the lived experiences of people living unsheltered. One estimate that we now have is that about double the number of people in the room that night are living unsheltered across Waterloo region.

This is a crisis that we are in the midst of. In Waterloo region, we have plenty of people with great ideas and passion. People are, for example, coming together to buy properties to keep them permanently affordable, such as Union Co-operative is doing. Organizations such as the Working Centre, the House of Friendship, Beyond Housing and so many more are pouring their hearts and lives into building the affordable housing that we need.

In light of this, I need the parliamentary secretary to know that the federal government cannot take a year off when it comes to ad-

ressing the housing crisis. Communities like mine, while full of people who are ready to step up, cannot be expected to do it on their own. We need all three levels of government acting like this is the crisis that it is.

Months ago, Canada's federal housing advocate, a position that was created by the federal government own legislation, was clear. She said that the national housing strategy is failing. After this budget, she said, "The newly unveiled Federal Budget is a sorry disappointment. It completely misses the mark on addressing the most pressing housing crisis this country has ever seen."

Why did she say that? It is because on housing, there was nothing in it, outside of a needed investment in indigenous housing, which is unfortunately back-loaded, and the funding does not start for a few years still.

My concern is that the federal government might be out of ideas on housing while we are in the midst of a crisis that needs urgent action. For the rest of my time, I want to offer more of those ideas for the parliamentary secretary to continue to put pressure on the implementation.

First, we need to get more affordable non-market housing built. One simple idea is to make the rapid housing initiative a permanent annual funding envelope for housing providers, in my community and others across the country, to apply for, predictably, to build the housing they are keen to build.

Second, we need to increase investments in co-op housing to get more built, just the way we did back in the eighties at the rate and the pace that we did then. We cannot pat ourselves on the back for an investment in co-op housing from last year and pretend that this is enough.

Third, we need to end the loophole for real estate investment trusts to ensure that they pay their taxes at the same rate as others and direct that funding to build more of the non-market housing that we need. Fourth, we need to follow through on Habitat for Humanity's call to waive GST for all affordable housing built by charities across the country.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is this: Will they push for these kinds of initiatives to address the housing crisis we are in?

*Adjournment Proceedings*

● (1930)

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and friend from Kitchener Centre for the excellent question on an issue that both of us truly care deeply about.

Just last week, I met with over a dozen stakeholders and community leaders in my community of Windsor—Tecumseh at a round table focused on the issue of affordable housing, and that includes housing for those experiencing homelessness.

Our government has made housing a priority since the very beginning of our mandate. That is why in 2017 we launched the landmark national housing strategy, a first in Canadian history and a return to federal involvement in housing. Prior to this, the federal government had not been seriously involved in housing for decades, and we knew we had much work to catch up on. The range of programs under the strategy addressed the needs of people across the housing spectrum, from building new shelter units to supporting the purchase of a first home to support directly for renters.

The rapid housing initiative is an example of one such program having tremendous success. The initiative helps people most in need, like people who are homeless or at risk of becoming so. This program provides grants to support the rapid creation of permanent affordable housing units. It has continually exceeded its targets, and now, with the third round, we hope to create a total of nearly 15,000 units.

The national housing co-investment fund is another program lifting people out of homelessness. Among its achievements, it has yielded over 3,700 shelter beds, 3,500 supportive housing units and 1,600 transitional housing beds so far. However, I do not want to talk about numbers here. I would rather talk about people.

These are people like Emily from Vancouver, who was homeless and struggled with addictions. She found a home at Union Gospel Mission's Women and Families Centre, and she says the support she received changed her life. The centre was built with funding from the national co-investment fund. There is also Bill, a Canadian Forces veteran in Ottawa who went from being homeless to living in Veterans' House. That project was also financed by the co-investment fund. Projects like these are successful because they acknowledge the complex nature of homelessness and the range of factors that lead to it.

Our government's homelessness strategy, Reaching Home, takes a whole-of-government approach to the issue. We also work closely with partners in other orders of government and elsewhere in the housing sector.

Our government takes a human rights-based approach to housing because we fundamentally believe that access to housing is indeed a human right. This is unlike the Conservative Party, which has no plan for housing, did nothing when it was in government and still will not say whether it believes housing is a human right. This should be something that all parties agree on.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Madam Speaker, I would agree that there are other parties here that are not doing enough on housing, but that

was not the question I asked. I asked how the parliamentary secretary can stand by a budget that does not invest in the housing we need.

He spoke about the rapid housing initiative. That is one of the issues I am calling on to be renewed. The City of Kitchener was calling for it to be renewed too, and it was not in this budget. The calls of organizations across the country are clear. We cannot spend time patting ourselves on the back for investments from past years in the midst of a housing crisis.

I would invite the parliamentary secretary, as I have said to others, to come by my community and meet the people who are living unsheltered and calling for so much better. Will he come and visit?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's concern about making sure that our policies are also forward-facing, not just talking about the major historic investments we have made, but what we will do looking forward.

The plans we announced in the spring budget acknowledged the complexity of the issue by approaching it from multiple directions. That includes increasing supply, like the supply of deeply affordable housing, tackling speculation in the housing sector and so much more.

We will continue to prioritize housing, as we have done since the start of our mandate, unlike the Conservatives, who simply spew buzzwords instead of putting forward a real plan. They did nothing on housing when they were in government and continue to do nothing in opposition.

I am pleased to know that my colleague from Kitchener Centre shares our concern, and I hope we can count on the support of everyone in the House as we continue to work to ensure everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home.

● (1935)

## DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on March 9, I raised questions with respect to foreign interference here in Canada, and I asked a very specific question. We have more and more reports, specifically from Global News, that talk about the type of well-organized orchestrated interference of our elections, and what became abundantly clear from these reports is that it was being orchestrated by Beijing diplomats. The question I asked was how many of these diplomats had been expelled. Of course, I did not get an answer to that question, but we do know the answer to that question, and the answer is absolutely none.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Our security services are doing the hard work. They are identifying what the problems are. These reports are delivered to the government. We also heard from the Prime Minister's chief of staff that he reads every single report, so that would mean that the Prime Minister actually read these reports we were hearing so much about in Global News, which included the fact that diplomats were orchestrating and organizing the donation of funds to preferred candidates through an organization they called the “tea party”.

Absolutely no action was taken by the government to expel any diplomats who were involved in this. The government knew there were some, because CSIS delivered that report, and we know from the Prime Minister's chief of staff that the Prime Minister reads every single report. Why was nothing done? Why has nothing been done to date, with respect to that? We are now a month and a half later. Absolutely nothing has been done.

What is so embarrassing about this and so difficult for us to justify with our allies is that we have now heard the Prime Minister has been telling our allies that the government will never meet the 2% target for spending on our armed forces, as required by NATO. The blows to our reputation never stop, but we can look where we are now. The United States now has made 36 arrests, including an arrest of one who has information on their cellphone and photos of folks proudly opening a police station here in Canada. Not only do we not expel diplomats in this country who we know are actively engaged in foreign interference in our elections, but we do not make any arrests either.

The United States is taking decisive action on this. Here in Canada, what are we doing? Why are we always behind the eight ball on these things? Why are we always playing catch-up? Why can we not get in front of some of these things, and do something?

I have heard on the special committee on Canada-China relations from Canadian citizens who talk about the orchestrated harassment they endure from Beijing in foreign influence operations, and we have clear evidence that the diplomatic corps is actively involved in this. No one gets expelled. Why is the government so afraid to stand up to Beijing foreign influence?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada, as I want to say very clearly to the House, takes any allegation of inappropriate or illicit behaviour by any foreign representative or diplomat in Canada extremely seriously, including interference in the internal affairs of Canada. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister have both been very clear that Canada will never tolerate any form of foreign interference.

The government, I think more than any other government I have ever experienced, has stated time and time again that foreign interference activities in Canada and violations of Canadian sovereignty are unacceptable. This includes harassment and intimidation of individuals, the establishment of illegal overseas so-called police stations and, of course, covert and malicious influence in Canadian democratic processes.

As my hon. colleagues are well aware, the Prime Minister relayed these messages directly to China's President Xi Jinping at the G20 summit in Indonesia last November. Our foreign affairs minister reiterated these same messages to her Chinese counterpart as re-

cently as March 2 of this year, and had done so with her previous counterpart on more than one occasion. Global Affairs Canada officials have also repeatedly delivered similar messages to Chinese officials in both Ottawa and Beijing. Our message has been consistent: There is no tolerance for interference by the People's Republic of China on Canadian soil.

The government has clearly stated its expectation that China respect Canadian and international law, including the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and any domestic law. We will never tolerate any breach by Chinese diplomats or diplomats of any other country of the Vienna Conventions on Canadian soil.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs was very clear during her last appearance before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in March, when she said she would never hesitate to order out of Canada any foreign diplomat suspected of wrongdoing. She would never hesitate to do that, should clear and concrete evidence linked to specific individuals come to light. As my colleagues know, and this was emphasized by the minister before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, the expulsion of any diplomat accredited to Canada would be a measure of last resort. No decision would be taken without considering all factors and risks. This decision is never taken lightly.

The government will continue to choose the most effective tools from a wide range of options at our disposal to properly combat foreign interference. This includes diplomatic tools that may be subtle to some, but are very effective in preventing foreign interference before it starts. Sometimes that means stopping certain positions from being created at foreign diplomatic missions. For example, we denied China's request to create a new position at the embassy in Ottawa for the international liaison department of the Chinese Communist Party. It was inappropriate, and we refused permission to create it. Sometimes we stop certain individuals from being posted to foreign diplomatic positions here. In fact, very often the government in question will withdraw an individual's application as soon as we raise concerns.

Our government will also continue to ensure that China faces consequences for any illegal or inappropriate actions. The question of foreign interference is not one that is unique to Canada; this is a problem that our partners and allies around the world are also grappling with. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has been very clear that she is working with her counterparts from around the globe to share best practices. We will continue—

● (1940)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, it is Groundhog Day here on Parliament Hill. When I raised the question the first time, the sum total of the answer was that the Liberals have had a stern conversation. It is a month and a half later and they have had a stern conversation, or they did not accredit someone. This kind of inaction actually emboldens someone. I think back to my father saying to me, “Don't do that” or “You shouldn't do that.” If I kept doing it six or seven times and my father just kept saying that I really should not do it, nothing actually happened. What we are doing to try to curb the behaviour is not working. What the government is doing to try to curb the foreign interference is not working. We actually need some bold action, like what is happening in the United States, with 36 arrests. They are taking it very seriously. Why will the government not?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the hon. member's consideration on this issue, he is completely wrong. He is off the mark. If he has any evidence of individuals doing wrong, it is his responsibility to report that to the authorities. That is his responsibility. We cannot just cast aspersions in the House. We cannot just say anything we want without evidence.

I wish to be very clear. Our government will never tolerate any interference in any domestic issue that is beyond the rights and responsibilities under the Vienna Convention of diplomats in this country. Our minister and our Prime Minister have been completely clear: Any evidence that is brought forward will be dealt with seriously.

We will continue to operate to ensure that Canadians are safe and that everyone is following our expectations on domestic law, international law and international conventions. We will do that because it is our job.

• (1945)

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am here in the House again to ask for financial support for persons with disabilities. I want to start with a story so that the government can understand how this is actually impacting people in my community.

Last week, a mother in her 70s came in to talk about her adult son who lives on his own and is about to be demovicted from an apartment he has lived in for almost 17 years. He cannot afford the new rent on the income he has at this point in time. This is what is really happening to people in this market-driven housing frenzy that the Liberal government has fed.

Once again, I rise in the House to shine a light on the urgency for persons with disabilities to have immediate income support as they continue to wait for a Canada disability benefit. While provincial and territorial income support programs have been virtually stagnant for years, the community is facing an ever-shrinking income while struggling to cope with the rising cost of food and the skyrocketing price of housing.

Through the course of the HUMA committee study on Bill C-22, the Canada disability benefit act, we heard that about one million Canadians living with a disability are in poverty. We heard from the minister and her ESDC officials that the average gap between

provincial and territorial support and the poverty line for persons with disabilities is \$9,000, and there is no way to fill that gap. Overwhelmingly, we heard that these one million people are not eating enough meals daily and that their housing can be unacceptable and often inaccessible.

It is essential that the federal government step up immediately with an emergency benefit. Therefore, I ask again for the Minister of Disability Inclusion to provide this emergency response benefit for persons with disabilities while Canadians wait for the currently unfunded Canada disability benefit.

Canadians with disabilities face exclusion from society on a daily basis. The recent Auditor General's report on accessible transportation found that, in 2019 and 2020, nearly two-thirds of the 2.2 million persons with disabilities who travelled on planes, trains and other federally regulated modes of transportation faced barriers. Even worse, the risk of damage to their essential assistive devices is beyond unacceptable. Transportation is essential to people's daily lives, including for people with disabilities. The government should understand that. Persons with disabilities are more likely to rely on public transportation as they navigate this incredibly ableist world.

Education is another place where people with disabilities are facing barriers and exclusion every day, whether in the aging infrastructure that years of out-of-date schools have put in front of people; insufficient funding for school boards to fully include children with disabilities; or challenges related to accessing and applying for student loans, grants, tax credits and other programs that are supposed to give access to better education. It is just not working. Even in seeking employment, people with disabilities are excluded, with inaccessible workplaces, biases of employers and the stresses of coping with too many other challenges on top of employment.

The NDP knows that people with disabilities need assistance today. This includes better access to income supports, publicly funded pharmacare and dental care as part of improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

With the Canada disability benefit at least a year away, I implore the Liberal government to help persons with disabilities now with an emergency relief benefit. The disability community deserves it.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, my friend, for her question, advocacy on behalf of Canadians with disabilities and, furthermore, her excellent teamwork in getting Bill C-22 through committee and improving that bill at committee. I wanted to thank the hon. member for her tremendous advocacy and her great teamwork.

I want to especially acknowledge the advocacy of the hon. Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion. She has been working tirelessly throughout her career to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. The minister understands the challenges that so many persons with disabilities face each and every day. She understands that many working-age persons with disabilities face a challenging income gap. That is why the minister has been working tirelessly to create the historic Canada disability benefit, an income supplement that has the potential to seriously reduce poverty and improve financial security for hundreds of thousands of working-age persons with disabilities.

Like my colleague, I too want nothing more than to see Canadians with disabilities receive the new Canada disability benefit as quickly as possible. I remind my colleague that, as set out in the legislation, the details of the proposed Canada disability benefit will be addressed in future regulations. These details include the benefit amount, eligibility criteria and other features such as the treatment of employment income. We will work out all of those details in consultation with our partners, including persons with disabilities and disability stakeholders, as well as with provinces and the territories. In the spirit of “nothing without us”, we will continue engaging the disability community at every turn to ensure that the benefit is designed with their voices at the table.

I am pleased to say that engagement activities began in the summer of 2021 and that work has not stopped. We have also been working closely with provincial and territorial governments because they play a key role in providing benefits and supports to many Canadians with disabilities. This will help us ensure that every person who receives the Canada disability benefit will be better off. It will also help us harmonize delivery of the CDB and ensure that there are no clawbacks to other benefits.

The Canada disability benefit has the potential to make a profound difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of working-age Canadian with disabilities. For that to happen we need to take the time to do things the right way. That is exactly what we are doing.

• (1950)

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Madam Speaker, I certainly do not question the wishes of the minister but what I do question is the understanding and the political will of the government.

I just wanted to point out that more people like the man whose mum came to see me just last week in my office will lose their housing and will go hungry. This is not acceptable. It is not acceptable that we will let people lose their housing and they will not be able to have a meal a day because we will not support the income supports they have been asking for.

Through the full consultation that I know this department has done, the number one pillar that people needed was financial security. Why will the government not look after the people in this country? Why will they not do it?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk:** Madam Speaker, the story of my colleague's constituent is absolutely heartbreaking but that is the story that motivates all of us to work together as urgently as possible to bring about the Canada disability benefit, which is groundbreaking legislation. It has the potential to significantly reduce poverty and improve financial security for hundreds of thousands of working-age persons with disabilities from coast to coast to coast. That is why we are taking the time to get it right.

Persons with disabilities know what they need. With their input we will determine all the details of the Canada disability benefit. We look forward to sharing those details with everyone, including my colleague, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

**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 7:54 p.m.)







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